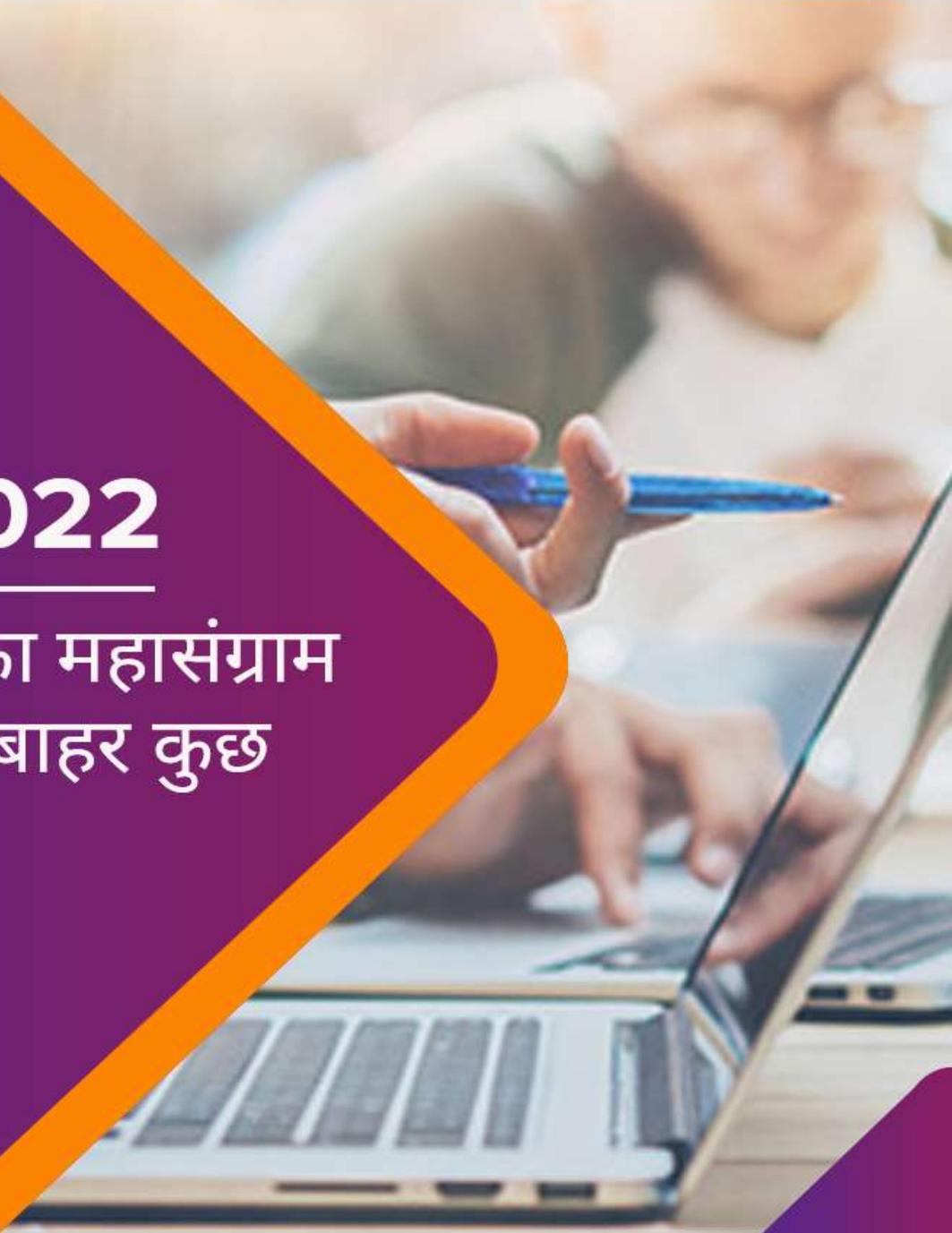


## ब्रह्मास्त्र 2022

करंट अफेयर्स का महासंग्राम  
परीक्षा में इससे बाहर कुछ  
नहीं आएगा



## Monthly Current Affairs January 2022

मासिक सम सामयिकी जनवरी 2022

Important News: World

### First India-Central Asia Virtual Summit

#### Why in News

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi hosted the **first India-Central Asia Summit** in virtual format on 27 January 2022, which was attended by Presidents of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Republic of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Republic of Uzbekistan.
- This first India-Central Asia Summit coincided with the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Central Asian countries.

#### Key Points

- The Leaders discussed far-reaching proposals to further cooperation in areas of trade and connectivity, development cooperation, defence and security and, in particular, on cultural and people to people contacts.
- These included a Round-Table on Energy and Connectivity; Joint Working Groups at senior official level on Afghanistan and use of Chabahar Port; showcasing of Buddhist exhibitions in Central Asian countries and commissioning of an India-Central Asia dictionary of common words, joint counter-terrorism exercises, visit of 100 member youth delegation annually from Central Asian countries to India and special courses for Central Asian diplomats.
- A comprehensive **Joint Declaration** was adopted by the leaders that enumerates their common vision for an enduring and comprehensive India-Central Asia partnership.
- In a historic decision, the Leaders agreed to institutionalize the Summit mechanism by deciding to hold it every 2 years.
- They also agreed on regular meetings of Foreign Ministers, Trade Ministers, Culture Ministers and Secretaries of the Security Council to prepare the groundwork for the Summit meetings.
- An **India-Central Asia Secretariat** in New Delhi would be set up to support the new mechanism.

**Source: PIB**

## Corruption Perception Index (CPI) 2021

### Why in News

- Recently, the **Corruption Perception Index (CPI) 2021** was released by **Transparency International**.
- India ranks 85 in the index.

### Key Points

- Denmark, Finland, New Zealand and Norway topped the list with the highest score.
- South Sudan, Syria and Somalia remain at the bottom of the index.

### India's Performance:

- India's rank improved by one place to 85 in 2021 from 86th in 2020.
- India's CPI score is 40.

### About Index:

- The index, which ranks 180 countries and territories by their perceived levels of public sector corruption according to experts and business people, uses a scale of 0 to 100 to rank Corruption Perception Index, where 0 is highly corrupt and 100 is very clean.

### Related Indian Initiatives:

- The Indian Penal Code, 1860
- Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988
- The Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002
- The Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, 2010
- The Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013
- Central Vigilance Commission (CVC)

### Source: Indian Express

## Global Risks Report 2022

### Why in News

- The **Global Risks Report 2022**, 17th Edition, is published by the **World Economic Forum (WEF)**.

### Key Points

- Cyber security, pandemic, climate change and space advancements are the emerging risks to the global economy.
- It stated that climate change was the number one danger, while erosion of social cohesion, livelihood crises and mental health deterioration were

identified as risks which had increased the most since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic.

- The global economy is to shrink by 2.3% by 2024.
- According to Report released ahead of the Davos Agenda, a “global risk is the possibility of the occurrence of an event or condition that, if it occurs, could cause significant negative impact for several countries or industries”.

**In India:**

- Widespread youth disillusionment, digital inequality, fracture of interstate relations, debt crisis and failure of technology governance are the top five risks for India.

**Facts about World Economic Forum:** It is an international NGO.

- **Headquarters:** Cologny, Switzerland
- **Founded:** January 1971
- **Founder:** Klaus Schwab

**Source:** Business Today

## **India pays \$29.9 million in UN Regular Budget Assessments for 2022**

**Why in News**

- India has paid USD 29.9 million in UN Regular Budget Assessments for the year 2022.

**Key Points**

- India has joined the 2022 Honour Roll of 24 Member States out of 193 that have paid their UN Regular Budget Assessments in full.

**UN Status of India:**

- India is currently a non-permanent member of the 15-nation Security Council and its two-year term will end on December 31, 2022.

**Source:** Business Standard

## **Meta’s new AI Supercomputer to be world’s fastest by mid-2022**

**Why in News**

- **Facebook parent company Meta** has said that its newly unveiled **AI (Artificial Intelligence) supercomputer** will be the fastest in the world by mid-2022.

**Key Points**

- Meta said that the company is introducing AI Research SuperCluster (RSC), which is believed to be among the fastest AI Supercomputers running today.
- AI can currently perform tasks like translating text between languages and helping identify potentially harmful content, but developing the next generation of AI will require powerful supercomputers capable of quintillions of operations per second.

**Metaverse:** Facebook in October 2021 had announced that it is changing the company name to Meta. The change was announced by Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg at the company's Connect Virtual Reality Conference.

**Source: The Hindu**

## **India, Israel launch commemorative logo to mark 30th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic ties**

### **Why in News**

- India and Israel have launched a commemorative logo to mark the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between the two countries.

### **Key Points**

- The logo was unveiled virtually at an online event in the presence of Ambassador of Israel to India Naor Gilon and Indian envoy to Israel, Sanjeev Singla.
- The logo features the Star of David and the Ashoka Chakra- the two symbols that adorn the national flags of both countries- and forms the numeral 30 depicting the 30th anniversary of bilateral relations.
- Israel and India relationship encompasses slew of areas — health and innovation, agriculture and water, trade and economic activities, science and technology, research and development, defence and homeland security, art and culture, tourism and space.
- Israel and India established diplomatic relations on 29th of January 1992.

### **Facts about Israel:**

- **Capital:** Jerusalem
- **President:** Isaac Herzog
- **Prime Minister:** Naftali Bennett

- **Currency:** Israeli Shekel
- Source: ET**

## Peru declares 'Environmental Emergency'

### Why in News

- The Peruvian government declared a 90-day **"Environmental Emergency"** in damaged coastal territories, after an oil spill that saw 6,000 barrels of crude oil pour into the sea.
- The spill was caused by freak waves, which resulted from the eruption of a volcano in Tonga.

### Key Points

- Peruvian authorities say that this measure will allow for "sustainable management of the affected areas," through "restoration and remediation" work.
- The oil spill came out of a tanker belonging to the Spanish energy firm Repsol.

### Environmental Impacts:

- Harmful to aquatic life
- Toxic Effects
- Threat to Mangroves

### Economic Impacts:

- Tourism
- Power Plants
- Fishing

### Related Laws in India:

- Currently, there is no law covering oil spill as such and its consequential environmental damage in India but India has "the National Oil Spill Disaster Contingency Plan of 1996 (NOS-DCP)" to handle these types of situations.
- In 2015 India ratified the International Convention on Civil Liability for Bunker Oil Pollution Damage, 2001 (Bunker Convention).

**Source: Indian Express**

## UNSC uses 3-D virtual diplomacy for the first time

### Why in News

- The **United Nations Security Council (UNSC)** used 3-D virtual diplomacy for the first time.

### Key Points

- Members of the UNSC went on a virtual field trip to Columbia, listening, watching and getting insights into the peace process with the help of **Virtual Reality (VR) technology**.

### Digital diplomacy:

- Digital diplomacy is also dubbed as Digiplomacy and eDiplomacy.
- It is defined as the use of new information communication technologies and the Internet to achieve diplomatic objectives.

### Virtual reality (VR):

- VR is a simulated experience, which can be similar to or completely different from the real world.
- It is an artificial and computer-generated simulation or recreation of real-life situations or environment.
- It is usually achieved by wearing a headset such as Facebook's Oculus equipped with the technology.

### Facts about UNSC (United Nations Security Council):

- **Formation:** 24 October 1945
- **Membership:** 15 countries
- **Permanent members:** 5 (China, France, Russia, United Kingdom and United States)
- **Non-permanent members:** 10 including India

**Source: Business Standard**

## PM Modi and Mauritius PM Pravind Jugnauth jointly inaugurate the Social Housing Units Project in Mauritius

### Why in News

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Prime Minister of Mauritius, Mr. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth, jointly inaugurated the **Social Housing Units Project in Mauritius**.
- The two Prime Ministers also took part in a virtual foundation stone laying ceremony for two other projects – construction of a state-of-the-art Civil Service College and a 8 MW Solar PV Farm– also undertaken as part of India's development support.

### Key Points

- The Prime Minister acknowledged the importance of the Civil Service College project in nation building and offered to share learnings of *Mission Karmayogi*.

- Prime Minister recalled the **One Sun One World One Grid (OSOWOG) initiative** that he put forth at the First Assembly of the International Solar Alliance (ISA) in October 2018 and said that the 8 MW Solar PV Farm project will help mitigate the climate challenges that Mauritius faces through avoidance of 13,000 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.
- Ceremony included exchange of **two key bilateral agreements**: Agreement for the extension of USD 190 million Line of Credit from the Government of India to the Government of Mauritius for the Metro Express and other infrastructure projects and MoU on the Implementation of Small Development Projects.

**Source: PIB**

## **Pacific 'Ring of Fire'**

### **Why in News**

- The Hunga Tonga-Hunga Ha'apai volcano, which erupted recently, lies along the Pacific 'Ring of fire'.

### **Key Points**

- The Hunga Tonga-Hunga Ha'apai volcano erupted, sending ash and smoke thousands of feet into the air.
- The volcano, situated on an uninhabited island, became active in 2009.
- It lies along the Pacific 'Ring of fire', and is just over 60 kilometres from the island nation of Tonga.

### **Pacific 'Ring of Fire':**

- The Pacific 'Ring of Fire' or Pacific rim, or the Circum-Pacific Belt, is an area along the Pacific Ocean that is characterised by active volcanoes and frequent earthquakes.
- It is home to about 75 percent of the world's volcanoes – more than 450 volcanoes. Also, about 90 percent of the world's earthquakes occur here.
- Its length is over 40,000 kilometres and traces from New Zealand clockwise in an almost circular arc covering Tonga, Kermadec Islands, Indonesia, moving up to the Philippines, Japan, and stretching eastward to the Aleutian Islands, then southward along the western coast of North America and South America.
- The area is along several tectonic plates including the Pacific plate, Philippine Plate, Juan de Fuca plate, Cocos plate, Nazca plate, and North American plate.

**Source: Indian Express**

### **First BRICS Sherpas meeting of 2022 held under Chinese chairship**

#### **Why in News**

- The first **BRICS Sherpas meeting of 2022** was held virtually on January 18-19 under the Chinese chairship with the members thanking India for its BRICS chairship in 2021.

#### **Key Points**

- **China** has taken on the rotating chairmanship of BRICS in 2022.
- Programme and priorities for the year were discussed at the first BRICS Sherpas Meeting of 2022.
- They looked forward to continuity, consensus and consolidation of BRICS cooperation.
- BRICS is a grouping of five major emerging economies -- Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa.

**Source: Business Standard**

### **ILO: World Employment and Social Outlook-Trends 2022**

#### **Why in News**

- The **International Labour Organisation (ILO)** has released the **World Employment and Social Outlook-Trends 2022 (WESO Trends)**.
- The report examines the impacts of the crisis on global and regional trends in employment, unemployment and labour force participation, as well as on job quality, informal employment and working poverty.
- It also offers an extensive analysis of trends in temporary employment both before and during the COVID-19 crisis.

#### **Key Point**

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

- Global unemployment is projected to stand at 207 million in 2022.
- This is 21 million more than in 2019 before the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic began.
- Global working hours in 2022 will be almost two percent below their pre-pandemic level — that is equivalent to the loss of 52 million full-time jobs.
- There is the need for a broad-based labour market recovery — the recovery must be human-centred, inclusive, sustainable and resilient.

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

- It is a United Nations agency whose mandate is to advance social and economic justice through setting international labour standards.
  - **Headquarters:** Geneva, Switzerland
  - **Director-General;** Guy Ryder
  - **Formation:** 11 April 1919
  - The ILO has **187 state members**.
  - **India** is a founder member of the International Labour Organization.
- Note: India has assumed the Chairmanship** of the Governing Body of ILO in 2020.

**Source: DTE**

## **Indonesia passes law to relocate capital from Jakarta to remote Borneo**

### **Why in News**

- Recently, Indonesia's parliament has passed a law approving the relocation of its capital from slowly sinking Jakarta to a site 2,000 kilometres away on jungle-clad Borneo Island that will be named "Nusantara".

### **Key Point**

- The move was first tipped by President Joko Widodo in April 2019, citing rising sea levels and severe congestion on densely populated Java Island.
- The new capital (Nusantara) will cover about 56,180 hectares in East Kalimantan province on the Indonesian part of Borneo, which the country shares with Malaysia and Brunei.

### **Note:**

- Indonesia is not the first country in the region to relocate from an overpopulated capital.
- Malaysia moved its government to Putrajaya from Kuala Lumpur in 2003, while Myanmar moved its capital to Naypyidaw from Rangoon in 2006.

### **About Sea Level Rise (SLR):**

- SLR is an increase in the level of the world's oceans due to the effects of climate change, especially global warming, induced by three primary factors: Thermal Expansion, Melting Glaciers, Loss of Greenland and Antarctic Ice Sheets

**Source: TOI**

## PM Modi delivers 'State of the World' special address at the WEF's Davos Agenda

### Why in News

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi delivered 'State of the World' special address at the **WEF (World Economic Forum)'s Davos Agenda** on 17th January, 2022.

### Key Points

- **Davos Agenda 2022** will be held from 17th to 21st January 2022.
- It will be the first global platform for key world leaders to share their visions for 2022.
- The event is being convened on the theme of "**State of the World.**"
- It will also be addressed by several Heads of State.
- It will also witness participation of top industry leaders, international organizations and civil society.
- During his special address, Prime Minister Modi outlined the reforms implemented by his administration to address the country's retrospective taxation problem.
- He also mentioned his government's asset monetisation efforts and large-scale infrastructure projects underway in India.

**Note:** Recently, the **Global Risks Report 2022**, 17th Edition, was published by the **World Economic Forum (WEF)**.

**Facts about World Economic Forum (WEF):** It is an international NGO.

- **Headquarters:** Cologny, Switzerland
- **Founded:** January 1971
- **Founder:** Klaus Schwab

**Source:** India Today

## Activities of 2022 discussed at BRICS STI Steering Committee: India to host 5 events

### Why in News

- **India** will host five events in 2022, namely Startups Forum meeting, Working Groups meetings on Energy; Biotechnology & Biomedicine; ICT & High-Performance Computing; STIEP (Science, Technology, Innovation and Entrepreneurship Partnership) Working Group Meeting and the launching of BRICS innovation Launchpad as a microsite (Knowledge

Hub), as per discussions at the 15<sup>th</sup> meeting of the **BRICS Science Technology Innovation (STI) Steering Committee.**

### **Key Points**

- India has successfully handed over the **BRICS Chairmanship to China** from January 2022.
- The **theme for BRICS 2022** is “Foster High-Quality BRICS Partnership Usher in a New Era for Global Development”.
- The Chinese side presented a broad outline of activities to be carried out during the whole year. It mainly includes thematic meetings, BRICS Young Scientist Conclave, Senior official, and Ministerial level meetings.
- A total of 25 events have been planned, of which India will host a total of five.

### **Facts about BRICS:**

- **Formation:** 2009
- **Countries:** Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa
- It is an important grouping bringing together the major emerging economies from the world, comprising:
  - 41% of world population
  - Total combined area of 29.3% of the total land surface of the world
  - 24% of global GDP
  - 16% of world trade

**Note:** The above data is based on World Bank data (2019).

**Source:** PIB

### **Volcanic eruption in Tonga**

#### **Why in News**

- Recently, a volcano erupted in the southern Pacific Island of Tonga, which triggered Tsunami waves around the Pacific.

#### **Key Points**

- It is an Undersea Volcanic Eruption consisting of two small uninhabited islands, Hunga-Ha’apai and Hunga-Tonga.
- The Hunga-Tonga-Hunga-Ha’apai volcano has erupted regularly over the past few decades.
- During events in 2009 and 2014/15 hot jets of magma and steam exploded through the waves. But these eruptions were small.

#### **About Volcano:**

- A volcano is a rupture in the crust of a planetary-mass object, such as Earth, that allows hot lava, volcanic ash, and gases to escape from a magma chamber below the surface.
- On Earth, volcanoes are most often found where tectonic plates are diverging or converging and most are found underwater.

**Source: Indian Express**

## **20th Dhaka International Film Festival inaugurated**

### **Why in News**

- The 9-day long **20th Dhaka International Film Festival (DIFF)** was inaugurated at the National Museum premises in Dhaka on 15<sup>th</sup> January, 2022 by the Foreign Minister of Bangladesh Dr A K Abdul Momen.
- High Commissioner of India to Bangladesh Vikram Doraiswami was present as special guest on the occasion.

### **Key Points**

- The film festival is showcasing 225 films spread in ten categories.
- Films from 70 countries are being shown at various venues during the festival.
- The **Indian entries** to the Festival include films like Koozhangal directed by P S Vinodraj, Avijatrik directed by Subhrajit Mitra, Mayar Jonjal directed by Indranil Roychowdhury, and Aandaal directed by Shareef Easa among the 35 entries.
- The Lebanese-German film 'The Anger' directed by Maria Ivanova was the inaugural movie of the festival.

### **About Dhaka International Film Festival (DIFF):**

- DIFF is organised by the Rainbow film Society established in 1977.
- DIFF was started in 1992.

**Source: newsonair**

## **Important News: India**

### **MoHUA-AFD launch Swachhata Start-Up Challenge to nurture the evolving ecosystem of Indian Waste Management Sector**

#### **Why in News**

- The Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs (MoHUA) in partnership with Department of Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) and Agence Française de Développement (AFD) launched the **Swachhata Start-Up Challenge** to nurture the evolving ecosystem of Indian Waste Management Sector.

#### **Key Points**

- Presently, the start-up space is evolving rapidly with India leading the world with over 70 unicorns (crossing the valuation of USD 1 billion).

- This is also aligned to the vision of **Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban 2.0 (SBM-U 2.0)** launched by Prime Minister on 1st October 2021, which is focused on encouraging the adoption of locally innovative, implementable solutions and business models in sanitation and waste management.
- The Challenge, which is open to start-ups registered in India and French actors collaborating with an Indian start-up (as a joint venture), invites solutions across four thematic areas viz. (i) social inclusion, (ii) zero dump (solid waste management), (iii) plastic waste management and (iv) transparency through digital enablement.

**Source: PIB**

## **India's first woman Rafale pilot Shivangi Singh takes part in Republic Day parade 2022**

### **Why in News**

- The country's first woman Rafale fighter jet pilot **Shivangi Singh** was part of the Indian Air Force (IAF) tableau at the Republic Day parade 2022.
- **Shivangi Singh** is only the second woman fighter jet pilot to be part of the IAF tableau.
- Last year, Flight Lieutenant Bhawna Kanth became the first female fighter jet pilot to be part of the IAF tableau.

### **Key Points**

- Shivangi Singh, who is from Varanasi, joined the IAF in 2017 and was commissioned in the IAF's second batch of women fighter pilots.
- She is part of the IAF's Golden Arrows squadron based out of Ambala in Punjab.

### **Note:**

- The first batch of Rafale fighter jets arrived on July 29, 2020, nearly four years after India signed an inter-governmental agreement with France to procure 36 aircraft at a cost of Rs 59,000 crore.
- So far, 32 Rafale jets have been delivered to the IAF and four are expected by April this year.

**Source: Indian Express**

## **Drone Certification Scheme to boost indigenous manufacturing**

### Why in News

- The **Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA)** notified a **Drone Certification Scheme (DCS)** to ensure minimum safety and quality requirements as it will boost indigenous manufacturing.

### Key Points

- The **Drone Certification Scheme** notified on January 26, 2022, under Rule 7 of the **liberalized Drone Rules, 2021** will help in simpler, faster and transparent type-certification of drones.
- Along with the liberalised drone rules, airspace map, the PLI (production-linked incentive) scheme and the single window DigitalSky Platform, this will help drone manufacturing industry in India, grow.
- This is another step in making India the drone hub of the world by 2030.
- A multi-stakeholder steering committee (MSC) chaired by a known professional, who is respected by government and industry alike, will oversee the scheme, along with a QCI (Quality Control of India) secretariat.

**Source: Business Standard**

## Results of preliminary round of first ever Fit India Quiz declared, UP students top Preliminary Quiz Rounds

### Why in News

- Results of the Preliminary Round of the **first-ever Fit India Quiz**, India's biggest sports and fitness quiz for students were announced.

### Key Points

- Results of the nation-wide competition organised by the **Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports** has revealed that two students from Uttar Pradesh have outperformed students from all other states to become the top scorers of the Preliminary Round.
- Divyanshu Chamoli of Delhi Public School, Greater Noida won the top spot, he was closely followed by Shashwat Mishra of Sunbeam School, Lahartara, Varanasi.
- The preliminary round of the Fit India Quiz, saw participants from 13,502 schools from more than 659 districts across the

country, out of which students of 361 schools across 36 States and Union Territories have now been shortlisted for the State Rounds.

- The Quiz has a prize money of 3.25 crores which will be given out to winning schools and students at various phases of the quiz.

#### **About Fit India Movement:**

- Fit India Movement is a nation-wide movement in India to encourage people to remain healthy and fit by including physical activities and sports in their daily lives.
- It was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi on 29 August 2019.

**Source: PIB**

### **Environment Management Plans for Najafgarh jheel: NGT**

#### **Why in News**

- The **National Green Tribunal (NGT)** has directed **Delhi and Haryana** to enforce the **Environment Management Plans** that the two governments have prepared for the **rejuvenation and protection of the Najafgarh jheel**, a transboundary wetland.

#### **Key Points**

- The implementation of these action plans is to be monitored by the National Wetland Authority through the respective State Wetland Authorities.
- The **Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH)** first took the matter of restoration of the Najafgarh jheel to the NGT in 2014, and then filed an execution application before the tribunal in 2019, noting that no remedial measures had been taken.

#### **About Environment Management Plan:**

- According to this plan, the top priority would be to notify the Najafgarh jheel and its area of influence under The **Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2017**.
- The rules prohibit and regulate certain activities within wetlands and their 'zone of influence'.

#### **About Najafgarh Jheel:**

- It is located in a natural depression in southwest Delhi, close to the Gurugram-Rajokri border on National Highway-48.
- The presence of 281 bird species, including several threatened ones such as Egyptian vulture, Sarus Crane, Steppe Eagle,

Greater Spotted Eagle, Imperial Eagle and those migrating along the Central Asian Flyway has been reported at the lake.

**About National Green Tribunal (NGT):**

- NGT was established in 2010 under the National Green Tribunal Act 2010 for effective and expeditious disposal of cases relating to environmental protection and conservation of forests and other natural resources.

**About Ramsar Convention on Wetlands:**

- The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, an international treaty, aims at the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands.
- Named after the city of Ramsar in Iran, the convention was signed in 1971.
- **World Wetlands Day** is celebrated internationally each year on 2 February.

**Note:** Recently, Governments of **Himachal Pradesh and Haryana** signed an MoU at Panchkula for the construction of **Adi Badri Dam** that would come up on 77 acres in Himachal Pradesh near Adi Badri area of Yamuna Nagar district of Haryana.

**Source: Indian Express**

**Ministry of Electronics & IT releases 2nd Volume of Vision Document on Electronics Manufacturing**

**Why in News**

- The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, in association with ICEA, released a 5-year roadmap and Vision Document for the electronics sector, titled “\$300 billion Sustainable Electronics Manufacturing & Exports by 2026.”
- This roadmap is the second volume of a two-part Vision Document – the first of which titled “Increasing India’s Electronics Exports and Share in GVCs” was released in November 2021.

**Key Points**

- This report provides a year-wise break-up and production projections for the various products that will lead India’s transformation into a US\$300 billion electronics manufacturing powerhouse, from the current US\$75 billion.
- Mobile manufacturing that is expected to cross US\$100 billion annual production - up from the current US\$30 billion - is expected to constitute nearly 40% of this ambitious growth.

### Related Initiatives:

- Design Linked Incentive (DLI) Scheme
- Scheme for Promotion of Manufacturing of Electronic Components and Semiconductors
- Modified Electronics Manufacturing Clusters (EMC 2.0) Scheme

**Source: PIB**

## India State of Forest Report (ISFR) 2021

### Why in News

- Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Bhupender Yadav, released the '**India State of Forest Report (ISFR) 2021**' prepared by the **Forest Survey of India (FSI)**.

### Key Points

- The **ISFR 2021** provides information on forest cover, tree cover, mangrove cover, growing stock, carbon stock in India's forests, forest fire monitoring, forest cover in tiger reserve areas, above ground estimates of biomass using SAR data & climate change hotspots in Indian forests.

### Major Findings:

- The total forest and tree cover of the country is **80.9 million hectares** which is 24.62 percent of the geographical area of the country. As compared to the assessment of 2019, there is an increase of **2,261 sq km** in the total forest and tree cover of the country. Out of this, the increase in the forest cover has been observed as 1,540 sq km and that in tree cover is 721 sq km.
- Increase in forest cover has been observed in open forest followed by very dense forest. Top three states showing increase in forest cover are **Andhra Pradesh (647 sq km) followed by Telangana (632 sq km) and Odisha (537 sq km)**.
- Area-wise **Madhya Pradesh** has the largest forest cover in the country followed by Arunachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Odisha and Maharashtra. In terms of forest cover as percentage of total geographical area, the top five States are **Mizoram (84.53%), Arunachal Pradesh (79.33%), Meghalaya (76.00%), Manipur (74.34%) and Nagaland (73.90%)**.
- 17 states/UT's have above 33 percent of the geographical area under forest cover. Out of these states and UT's, five states/UTs namely Lakshadweep, Mizoram, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Arunachal Pradesh and Meghalaya have more than 75 percent forest cover while 12 states/UTs namely Manipur, Nagaland, Tripura, Goa, Kerala, Sikkim, Uttarakhand, Chhattisgarh, Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu, Assam, Odisha, have forest cover between 33 percent to 75 percent.

- Total mangrove cover in the country is 4,992 sq km. An increase of 17 sq Km in mangrove cover has been observed as compared to the previous assessment of 2019. Top three states showing mangrove cover increase are **Odisha (8 sq km) followed by Maharashtra (4 sq km) and Karnataka (3 sq km).**
- Total carbon stock in the country's forest is estimated to be 7,204 million tonnes and there is an increase of 79.4 million tonnes in the carbon stock of the country as compared to the last assessment of 2019. The annual increase in the carbon stock is 39.7 million tonnes.

**Source: PIB**

## **Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying launches Fisheries Startup Grand Challenge**

### **Why in News**

- The **Department of Fisheries**, Government of India in association with **Startup India**, Ministry of Commerce and Industry inaugurated the **"Fisheries Startup Grand Challenge"**.

### **Key Points**

- The challenge has been launched with an objective to provide a platform to start-ups within the country to showcase their innovative solutions within the Fisheries and Aquaculture sector.
- The challenge is expected to foster start-up culture within the sector and to establish a strong foundation of the entrepreneurial model, the Department of Fisheries has earmarked funds to the tune of Rs. 3.44 Crore for the challenge.

### **Note:**

- Fisheries sector has tremendous potential for growth and the Government of India is providing all necessary support to achieve the one lakh crore export target from the sector by 2024-25.
- India is the second major producer of fish through aquaculture in the world.
- India is the 4th largest exporter of fish in the world as it contributes 7.7% to the global fish production.

### **Government's Effort to Improve Fisheries:**

- Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana

- Seaweed Park
- Palk Bay Scheme
- Marine Fisheries Bill
- Fisheries and Aquaculture Infrastructure Development Fund
- Marine Products Export Development Authority

**Source: PIB**

## India and UK launch Free Trade Agreement Negotiations

### Why in News

- **India and the United Kingdom** have formally launched negotiations for a **Free Trade Agreement (FTA)**.
- This announcement has been made by Indian Minister for Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal and UK Trade Secretary, Anne-Marie Trevelyan.

### Key Points

- The India-UK bilateral trading relationship is already significant, and both sides have agreed to double that bilateral trade by 2030, as part of Roadmap 2030 announced by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Prime Minister Boris Johnson in May 2021.
- India and the UK will seek to agree a mutually beneficial agreement supporting jobs, businesses and communities in both countries.
- In parallel to trade negotiations, the India-UK Joint Economic and Trade Committee will continue to work in improving the India-UK trading relationship and addressing market access barriers outside of a trade agreement.

**Source: PIB**

## Purposive Testing Strategy for COVID-19: ICMR

### Why in News

- Amid the rising cases of **COVID-19** and its highly contagious Omicron variant, the **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)** has issued fresh guidelines on **Purposive Testing Strategy**.

### Key Points

#### **Purposive Testing Strategy:**

- ICMR issued fresh guidelines on who needs to get tested for the infection, and who doesn't.

- Asymptomatic individuals and contacts of COVID patients do not need to be tested unless identified as “high-risk individuals” based on age or co-morbidities.
- People undertaking “inter-state domestic travel” need not get tested.

#### **Modes of testing**

- As per the new guidelines of ICMR, testing can be undertaken either through RT-PCR, True Nat, CBNAAT, CRISPR, RT-LAMP, Rapid Molecular Testing Systems or through Rapid Antigen Test (RAT).

**Source: Indian Express**

### **India’s passport rank improves to 83 from 90: Henley Passport Index 2022**

#### **Why in News**

- India’s passport power has improved this quarter compared to 2021.
- It now ranks at 83rd position in the Henley Passport Index 2022, climbing seven places from 90th rank last year (2021).
- The current rankings are for the first quarter of 2022.

#### **Key Points**

- India shares the position with Sao Tome and Principe in Central Africa, behind Rwanda and Uganda.
- India now has visa-free access to 60 destinations worldwide with Oman and Armenia being the latest additions. India has added 35 more destinations since 2006.

#### **Best Passports:**

- Japan and Singapore have been ranked 1st, with passport holders having access to 192 destinations visa-free.

#### **Worst Passports:**

- Afghanistan with access to just 26 countries, emerged as the worst performer.

#### **Henley Passport Index:**

Since 2005, Henley Passport Index ranks world’s passports according to the number of destinations their holders can access without prior visa and is based on data from International Air Transport Association (IATA).

**Source: The Hindu**

### **India – South Korea Bilateral Trade Talks**

#### **Why in News**

- Yeo Han-Koo, Minister for Trade of South Korea held discussions with Piyush Goyal, Minister of Commerce & Industry, Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution and Textiles in New Delhi.

#### **Key Points**

- Both the Ministers held wide ranging discussions covering the whole gamut of Bilateral Trade and Investment related aspects.

**CEPA negotiations:**

- The Ministers agreed to impart fresh momentum to the discussions on **Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)** up-gradation negotiations and also promote extensive **B2B (Business-to-Business)** interactions on trade and investment between the Industry leaders of the two countries.

**Bilateral Trade:**

- India and South Korea set a bilateral trade target of USD50 billion before 2030, which was agreed at the summit meeting in 2018.
- These regular negotiations shall be a forum to discuss the difficulties of the business community from both countries and emerging trade-related issues including supply chain resilience.
- India's total exports to South Korea in FY21 were about \$4.68 billion against imports of \$12.77 billion.

**Multilateral Platforms Shared by Both the Countries:**

- United Nations
- G20
- World Trade Organisation (WTO)
- ASEAN Plus
- East Asia Summit (EAS)

**Note:**

**India's Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA):**

- India has signed CEPAs with South Korea and Japan.
- In 2021, India and the United Arab Emirates formally launched negotiations on the India-UAE CEPA.

**Source: Indian Express**

## **Prime Minister Modi inaugurates MSME Technology Centre at Puducherry**

### **Why in News**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated a Technology Centre of the MSME Ministry, established at Puducherry, on the occasion of National youth day.
- He inaugurated 11 new medical colleges and a new campus of Central Institute of Classical Tamil (CICT) in Tamil Nadu.

### **Key Points**

- This World Class Technology Centre set up with an investment of about Rs. 122 crore is spread across 10 acres, will train 20,000 youth, support 2000

MSMEs and incubate 200 Start Ups, thereby propelling the local economy to great heights.

- The Technology Centres across the country developed under the flagship Technology Centre Systems Program are supporting existing and prospective MSMEs by developing production facilities, manpower, providing consultancy and developing competitive edge through adoption of best practices.

**Source: PIB**

## IndiaSkills 2021

### Why in News

- 270 winners of **IndiaSkills 2021 National Competition** felicitated with 61 gold, 77 silver, 53 bronze and 79 medallions of excellence.
- **Odisha** topped the chart with 51 winners, followed by Maharashtra, 30 and Kerala, 25 winners.

### Key Points

- The competition, organised by **National Skill Development Corporation** under the guidance of **Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (MSDE)**, Government of India, witnessed participation in 54 skills such as concrete construction work, beauty therapy, car painting, health and social care, visual merchandising, graphic design technology, wall & floor tiling, welding, among others.
- IndiaSkills Competition, which raises the profile and recognition of the youth, brought together over 500 participants from 26 states/ union territories this year.

**Note:** The winners of IndiaSkills 2021 Nationals will get a chance to represent the country at **WorldSkills International Competition** to be held in Shanghai, China in October 2022.

### Related Initiatives/Schemes:

- Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana
- Young, Upcoming and Versatile Authors' (YUVA) scheme
- National Career Service Project
- Skills Acquisition and Knowledge Awareness for Livelihood (SANKALP)
- Kaushalacharya Awards
- Scheme for Higher Education Youth in Apprenticeship and Skills (SHREYAS)
- Skill Certification
- Atmanirbhar Skilled Employee Employer Mapping (ASEEM)

**Source: PIB**

## UNESCO agrees to publish Hindi descriptions of India's world heritage sites on WHC website

### Why in News

- On the occasion of World Hindi Day, the **UNESCO's World Heritage Centre (WHC)** has agreed to publish Hindi descriptions of **India's UNESCO World Heritage Sites** on the WHC website.

### Key Points

- The **United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)** World Heritage Sites are the important places of cultural or natural heritage as described in the UNESCO World Heritage Convention, established in 1945.
- India accepted the convention on 14 November 1977, making its sites eligible for inclusion on the list.

### 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.

### World's UNESCO World Heritage Sites:

- As of July 2021, a total of 1,154 World Heritage Sites (897 cultural, 218 natural, and 39 mixed properties) exist across 167 countries.
- With 58 selected areas, Italy is the country with the most sites on the list.

**Source: HT**

## MoE, AICTE and DPIIT organises first-ever Startup India Innovation Week

### Why in News

- To commemorate 75<sup>th</sup> years of progressive India 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav', **Ministry of Education (MoE), AICTE and Ministry of Commerce & Industry (DPIIT)** are jointly organising first-ever **Startup**

**India Innovation Week (National Innovation Week)** from 10<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> Jan 2022.

- A 2 days long e- Symposium on 'Building Innovation Ecosystem in Educational Institutions' will be held on 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> January 2022 by the Ministry of Education.
- Startups are the key reason behind India's meteoric rise in **Global Innovation Index from 76 in 2014 to 46 in 2021.**

### Key Points

- This Innovation week will highlight various initiatives undertaken by these agencies to spread awareness to promote innovation and entrepreneurship in India.
- 75 innovative technologies selected from various programs such as National Innovation Contest, Smart India Hackathon, YUKTI2.0 and Toycathon conducted by the Ministry of Education will participate in e-exhibition and demonstrate their innovations.

### Note:

- In the startup world, 2021 has been recognised as the 'year of unicorns,' with 40+ unicorns added in the year.
- India is emerging as a global innovation hub, boasting the world's third-largest startup ecosystem.
- DPIIT has recognised more than 61,000 startups as on date.
- Startups representing 55 industries, spread across 633 districts with at least one startup from every State and UT of the country have created over 6 lakh jobs since 2016.
- 45% of the startups are from Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities and 45% of them are represented by women entrepreneurs.
- This year marked the completion of 6 years of Startup India scheme.

**About Startup India scheme:** It was launched on January 16, 2016 with the aim of promoting and supporting the start-ups in India by providing bank finances.

**Source: PIB**

## Government releases revised Universal Accessibility Guidelines

### Why in News

- The **Central Public Works Department (CPWD)** released the **Harmonised Guidelines and Standards for Universal Accessibility in India 2021.**

### Key Points

- From the design plan to the implementation, various aspects of the built environment have been covered under the new guidelines for universal accessibility recently drafted by the Centre.
- The guidelines are a revision of the Harmonised Guidelines and Space Standards for Barrier-Free Built Environment for Persons with Disabilities and Elderly Persons released by the CPWD, under the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) in February 2016.
- Drafted by a team of the Indian Institute of Technology-Roorkee and the National Institute of Urban Affairs of the MoHUA, the revised guidelines aim to give a holistic approach.
- The guidelines say ramps are extremely crucial for providing an accessible mobility option, but it is equally important to understand that ramps have to adhere to given guidelines.
- The guidelines provide the gradient and length of ramps — for example, for a length of six metres, the gradient should be 1:12.
- The minimum clear width of a ramp should be 1,200 mm, the guidelines say.
- The guidelines are not just for persons with disabilities (PwD), but for those involved in planning projects, from the construction of government buildings to master-planning cities.
- While making public buildings and transport fully accessible for wheelchair users is covered in the guidelines, other users who may experience temporary problems have also been considered.

**Source: The Hindu**

### **SC to set up high-level committee to inquire into security lapses during PM Modi's visit to Punjab**

#### **Why in News**

- The **Supreme Court** will constitute a high-level committee headed by retired Supreme Court judge to investigate lapses in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's security in Punjab.

#### **Key Points**

- A three-judge bench comprising Chief Justice NV Ramana and Justices Surya Kant and Hima Kohli was hearing the plea filed by an organisation, Lawyers Voice.
- The committee will also include DGP Chandigarh, Inspector General of National Investigation Agency (NIA), Registrar General of Punjab and Haryana High Court and Additional DGP Punjab.

**Note:**

- Recently, the Union Home Ministry has constituted a committee to enquire into the serious lapses in the security arrangements during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Punjab.
- The three-member committee will be led by Sudhir Kumar Saxena, Secretary (Security), Cabinet Secretariat and will comprise Balbir Singh, Joint Director, IB and S. Suresh, IG, SPG.

**Source: Indian Express**

### **PM Modi announces 26th December as 'Veer Baal Diwas'**

#### **Why in News**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the auspicious occasion of the Parkash Purab of Sri Guru Gobind Singh has announced that starting this year, **26th December** shall be observed as '**Veer Baal Diwas**'.

#### **Key Points**

- The Government of India has decided to commemorate 26<sup>th</sup> December as "Veer Baal Diwas" in the honour of the supreme sacrifice made by Sahibzada Zorawar Singh and Sahibzada Fateh Singh, the younger sons of the 10<sup>th</sup> Sikh Guru Govind Singh, for their supreme and unparalleled sacrifice on 26<sup>th</sup> December, 1705 at the tender age of 9 and 6 years respectively to defend the dignity and honour of Sikhism.

**Note: Children's Day** in India is observed on November 14, former Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's birthday.

**Source: PIB**

### **3rd National Water Awards**

#### **Why in News**

- Union Minister of Jal Shakti Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat announced **3<sup>rd</sup> National Water Awards-2020**.
- In the Best State category, **Uttar Pradesh** has been awarded first prize, followed by Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu.

#### **Key Points**

- To encourage and recognize individuals and organizations doing exemplary work in the field of water resources management, the Department of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation, Ministry of Jal Shakti is giving 57 awards to States, Organizations, Individuals etc. in 11 different categories - Best State, Best District, Best Village Panchayat, Best Urban Local Body, Best Media (Print & Electronic), Best School, Best Institution/RWA/Religious organization

- for Campus usage, Best Industry, Best NGO, Best Water User Association, and Best Industry for CSR Activity.
- National Water Awards were instituted in attaining the government's vision of a '*Jal Samridh Bharat*'.
  - The first National Water Award was launched in 2018.

**Note:**

- India's current water requirement is estimated to be around 1,100 billion cubic meters per year, projected to go up to 1,447 billion cubic meters by 2050.
- While India has more than 18% of the world's population, it has only 4% of the world's renewable water resources.

**Related Initiatives**

- Jal Kranti Abhiyan
- Catch the Rain: National Water Mission
- NITI Aayog's Composite Water Management Index
- Jal Jeevan Mission
- Jal Shakti Abhiyan
- Atal Bhujal Yojana

**Source: PIB**

**EC announces schedule for assembly elections in Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Goa, Punjab and Manipur**

**Why in News**

- The **Election Commission** announced the schedule for assembly elections in **Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Goa, Punjab and Manipur**.

**Key Points**

- Uttar Pradesh will go to polls in seven phases from 10th February to 7th March.
- Voting for Punjab, Uttarakhand and Goa will be held on 14th of February in a single phase. Manipur will vote on 27th February and 3rd March in two phases.
- Counting of votes will be held on 10th of March.
- The term of Goa Legislative Assembly is ending on 15th March this year, Manipur Assembly on 19th March, Uttarakhand and Punjab Legislative Assembly on 23rd March and Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly on 14th May this year.

**About ECI (Election Commission of India):**

- It is a permanent and independent body established by the Constitution of India directly to ensure free and fair elections in the country.
- **Formed:** 25 January 1950 (Later celebrated as National Voters Day)
- **Headquarters:** New Delhi
- **Commission executives:**  
**Sushil Chandra**, Chief Election Commissioner  
**Rajeev Kumar**, Election Commissioner  
**Anup Chandra Pandey**, Election Commissioner

**Note:**

- Recently, the expenditure limit for candidates for Lok Sabha constituencies was increased from Rs 54 lakh-Rs 70 lakh (depending on states) to Rs 70 lakh-Rs 95 lakh, by the Election Commission of India (ECI).
- Further, the spending limit for Assembly constituencies was hiked from Rs 20 lakh-Rs 28 lakh to Rs 28 lakh- Rs 40 lakh (depending on states).
- In 2020, the ECI had formed a committee in 2020 to study the election spending limit.

**Source: newsonair**

### **Union Tourism Minister inaugurates PRASHAD projects at Govardhan, Mathura, Uttar Pradesh**

#### **Why in News**

- Union Minister of Tourism G. Kishan Reddy inaugurated various components developed Govardhan Bus Stand under the project “Development of Govardhan, Mathura” under the **PRASHAD Scheme** of the Ministry of Tourism.
- Moreover, Rs. 500 crores has been allocated for the state of Uttar Pradesh alone through the **Swadesh Darshan Scheme** towards strengthening Tourism infrastructure through various spiritual circuits such as the Ramayana and Buddha circuits.

#### **Key Points**

- The project for “Development of Govardhan, Mathura” under the PRASHAD scheme was approved by the Ministry of Tourism with the cost of INR 39.73 Cr. in January 2019.

#### **About PRASHAD Scheme:**

- The ‘**National Mission on Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual Heritage Augmentation Drive**’ (**PRASHAD**) is a Central Sector Scheme with complete financial assistance by the Government of India.
- The scheme was launched by the Ministry of Tourism in the year 2014-15 with the vision of focused infrastructure development to harness

pilgrimage and heritage tourism destinations for its direct and multiplier effect upon employment generation and economic development.

#### **About Swadesh Darshan Scheme:**

- It is a scheme of the Ministry of Tourism under Government of India.
- It was launched in 2015.
- This is a central sector scheme; i.e. - 100% funded by the Central Government of India.
- The funding available for Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives of Central Public Sector Undertakings and Corporate Sector is also used in this scheme.
- Under the scheme fifteen thematic circuits have been identified for development namely; North-East Circuit, Buddhist Circuit, Himalayan Circuit, Coastal Circuit, Krishna Circuit, Desert Circuit, Tribal Circuit, Eco Circuit, Wildlife Circuit, Rural Circuit, Spiritual Circuit, Ramayana Circuit, Heritage Circuit, Sufi Circuit, and Tirthankara Circuit.

#### **Other Government Schemes Related to Tourism**

- DekhoApnaDesh
- Adopt A Heritage Project
- Development of Iconic Tourist Sites

Source: PIB

### **Construction of bridge over Mahakali River at Dharchula (India) - Dharchula (Nepal)**

#### **Why in News**

- The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has approved the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and Nepal for construction of a bridge over **Mahakali River at Dharchula (India) - Dharchula (Nepal)**.

#### **Key Points**

- The bridge will help the people living in Uttarakhand (Dharchula) and in the area under Nepal territory.
- Both India and Nepal have been working together on different regional forums i.e. SAARC, BIMSTEC as well as global fora.

#### **Mahakali River:**

- It is also known as Sharda River or Kali Ganga in Uttarakhand.
- It joins the Ghagra River in Uttar Pradesh, which is a tributary of Ganga.
- **River Projects:** Tanakpur hydro-electric project, Chameliya hydro-electric project, Sharda Barrage.

Source: Indian Express

## Drone use in Agriculture – Financial support under ‘Sub-Mission on Agriculture Mechanization’

### Why in News

- The Union Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare has issued guidelines to make drone technology affordable to the stakeholders of agriculture sector.
- The guidelines of “**Sub-Mission on Agricultural Mechanization**” (SMAM) have been amended which envisages granting upto 100% of the cost of agriculture drone or Rs. 10 lakhs, whichever is less, as grant for purchase of drones by the Farm Machinery Training & Testing Institutes, ICAR institutes, Krishi Vigyan Kendras and State Agriculture Universities.

### Key Points

- The **Farmers Producers Organizations (FPOs)** would be eligible to receive grants up to 75% of the cost of agriculture drone for its demonstrations on the farmers’ fields.
- A contingency expenditure of Rs.6000 per hectare would be provided to implementing agencies that do not want to purchase drones but will hire drones for demonstrations from Custom Hiring Centres, Hi-tech Hubs, Drone Manufacturers and Start-Ups.
- The financial assistance and grants would be available until March 31, 2023.
- The drone operations are being permitted by the Ministry of Civil Aviation and Director General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) through the conditional exemption route. The Ministry of Civil Aviation has published ‘**Drone Rules 2021**’ vide GSR No. 589(E) dated 25th August 2021 to regulate the use and operation of Drones in India.

### Other Related Initiatives:

- National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture
- Sub-Mission on Agroforestry Scheme
- National Food Security Mission
- Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana
- Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture
- Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sichayee Yojana
- Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana
- Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana

## Source: PIB

### India emerges as largest exporters of cucumber and gherkins in the world

#### Why in News

- India has emerged as the largest exporter of **cucumber and gherkins** in the world.
- India has exported cucumber and gherkins to the tune of 1,23,846 Metric Tonnes with a value of USD 114 million during April-October (2020-21).

#### Key Points

- In 2020-21, India had shipped 2,23,515 Metric Tonnes of cucumber and gherkins with a value of USD 223 million.
- Following directions of the Department of Commerce, Ministry of Commerce & Industry, the **Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA)** undertook a series of initiatives in infrastructure development, product promotion in the global market and adherence to food safety management system in processing units.
- **Gherkins** are exported under two categories -- cucumbers and gherkins, which are prepared and preserved by vinegar or acetic acid and cucumbers and gherkins, which are provisionally preserved.
- Gherkin cultivation, processing and exports started in India during the early 1990s with a modest beginning in Karnataka and later extended to the neighbouring states of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.

**Note:** Nearly 15% production of the world's gherkin requirement is grown in India.

**Source: PIB**

### Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar- 2022

#### Why in News

- 29 Children have been conferred the **Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar (PMRBP) 2022**, selected from all regions of the country for their exceptional achievements in Innovation (7), Social Service (4), Scholastic (1), Sports (8), Art & Culture (6) and Bravery (3) categories.

- There are 15 Boys and 14 Girls among the awardees belonging to 21 States and UTs.

### **Key Points**

- During the function, **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** gave digital certificates to the 61 winners of PMRBP 2021 and 2022 using a **Block Chain**-driven technology developed by IIT Kanpur under the **National Blockchain Project**.

### **About Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar:**

- The Government of India presents PMRBP awards to children for their exceptional achievement in six categories namely Innovation, Social Service, Scholastic achievements, Sports, Art & Culture and Bravery.
- Each awardee is given a medal, a cash prize of Rs. 1,00,000/- and a certificate.

**Source: PIB**

**DBT-BIRAC supported start-ups InnAccel and NIRAMAI have received World Bank Group and the Consumer Technology Association's Global Women's Health Tech Awards**

### **Why in News**

- **NIRAMAI Health Analytix Pvt. Ltd. and InnAccel Technologies Pvt. Ltd.**, two start-ups supported by **DBT-BIRAC**, have received the **World Bank Group and the Consumer Technology Association's Global Women's Health Tech Awards**.

### **Key Points**

- The award recognises innovative startups that leverage tech to improve women's health and safety in emerging markets.

### **About Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC):**

- BIRAC is a not-for-profit Section 8, Schedule B, Public Sector Enterprise, set up by the Department of Biotechnology (DBT), Government of India as an Interface Agency to strengthen and empower the emerging Biotech enterprise to undertake strategic research and innovation, addressing nationally relevant product development needs.

**Source: PIB**

**Actress Harshaali Malhotra receives Bharat Ratna Dr Ambedkar Award 2022**

### **Why in News**

- 'Bajrangi Bhaijaan' actress **Harshaali Malhotra** received the prestigious 12<sup>th</sup> Bharat Ratna Dr Ambedkar Award 2022.

#### **Key Points**

- Harshaali Malhotra received the award from Bhagat Singh Koshyari, Governor of Maharashtra, for her performance in the film and for her contribution to the field of cinema.
- Harshaali featured in Bajrangi Bhaijaan, released in 2015, directed by Kabir Khan.

**Source: HT**

#### **79<sup>th</sup> Golden Globe Awards (2022)**

- The 79<sup>th</sup> Golden Globe Awards (2022) honored the best in film and American television of 2021, as chosen by the Hollywood Foreign Press Association (HFPA).
- The nominations were announced on December 13, 2021 by rapper Snoop Dogg and HFPA president Helen Hoehne.
- Two of the films namely **The Power of the Dog** and **the West Side Story**, won the most number of awards with 3 each.

**List of winners in key categories:**

#### **MOVIES:**

- **BEST DRAMA: "The Power of the Dog"**
- **BEST COMEDY OR MUSICAL: "West Side Story"**
- **BEST ACTOR, DRAMA: Will Smith "King Richard"**
- **BEST ACTRESS, DRAMA: Nicole Kidman, "Being the Ricardos"**
- **BEST ACTOR, COMEDY OR MUSICAL: Andrew Garfield, "Tick, Tick... Boom!"**
- **BEST ACTRESS, COMEDY OR MUSICAL: Rachel Zegler, "West Side Story"**
- **BEST DIRECTOR: Jane Campion, "The Power of the Dog"**
- **BEST ANIMATED FILM: "Encanto"**
- **BEST NON-ENGLISH LANGUAGE FILM: "Drive My Car"**

#### **TELEVISION:**

- **BEST TV DRAMA SERIES: "Succession"**
- **BEST TV COMEDY/MUSICAL SERIES: "Hacks"**
- **BEST ACTOR, TV DRAMA: Jeremy Strong, "Succession"**
- **BEST ACTRESS, TV DRAMA: Mj Rodriguez, "Pose"**
- **BEST ACTOR, TV COMEDY/MUSICAL: Jason Sudeikis, "Ted Lasso"**
- **BEST ACTRESS, TV COMEDY/MUSICAL: Jean Smart, "Hacks"**
- **BEST TV MOVIE OR LIMITED SERIES: "The Underground Railroad"**

**Source: goldenglobes.com**

## Amar Jawan Jyoti merged with National War Memorial flame

### Why in News

- The flame of the **Amar Jawan Jyoti** at the India Gate in Delhi was merged with the eternal flame at the National War Memorial.

### Key Points

#### About Amar Jawan Jyoti:

- The flame at Amar Jawan Jyoti in the India Gate memorial paid tributes to the martyrs of 1971 and other wars, however, none of the names who made that supreme sacrifice for the country were present there.
- The India Gate memorial, on the other hand, was built by the British government in memory of the British Indian Army soldiers who lost their lives between 1914-1921.
- The Amar Jawan Jyoti there was only included in the 1970s after the massive victory of India over Pakistan in which 93,000 troops of the enemy country surrendered.

#### About National War Memorial:

- The National War Memorial, which was built in the India Gate complex by the Narendra Modi government and was inaugurated in 2019, has the names of all the Indian defence personnel who have lost their lives in different operations from the 1947-48 war with Pakistan to the Galwan valley clash with Chinese troops.
- The names of troops who lost lives in the counter-terrorist operations are also included on the walls of the memorial.

#### Source: HT

## Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar 2022

### Why in News

- For the year 2022, (i) Gujarat Institute of Disaster Management (in the Institutional category) and (ii) Professor Vinod Sharma (in the Individual category) have been selected for the **Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar** for their excellent work in Disaster Management.

### Key Points

- They have been conferred with the Award, alongwith the awardees of the year 2019, 2020 and 2021, by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
- **Gujarat Institute of Disaster Management (GIDM)**, established in 2012, has been working to enhance the disaster risk reduction (DRR) capacity of Gujarat.
- **Professor Vinod Sharma**, a senior professor at the Indian Institute of Public Administration and Vice-Chairman of the Sikkim State Disaster Management Authority, was the founder co-ordinator of the National Centre of Disaster Management, now known as the National Institute of Disaster Management. He has worked tirelessly towards bringing disaster risk reduction (DRR) to the forefront of the national agenda.

#### **About Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar:**

- To recognize and honour the invaluable contribution and selfless service rendered by individuals and organizations in India in the field of disaster management, Government of India has instituted an annual award known as Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar.
- The award is announced every year on 23rd January, the birth anniversary of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose.
- The award carries a cash prize of Rs. 51 lakh and a certificate in case of an institution and Rs. 5 lakh and a certificate in case of an individual.

#### **PM Modi delivers the keynote address at the national launch ceremony of 'Azadi Ke Amrit Mahotsav se Swarnim Bharat Ke Ore'**

##### **Why in News**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi delivered the keynote address at the national launch ceremony of '**Azadi Ke Amrit Mahotsav se Swarnim Bharat Ke Ore**'.
- He also flagged off seven initiatives of Brahma Kumaris.

##### **Key Points**

- The Prime Minister urged everyone to keep our culture, our civilization, our values alive and to preserve and promote our spirituality and our diversity.
- He flagged off seven initiatives of Brahma Kumaris. These include My India Healthy India, Aatmanirbhar Bharat-Self Reliant Farmers, Women-Flag Bearers of India, Power of Peace Bus Campaign, Andekha Bharat Cycle

Rally, United India Motor Bike Campaign, and green initiatives under Swachh Bharat Abhiyan.

**About Brahma Kumaris:** It is a worldwide spiritual movement dedicated to personal transformation and world renewal. Founded in India in 1937, Brahma Kumaris has spread to over 130 countries.

**About Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav:**

- The nation is celebrating Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav as the country is going to complete 75th year of Independence this year.
- The Prime Minister launched the Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav on 12th March last year from Sabarmati Ashram, Ahmedabad, Gujarat.
- Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav was launched 75 weeks before 15 August 2022 and will continue till 15 August 2023.

**Source: PIB**

## Devas-Antrix deal

### Why in News

- Recently, the **Supreme Court upheld a May 25, 2021 order** of the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) to liquidate Devas on the ground that the firm was created under fraudulent circumstances.

### Key Points

- The investors have won separate compensation awards in international tribunals, including \$1.2 billion awarded by an International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) tribunal on September 14, 2015.
- The Supreme Court has kept the \$1.2 billion award in abeyance.
- A 2005 satellite deal between Antrix Corporation — the commercial arm of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) – and Devas Multimedia Pvt Ltd, a start-up headquartered in Bengaluru, is at the heart of a global legal tussle between the Indian government and foreign investors in Devas.
- The tussle is a fallout of the cancellation of the deal in 2011 by the then UPA government citing requirement of satellite spectrum allotted to Devas for security purposes.

### Devas-Antrix deal:

- Under the deal, ISRO would lease to Devas two communication satellites (GSAT-6 and 6A) for 12 years for Rs 167 crore. Devas would provide multimedia services to mobile platforms in India using S-band transponders on the satellites.

**Source: Indian Express**

## **Cabinet approves extension of tenure of the National Commission for Safai Karamcharis for three years**

### **Why in News**

- The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has approved the extension of the tenure of the **National Commission for Safai Karamcharis (NCSK)** for three years beyond 31.3.2022.

### **Key Points**

- The total implication of the extension for three years would be approximately Rs.43.68 crore.
- The major beneficiaries would be the Safai Karamcharis and identified manual scavengers in the country since the NCSK for 3 more years beyond 31.3.2022.
- The **NCSK** was established in the year 1993 as per the provisions of the **NCSK Act 1993** initially for the period upto 31.3.1997.

### **Background:**

- The NCSK has been giving its recommendations to the Government regarding specific programmes for welfare of Safai Karamcharis, study and evaluate the existing welfare programmes for Safai Karamcharis, investigate cases of specific grievances etc.
- Also as per the provisions of the **Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013**, the NCSK has been assigned the work to monitor the implementation of the Act, tender advice for its effective implementation to the Centre and State Governments and enquire into complaints regarding contravention/non-implementation of the provisions of the Act.

**Source: PIB**

## **MoHUA announces winners of Streets for People and Nurturing Neighbourhoods Challenge**

### **Why in News**

- The **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA)** organised an online event wherein it announced eleven winning cities for the **Streets for People Challenge**, and ten winning cities for the pilot stage of the **Nurturing Neighbourhoods Challenge**.

- At the event, the Ministry also launched Season-2 of India Cycles4Change and Streets for People Challenges and a book titled 'Nurturing Neighbourhoods Challenge: Stories from the Field'.

### **Key Points**

- These cities will now enter the scale up stage of the challenge wherein the projects undertaken in the pilot stage will now be scaled up in a sustainable manner.

### **Announcement of winning cities under Streets4People Challenge Pilot**

#### **Phase:**

- Since 2020, the Smart Cities Mission (SCM) has been anchoring inter-city challenges to make public spaces more people-friendly.
- This is in line with the 2006 National Urban Transport Policy, which called for a paradigm shift from car-centric roads to people-centric streets.
- 11 cities have been selected by a jury panel for the next phase of scale up and will be awarded Rs. fifty lakhs each by MoHUA.
- The challenge was conducted with technical support from the Institute for Transportation and Development Policy (ITDP India).

### **Announcement of winning cities under Nurturing Neighbourhoods**

#### **Challenge**

- MoHUA announced ten winning cities for the **Nurturing Neighbourhoods Challenge**, in collaboration with the Bernard van Leer Foundation (BvLF) and technical partner World Resources Institute (WRI) India.

**Source: PIB**

## **Cabinet approves infusion of Rs. 1,500 crore in Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Limited**

### **Why in News**

- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by the Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, approved the equity infusion of Rs.1500 crore in **Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Limited (IREDA)**.

### **Key Points**

- This equity infusion will help in employment generation of approximately 10200 jobs-year and CO2 equivalent emission reduction of approximately 7.49 Million Tonnes CO2/year.

### **About Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Limited (IREDA):**

- IREDA, a mini ratna (Category-1) company under the administrative control of MNRE was set up in 1987 to work as a specialised non-banking finance agency for the Renewable Energy (RE) sector.

**Note:** At COP26 in Glasgow last November, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced India's aim to achieve net-zero emissions by 2070 and also

committed to achieving 500 GW of installed electricity capacity from non-fossil fuel sources by 2030.

**Source: PIB**

## **National Technical Textiles Mission (NTTM)**

### **Why in News**

- The **Ministry of Textiles** cleared 20 strategic research projects worth INR 30 crores in the areas of Specialty fibres and Geotextiles.
- These strategic research projects fall under the Flagship Programme '**National Technical Textiles Mission (NTTM).**'

### **Key Points**

- Amongst the 20 Research projects, 16 projects of Specialty fibres were cleared including 5 projects in Healthcare, 4 projects in Industrial and Protective, 3 projects in Energy Storage, 3 projects in Textile waste recycling, & 1 in Agriculture and 4 projects in Geotextiles (Infrastructure) were cleared.
- Previously, 11 research projects worth INR 78.60 Crores were cleared by the Ministry of Textiles on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2021.

### **About Technical textiles:**

- Technical textiles are functional fabrics that have applications across various industries including automobiles, civil engineering and construction, agriculture, healthcare, industrial safety, personal protection etc.

### **About National Technical Textiles Mission (NTTM):**

- NTTM was approved in 2020 by the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) with the aim to position the country as a global leader in technical textiles and increase the use of technical textiles in the domestic market.
- The Government has approved the proposal for creation of National Technical Textiles Mission for a period of 4 years (2020-21 to 2023-24) with an outlay of Rs.1480 crores.

### **Initiatives Related to Technical Textile:**

- Harmonized System of Nomenclature (HSN) Codes for Technical Textile
- Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme for Textiles Sector
- 100% FDI under Automatic Route
- Amended Technology Upgradation Fund Scheme
- Technotex India

**Source: PIB**

## **Valedictory function of Kala Utsav 2021**

### Why in News

- Minister of State for Education, Smt. Annpurna Devi and Minister of State for Education Dr. Rajkumar Ranjan Singh addressed the valedictory function of **Kala Utsav 2021**.

### Key Points

- **Kala Utsav 2021** was launched online on January 1, 2022 through a digital platform.
- A total of 35 teams have participated in Kala Utsav 2021, from different states, union territories, Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan and Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti schools where 582 students demonstrated their talent.
- Out of these participants, 291 girls and 291 boys participated in Kala Utsav 2021 including 5 Divyang participants.

### About Kala Utsav:

- The National **Kala Utsav** was launched by the National Council of Educational Research and Training and the Department of School Education and Literacy, Ministry of Education, in 2015.

**Source: PIB**

## MeitY organises 26th CISO Deep Dive Training program under Cyber Surakshit Bharat initiative

### Why in News

- The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) is organizing **26th CISO (Chief Information Security Officers) Deep Dive Training program** under **Cyber Surakshit Bharat initiative**.

### Key Points

- The training program is a part of a series of workshops organised by the National e-Governance Division at MeitY under the Cyber Surakshit Bharat initiative.
- The program is being conducted from January 17 - 22, 2022 and will cover topics such as Governance Risk & Compliance and Data Privacy, Network Security, End Point Security, Application & Data Security, Cloud Security, Mobile Security, Cryptography, Cyber Security related provisions in IT Act, Security audit, guidelines for preparing CCMP and operation and monitoring of Security Operation Centre (SoC) etc.
- It will help the CISOs and other participants to equip themselves with better understanding of the emerging cyber threat landscape, understand best practices in cyber security.

**About Cyber Surakshit Programme:**

- To empower the CISOs with the emerging challenges of cyber security and train them to meet the challenges, MeitY had initiated the Cyber Surakshit Programme in January 2018 with active support of industry consortium.
- The objective of the programme is to train 1200 CISOs and frontline IT officials from Central and State Government, PSUs, Banks and government organizations.

**Source: PIB**

## Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs launches 'Open Data Week'

### Why in News

- The **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA)** announced the initiation of the '**Open Data Week**' to encourage adoption of open data and promote innovation across India's urban ecosystem.

### Key Points

- Leading up to the 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav - Smart Cities: Smart Urbanization' conference scheduled to be held in Surat, during February 2022, the Open Data Week is part of a series of pre-event initiatives being undertaken by MoHUA to promote awareness and use of open data.
- It will be conducted during the third week of January, i.e., from 17<sup>th</sup> January 2022 to 21<sup>st</sup> January 2022.
- The Event will see participation from all **100 Smart Cities** that will be publishing high quality datasets and data blogs on the Smart Cities Open Data Portal.
- The Event aims to show the benefits of open data such as increased efficiency, transparency, a spur in innovation, and economic growth.

**Source: PIB**

## Oxfam India's "Inequality Kills" Report

### Why in News

- According to **Oxfam India's "Inequality Kills" Report**, the income of 84 percent of households in the country declined in 2021, but at the same time the number of Indian billionaires grew from 102 to 142.

### Key Points

- In 2021, the collective wealth of India's 100 richest people hit a record high of Rs 57.3 lakh crore (USD 775 billion).

- In the same year, the share of the bottom 50 percent of the population in national wealth was a mere 6 per cent.
- During the pandemic (since March 2020, through to November 30, 2021), the report says, the wealth of Indian billionaires increased from Rs 23.14 lakh crore (USD 313 billion) to Rs 53.16 lakh crore (USD 719 billion).
- India has the third highest number of billionaires in the world, just behind China and the United States, with more billionaires than France, Sweden and Switzerland combined — a 39 percent increase in the number of billionaires in India in 2021.
- The Oxfam India briefing also points out to the increase in indirect taxes as a share of the Union government revenue in the last four years, while the proportion of corporate tax in the same was declining.

**Source: Indian Express**

### **Minimum 6 airbags to be made mandatory in vehicles carrying up to 8 passengers: MoRTH**

#### **Why in News**

- The **Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH)** has approved a draft notification, making it compulsory for the car manufacturers to equip a minimum of six airbags in motor vehicles that can carry up to 8 passengers.

#### **Key Points**

- To enhance the safety of occupants of the motor vehicle, it has been decided to enhance safety features by amending the **Central Motor Vehicles Rules (CMVR), 1989**.
- The General Statutory Rules (GSR) have been mandated to the motor vehicles of category M1 (motor vehicles used for the carriage of passengers, comprising not more than eight seats, in addition to the driver's seat), with the effective timeline of cars manufactured after 1st October 2022.
- Recently, dual airbags (driver and passenger) became mandatory on all motor vehicles (M1 category) from 1st January 2022. Earlier, a driver airbag was mandated for all passenger vehicles since July 1, 2019.
- An airbag is a vehicle occupant-restraint system that creates a safety layer (a bag of air) between the driver and the vehicle's dashboard during a collision, averting fatal injuries.

**Road accidents in India:** According to Union transport minister Nitin Gadkari, 23,483 pedestrians lost their lives in road crashes in 2020. As per NCRB data, 17,538 car occupants died in road crashes in 2020.

**Source: newsonair**

## India marks 1st anniversary of nationwide vaccination drive against COVID-19

### Why in News

- India marks the first anniversary of the nationwide vaccination drive against COVID-19 on January 16, 2022.
- Health Minister Dr Mansukh Mandaviya released a commemorative **postal stamp** on India's achievement in developing indigenous COVID19 vaccine.
- The postal stamp was released to mark one year of vaccination drive in the country.

### Key Points

- India's COVID-19 vaccination drive was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 16 January, 2021.
- This is the world's largest vaccination program.
- 93 percent of people above 18 years are vaccinated with 1st dose and 70 percent of the population is fully vaccinated till date.

**Source: newsonair**

## National Startup Awards 2021

### Why in News

- Union Minister of Commerce & Industry, Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution and Textiles, Piyush Goyal presented the **National Startup Awards 2021**.
- A total of 46 Startups have been recognized as winners of **National Startup Awards 2021** along with 1 incubator and 1 accelerator.

### Key Points

- The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) conceived the National Startup Awards to recognize and reward outstanding Startups and ecosystem enablers that are building innovative products or solutions and scalable enterprises, with high potential of employment generation or wealth creation, demonstrating measurable social impact.
- Shri Goyal called upon the Startups to focus mainly on five areas to make India the No. 1 Startup ecosystem in the world:
  1. Develop solutions & content in Indic languages
  2. Encourage products & solutions that have a larger social & economic impact
  3. Promoting Startups in every district across the country, - Establish 'Startup Access centers' in every district
  4. Creating Innovation zones at the level of Urban Local Bodies

5. Adopt best practices from across the globe & enhance India's global competitiveness

**Note:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced that **January 16** will be celebrated as **National Startup Day**, to take the Startup culture to the far flung areas of the country.

**Growth in Startup:**

- In 2013, only 4000 patents were approved. However, in 2020-21, more than 28,000 patents have been registered. In 2013-14, 70,000 trademarks were registered. However, in 2020-21 more than 2.5 lakh trademarks were registered.
- India reached 46th spot in Global Innovation Index from 81st rank.

**Source: PIB**

**India grants financial assistance of over USD 900 million to Sri Lanka to overcome forex crisis**

**Why in News**

- **India** has announced a USD 900 million loan to **Sri Lanka** to build up its depleted foreign reserves and for food imports.

**Key Points**

- Sri Lanka is currently experiencing a shortage of almost all essentials due to a shortage of dollars to pay for the imports.
- These comprise deferment of Asian Clearing Union settlement of over \$509 million and currency swap of \$400 million.

**Note:**

- In September 2021, The **President of Sri Lanka Gotabaya Rajapaksa** had declared an economic emergency due to rapidly **depleting forex reserves, depreciating currency, and rising food prices** in the country.
- Recently, the **Chinese Foreign Minister (CFM)** visited Sri Lanka.
- The CFM visit envisaged launching celebrations marking the 70th anniversary of the historic Rubber-Rice Pact 1952 and the 65th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Sri Lanka.

**Facts about Sri Lanka:**

- **Capitals:** Colombo, Sri Jayawardenepura Kotte
- **Currency:** Sri Lankan rupee
- **President:** Gotabaya Rajapaksa
- **Prime Minister:** Mahinda Rajapaksa

**Source: ET**

**Important News: State**

## Kochi becomes India's first city with Water Metro Project

### Why in News

- **Kochi (Kerala)** has become India's first city with a **Water Metro Project** as it launches the first in a series of battery-powered electric boats in the city.

### Key Points

- The new project by the Kochi Metro Rail Ltd will likely have an integrated water transport system with 15 identified routes.
- It will connect 10 islands along a network of routes that span 76 km with a fleet of 78 fast, electrically propelled hybrid ferries plying to 38 jetties.
- The project intended to introduce modern, energy-efficient, environment-friendly and safe boats with low wake and draft characteristics at a high frequency to increase ridership.
- Constructed at Cochin Shipyard Ltd, the fully air-conditioned boats with wide windows offer comfortable travel which would be an exciting experience to passengers and tourists.

**Source: India Today**

## Uttar Pradesh Govt declares 4 Villages near Nepal Border as Revenue Villages

### Why in News

- The **Uttar Pradesh government** declared four villages located near the Nepal border in the Bahraich district as revenue villages.

### Key Points

- These four villages are Bhavanipur, Tedhia, Dhakia and Bichhia located in Mihinpurwa tehsil of the Bahraich district.
- All these villages are Vantangiya villages.
- The Vantangiya' community comprises people brought from Myanmar during the colonial rule to plant trees.
- The people of these villages will now get the benefits of all the schemes of the government.

### Revenue village:

- A revenue village is a small administrative region with defined borders. One revenue village may contain many hamlets.
- A village administrative officer is the head officer of a revenue village.

**Note:** Total of seven districts in UP share border with Nepal. These districts are- Pilibhit, Lakhimpur Kheri, Bahraich, Balrampur, Shravasti, Maharajganj and Siddharthanagar.

**Source: Business Standard**

### **Kevadia railway station renamed as Ekta Nagar railway station**

#### **Why in News**

- The Ministry of Railways has approved the renaming of the **Kevadiya railway station** as **Ekta Nagar railway station**.

#### **Key Points**

- The Statue of Unity's Kevadiya railway station falls under the Vadodara division.
- Facing the Narmada River, it is 7 kilometers away from the small town of Kevadiya.
- The construction of the station aims to make the **Statue of Unity** more accessible to tourists.

**Note:** The President of India, Ram Nath Kovind had laid the foundation stone on 15 December 2018. It is also India's first railway station with a Green Building Certificate.

**Source: Financial Express**

### **India's first graphene innovation centre to come up in Kerala**

#### **Why in News**

- India's first innovation centre for graphene will be set up in Kerala by the Digital University Kerala (DUK), along with Centre for Materials for Electronics Technology (C-MET) in Thrissur, for Rs 86.41 crore.

#### **Key Points**

- Tata Steel Limited is set to be the industrial partner of the centre.
- **Graphene** is an allotrope of carbon consisting of a single layer of atoms arranged in a two-dimensional honeycomb lattice nanostructure.
- Graphene is known for its extraordinary electrical and electronic properties, and as per latest research, it could replace indium and thereby bring down the cost of OLED (organic light-emitting diode) screens in smartphones.

**Source: The Hindu**

## Andhra Pradesh government forms 13 new districts

### Why in News

- The Andhra Pradesh government formed 13 new districts in the state.

### Key Points

- The new districts have been formed based on Parliamentary constituencies.
- Adding to the existing 13 districts, the total number of districts in Andhra Pradesh is now 26.
- The new districts are being formed under the AP Districts Formation Act, 1974, Section 3(5).

**List of the new districts:** Manyam, Alluri Sitharama Raju, Anakapalli, Kakinada, Kona Seema, Eluru, NTR District, Bapatla, Palnadu, Nandyal, Sri Satyasai, Annamayya and Sri Balaji District.

**Source: Indian Express**

## Home Minister Amit Shah releases country's 1st District Good Governance Index in Jammu and Kashmir

### Why in News

- Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation Amit Shah released India's First "**District Good Governance Index**" in Jammu and Kashmir.

### Key Points

- Under the index, the policies, schemes and programs of the central as well as the state governments have been monitored at the district level.
- The index will rank the districts and also present their comparative picture.
- The District Good Governance Index, which has been launched for 20 districts of Jammu and Kashmir, has been prepared by the **Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG)** in partnership with the Union Territory's administration.

**Note:**

- Previously, the Centre had released the **National Good Governance Index** on December 25, 2021 that indicated Jammu and Kashmir saw an increase of 3.7% in Good Governance Indicators from 2019 to 2021.

**Source: HT**

### **Election Commission defers February 14 Punjab Assembly election due to Guru Ravidas Jayanti**

#### **Why in News**

- The **Election Commission of India (ECI)** decided to postpone the February 14 assembly election in Punjab due to **Guru Ravidas Jayanti**.

#### **Key Points**

- The Election Commission has announced that the voting for the state's 117 assembly seats will now take place on February 20.
- Commission has received several representations from State Government, Political Parties and other organizations drawing attention regarding movement of a large number of devotees from Punjab to Varanasi for participation in Sri Guru Ravidas Ji Jayanti celebrations, which is observed on 16th February 2022.

#### **About Guru Ravidas Jayanti:**

- "Guru Ravidass Jayanti" is the birthday of Guru Ravidas, celebrated on Magh Purnima, the full moon day in the month of Magh month.

**Source: TOI**

## **Important News: Polity**

### **Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 (CAA)**

#### **Why in News**

- The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) did not notify the **Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 (CAA)** rules, the third extended deadline after the Act was passed.
- January 9, 2022 was the last day of an extension sought from the two parliamentary committees in the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha to frame the rules.

#### **Key Points**

- Without rules, the CAA cannot be implemented.
- Earlier, it had sought time till April 9, 2021 and then July 9, 2021 from the committees to notify the rules which are to be published in the Gazette of India.

- On November 30 last, Minister of State for Home Nityanand Rai informed the Lok Sabha: “The persons covered under the CAA may apply for citizenship after the rules are notified under the CAA.”

#### **About CAA:**

- The CAA was passed by Parliament on December 11, 2019 and the Act was notified on December 12.
- In January 2020, the Ministry notified that the Act will come into force from January 10, 2020.
- The CAA provides citizenship on the basis of religion to six undocumented non-Muslim communities (Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis and Christians) from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh who entered India on or before December 31, 2014.
- It exempts the members of the six communities from any criminal case under the Foreigners Act, 1946 and the Passport Act, 1920.
- The two Acts specify punishment for entering the country illegally and staying here on expired visas and permits.

**Source: The Hindu**

### **Important News: Economy**

#### **Report of second quarter of Quarterly Employment Survey (QES)**

##### **Why in News**

- Union Minister for Labour & Employment, Bhupender Yadav released the report of second quarter of **Quarterly Employment Survey (QES)** part of **All-India Quarterly Establishment-based Employment Survey (AQEES)**.
- The estimated total employment in the nine selected sectors in this round of QES (July-September, 2021) came out as 3.10 crore approximately, which is 2 lakhs higher than the estimated employment (3.08 crore) from the first round of QES (April-June, 2021).
- It is worthwhile to mention here that the total employment for these nine sectors taken collectively was reported as 2.37 crore in the sixth EC (2013-14).

##### **Key Points**

- The AQEES has been taken up to provide frequent (quarterly) updates about the employment and related variables of establishments in both organized and unorganized segments of nine selected sectors which account for a great majority of the total employment in the non-farm establishments.
- The nine selected sectors are Manufacturing, Construction, Trade, Transport, Education, Health, Accommodation & Restaurant, IT/BPO and Financial Services.

- The report on Quarterly Employment Survey being a demand side survey along with supply side survey i.e. Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) will bridge data gaps on employment in the country.

**Source: PIB**

### **Indian Government to become single largest shareholder in Vodafone Idea**

#### **Why in News**

- **Vodafone Idea's** board has informed the telecom department that it will opt for converting the interest on spectrum and **Adjusted Gross Revenue (AGR)** dues into government equity.
- In this case, it would mean that the government will hold 35.8% stake and become the single largest shareholder in the third largest telecom of the country.

#### **Key Points**

- The Vodafone had to pay Rs 58,254 crores of Adjusted Gross Revenue to the Government of India. It has already paid around 7,000 crores of rupees.
- The company has converted this pending amount into shares.

**Source: ET**

### **FDI flows to India drop 26% in 2021: UNCTAD**

#### **Why in News**

- According to the **United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)**'s Investment Trends Monitor, **Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)** flows to India dropped 26 percent in 2021 as compared with the previous year.

#### **Key Points**

- Global foreign direct investment (FDI) flows showed a strong rebound in 2021, up 77 percent to an estimated \$1.65 trillion, from \$929 billion in 2020.
- Recovery of investment flows to developing countries is encouraging, but stagnation of new investment in least developed countries in industries important for productive capacities, and key Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) sectors - such as electricity, food or health - is a major cause for concern.

- Developed economies saw the biggest rise by far, with FDI reaching an estimated \$777 billion in 2021 - three times the exceptionally low level in 2020.
- FDI to India increased 27 percent to USD 64 billion in 2020 from USD 51 billion in 2019, pushed up by acquisitions in the information and communication technology (ICT) industry.

**Source: ET**

### **SEBI launches Saaṛthi mobile app**

#### **Why in News**

- **Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)** launched “**Saaṛthi**” – a mobile app on investor education.

#### **Key Points**

- The Saaṛthi mobile app aims to create awareness among investors about the basic concepts of the securities market.
- The app will also explain about KYC process, trading and settlement, mutual funds (MF), recent market developments, investor grievances redressal mechanism, etc.

**Need:** According to NSE (National Stock Exchange) data, the share of Individual investors increased to 45% in 2021 from 39% in 2020.

#### **About Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI):**

- SEBI is the regulatory body for securities and commodity markets in India under the ownership of the Ministry of Finance, Government of India.
- It was established on April 12, 1992 in accordance with the provisions of the Securities and Exchange Board of India Act, 1992.

**Source: Indian Express**

### **Important News: Defence and Science**

### **Western Naval Command conducts Joint Maritime Exercise: Paschim Lehar (XPL-2022)**

#### **Why in News**

- A joint maritime exercise **Paschim Lehar (XPL-2022)** conducted by the Indian Navy off the West Coast was concluded on 25 January 2022.

#### **Key Points**

- The exercise **was conducted over a duration of 20 days** with an **objective to validate operational plans of the Western**

- Naval Command and enhance Inter-Service synergy** among the **Indian Navy, IAF, Indian Army and Coast Guard.**
- The exercise was **conducted under the aegis of FOC-in-C, Western Naval Command.**
  - The intra-theatre exercise included **mobilisation and participation of over 40 ships and submarines of the Indian Navy.**
- Source: PIB**

## **Delivery of 50Ton Bollard Pull Tugs “Balbir” to Naval Dockyard Mumbai**

### **Why in News**

- Contract for construction of 50Ton Bollard Pull Tugs was concluded with M/s Hindustan Shipyard Ltd, Visakhapatnam in February 2019.
- The Fourth tug in the series, “**Balbir**” has been delivered to Naval Dockyard, Mumbai on **24 Jan 2022.**

### **Key Points**

- These tugs have been designed and built under the classification rules of Indian Register for Shipping (IRS) with a service life of 20 years and are capable of assisting large naval ships, including Aircraft Carrier and Submarines in berthing, un-berthing, turning and manoeuvring in confined waters and in harbour.
- With all major and auxiliary equipment/system sourced from indigenous manufacturers, these tugs are proud flag bearers of “Make in India, Make for the World” initiatives of Ministry of Defence in consonance with “Atmanirbhar Bharat”.

### **Note:**

Tugs “**Veeran**” and “**Balraj**” were inducted on 22 Oct 2021 and 31 Dec 2021 at Naval Dockyard, Visakhapatnam respectively and “**Balram**” on 30 Oct 2021 at Naval Dockyard, Mumbai.

**Source: PIB**

## **Saab awarded Indian contract for AT4 Support Weapon**

### **Why in News**

- **Swedish defence company Saab** has been awarded a contract to supply single-shot **anti-armour weapon AT4** to the Indian armed forces.

### **Key Points**

- The company has been awarded the contract for the lightweight and fully disposable weapon after going through a "competitive programme".
- AT4 will be used by the Indian Army and the Indian Air Force.
- The contract was signed by FFV Ordnance AB, responsible for Saab's Ground Combat offer in India.
- Operated by a single soldier, this single-shot system has proven efficacy against structures, landing craft, helicopters, armoured vehicles and personnel.
- Its 84 mm calibre warhead offers enhanced power and performance.

**Source: ET**

## **Small Satellite Launch Vehicle (SSLV)**

### **Why in News**

- The **ISRO (Indian Space Research Organisation)** chairman Dr S Somanath has mentioned the launch of an "SSLV-D1 Micro SAT" in April 2022.

### **Key Points**

- The SSLV is intended to cater to a market for the launch of small satellites into low earth orbits which has emerged in recent years on account of the need for developing countries, private corporations, and universities for small satellites.

### **About Small Satellite Launch Vehicle (SSLV):**

- The SSLV is the smallest vehicle at 110-ton mass at ISRO.
- It will take only 72 hours to integrate, unlike the 70 days taken now for a launch vehicle.
- SSLV is a three-stage all solid vehicle and has a capability to launch up to 500 kg satellite mass into 500 km Low Earth Orbit (LEO) and 300 kg to Sun Synchronous Orbit (SSO).
- The maiden flight of the SSLV was scheduled to launch in July 2019 but that has since been delayed due to setbacks from Covid-19 and other issues.

**Source: Indian Express**

### Important News: Appointment

## Vinodanand Jha appointed as new chairperson of the PMLA Adjudicating Authority

### Why in News

- **Vinodanand Jha** has been appointed as the chairperson of the **PMLA Adjudicating Authority** for a period of 5 years.

### Key Points

- Vinodanand Jha, a 1983-batch retired IRS officer has been serving as the Member (Finance and Accounts) in the Authority since September 2018.
- The PMLA Adjudicating Authority is a three-member body whose mandate is to adjudicate the cases of attachment of assets orders issued under the **Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA)**.

### About Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002:

- Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002 is an Act of the Parliament of India enacted by the NDA government to prevent money-laundering and to provide for confiscation of property derived from money-laundering.
- PMLA and the Rules notified there under came into force with effect from July 1, 2005.

### Source: The Hindu

## BrahMos supersonic cruise missile, with enhanced capability, successfully test-fired

### Why in News

- **BrahMos supersonic cruise missile**, with increased indigenous content and improved performance, was successfully test-fired from Integrated Test Range, Chandipur off the coast of Odisha.

### Key Points

- The launch was conducted by Brahmos Aerospace in close coordination with the teams of **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)**.
- BrahMos Aerospace has been continuously upgrading the powerful, highly versatile BrahMos to increase its effectiveness and lethality against sea and land targets.

### BrahMos missiles:

- A combination of the names of Brahmaputra and Moskva rivers, BrahMos missiles are designed, developed and produced by BrahMos Aerospace, a joint venture company set up by DRDO and NPOM of Russia.
- The first test launch of the initial version BrahMos took place in 2001.
- Various types of the BrahMos including those which can be fired from land, warships, submarines and Sukhoi-30 fighter jets have already been developed and successfully tested since then.

**Note:** Earlier on January 11, 2022, the country had successfully test-fired BrahMos Supersonic Cruise missile from the Indian Navy's INS Visakhapatnam warship.

**Source: Indian Express**

### **BSF's "Operation Sard Hawa"**

#### **Why in News**

- The **Border Security Force (BSF)** will increase surveillance along the Pakistan border in Rajasthan under its "**Operation Sard Hawa**" from January 23 to 28, 2022.

#### **Key Points**

- Due to fog and haze on the border during winter, the force remains on "high alert" to deal with infiltration and other nefarious activities from across the border.
- All personnel and officers of the headquarters will remain on the border during this period and will monitor the situation 24 hours.

**Note:** The BSF conducts "Operation Garam Hawa" in summer and "Operation Sard Hawa" in winter every year.

**Source: ET**

### **In a first, India to export BrahMos missiles to the Philippines**

#### **Why in News**

- **India's BrahMos supersonic cruise missile** will be exported first time and missiles will be purchased by Philippines.
- The Philippines has approved the purchase of anti-ship cruise missile BrahMos. This deal has been done for about \$ 374.9 million.

#### **Key Points**

- **BrahMos Aerospace**, an India-Russian joint venture, produces the supersonic cruise missile 'BrahMos' that can be launched from submarines, ships, aircraft, or from land platforms.
- The BrahMos order is the first major military export by India.

- Last year, India and the Philippines signed a defence arrangement that would enable export of defence equipment to Manila.
- Other countries in Southeast Asia, including Vietnam and Indonesia, have also expressed their interest in buying BrahMos from India, to which end discussions are ongoing.

**Note:** Recently, the Indian Navy and Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has successfully test-fired BrahMos Supersonic Cruise missile.

**Source: India Today**

## Indian Navy conducts Passage Exercise (PASEX) with Russian Navy

### Why in News

- Indian Navy's indigenously designed and built guided missile destroyer, INS Kochi, conducted Passage Exercise (PASEX) with Russian Navy's RFS Admiral Tributs on 14 January 2022 in the Arabian Sea.
- Indian Navy's indigenously designed and built Guided Missile Destroyer INS Kochi along with RFS Admiral Tributes of the Russian Navy undertook the Passage Exercise (PASEX) in the Arabian Sea on 14 January 2022.

### Key Points

- This is for the first time that the Indian Navy has tested its indigenously designed and built guided-missile destroyer and was tested with the Russian Federation Navy to showcase India's defence capabilities.
- The exercise showcased cohesiveness and interoperability between the two navies and included tactical manoeuvres, cross-deck helicopter operations and seamanship activities.

### Exercise between India and Russia:

- Indra: Joint Exercise (Army, Navy, Air Force)

**Source: TOI**

Science

## India's first coal to methanol plant built by BHEL

### Why in News

- Union Minister for Heavy Industries Mahendra Nath Pandey dedicated **India's first BHEL-built 'coal to methanol' (CTM) pilot plant** to the nation.

- The Minister also inaugurated an exhibition on Products Developed under Aatmanirbhar Bharat' organised at Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited's (BHEL) Hyderabad unit.

#### **Key Points**

- This conversion of high-ash Indian coal to methanol through the gasification route is the first-of-its-kind technology demonstration in India.
- The 0.25 TPD (tonnes per day) capacity CTM pilot plant that has been indigenously designed, developed and installed by BHEL is currently producing methanol with purity of more than 99 percent from high-ash Indian coal.

**Note:** BHEL will also assist Coal Gasification Mission and Coal to Hydrogen Production for Hydrogen Mission.

**Source: Business Standard**

### **Cryogenic Engine for Gaganyaan: ISRO**

#### **Why in News**

- **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** has successfully conducted qualification tests of the **Cryogenic Engine for Gaganyaan human space programme**.

#### **Key Points**

- The ISRO Propulsion Complex in Tamil Nadu conducted the test for 720 seconds duration and met the test objectives.
- The engine will further undergo four more tests for a cumulative duration of 1810 seconds.
- The Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV) Mark III launch vehicle to be used for the Gaganyaan programme will use two cryogenic engines.
- This engine developed by ISRO is named as Vikas.

#### **Note:**

- India's first Human Space Mission '**Gaganyaan**' will be launched in 2023.
- ISRO is planning to conduct the first Unmanned Mission under Gaganyaan program by the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of India's independence.

**Source: The Hindu**

### **Awards and Honours**

**President approves 384 Gallantry awards for Armed Forces personnel; Neeraj Chopra honoured with PVSM**

- **President Ram Nath Kovind** has approved awards of **384 Gallantry** and other Defence decorations to Armed Forces personnel and others on the occasion of 73rd Republic Day celebrations.
- These include **12 Shaurya Chakras** including, 29 Param Vishisht Seva Medals, 4 Uttam Yudh Seva Medals, 53 Ati Vishisht Seva Medals, 13 Yudh Seva Medals, 3 Bar to Vishisht Seva Medals, 122 Vishisht Seva Medals, 3 Bar to Sena Medals (Gallantry). Besides, 81 Sena Medals (Gallantry), 2 Vayu Sena Medals (Gallantry), 40 Sena Medals for Devotion to Duty, 8 Nao Sena Medals and 14 Vayu Sena Medals have been approved Devotion to Duty.
- Out of the total 12 Shaurya Chakra Awardees, 9 of them have been awarded posthumously. They include Subedar Sreejith M of 17th Battalion of the Madras Regiment, Havildar Anil Kumar Tomar, Rajput Regiment, the 44th Batallion The Rashtriya Rifles and Havildar Pinku Kumar, the Jat Regiment, 34th Battalion the Rashtriya Rifles.
- Olympian **Neeraj Chopra** who is a Subedar in the Indian Army has been honoured with **Param Vishisht Seva Medal (PVSM)** on the eve of Republic Day. Neeraj Chopra won the gold medal for India in the javelin throw event at Tokyo Olympics.

**Source: newsonair**

## **Padma Awards 2022**

### **About Padma Awards:**

- Padma Awards - one of the highest civilian Awards of the country, are conferred in three categories, namely, Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan and Padma Shri.
- The Awards are given in various disciplines/ fields of activities, viz.- art, social work, public affairs, science and engineering, trade and industry, medicine, literature and education, sports, civil service, etc.
- 'Padma Vibhushan' is awarded for exceptional and distinguished service; 'Padma Bhushan' for distinguished service of high order and 'Padma Shri' for distinguished service in any field.
- The awards are announced on the occasion of Republic Day every year.

- These awards are conferred by the President of India at ceremonial functions which are held at Rashtrapati Bhawan usually around March/ April every year.

### **Padma Awards 2022:**

- This year the President has approved conferment of 128 Padma Awards including 2 duo case (in a duo case, the Award is counted as one).
- The list comprises 4 Padma Vibhushan, 17 Padma Bhushan and 107 Padma Shri Awards.
- 34 of the awardees are women and the list also includes 10 persons from the category of Foreigners/NRI/PIO/OCI and 13 Posthumous awardees.
- Among the notable names, India's first chief of defence staff (CDS) – the late General Bipin Rawat – was posthumously awarded the Padma Vibhushan, while Olympic gold medallist Neeraj Chopra was among Padma Shri recipients.

### **Following are some notable names from the Padma awards:**

- **Padma Vibhushan:** Kalyan Singh, former chief minister of Uttar Pradesh (posthumous); General Bipin Rawat, India's first chief of defence staff (posthumous)
- **Padma Bhushan:** Congress leader Ghulam Nabi Azad, former West Bengal chief minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee, Covaxin maker Bharat Biotech's chairman Krishna Ella and his co-founder wife Suchitra Ella, Serum Institute of India (SII) managing director Cyrus Poonawalla
- Key names from Big Tech, including Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella and Alphabet and Google CEO Sundar Pichai, were also named as Padma Bhushan recipients.
- **Padma Shri:** Olympic gold medallist Neeraj Chopra, Olympians Pramod Bhagat, and Vandana Kataria, singer Sonu Nigam

**Source: PIB**

## **Jai Bhim and Marakkar eligible for Best Feature Film at Oscars 2022**

### **Why in News**

- Suriya's Jai Bhim and Mohanlal's Marakkar: Arabikadalinte Simham are eligible for Best Feature Film at Oscars 2022.

### Key Points

- Suriya's Jai Bhim, directed by TJ Gnanavel, premiered on Amazon Prime Video in November 2021.
- Jai Bhim is the only Tamil film to get shortlisted for the Best Feature Film at the 94th Academy Awards.
- Among the 276 films that have been shortlisted across the world, Jai Bhim and the Malayalam film, Marakkar: Arabikadalinte Simham, have been chosen from India.
- The award ceremony is scheduled on March 27, 2022, in Hollywood, US.

**Source: Indian Express**

## Former Japan PM Shinzo Abe conferred Netaji Award 2022

### Why in News

- **Former Japan Prime Minister Shinzo Abe** was conferred with the **Netaji Award 2022** by Netaji Research Bureau.

### Key Points

- Consul General of Japan in Kolkata Nakamura Yutaka received the honour on behalf of Abe at a function at the Elgin Road residence of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose on his 125th birth anniversary.
- Moreover, in January 2021, India bestowed the Padma Vibhushan on former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, the country's second-highest civilian honour.

**Source: India Today**

## Prajakta Koli becomes India's first UNDP Youth Climate Champion

### Why in News

- Prajakta Koli has become India's first **UN Development Programme (UNDP) Youth Climate Champion**.

### Key Points

- Prajakta Koli is a content creator on various online platforms like youtube, Instagram, etc.

- The title has been conferred to her following her contribution towards mental health, women's rights and girl child education through various global social campaigns.

**About UN Development Programme (UNDP):**

- It is a United Nations organization tasked with helping countries eliminate poverty and achieve sustainable economic growth and human development.
- **Headquarters:** New York, United States
- **Founded:** 22 November 1965
- **Parent organization:** United Nations General Assembly

**Source: Business Standard**

**India's Koozhangal wins best film award at 20th Dhaka International Film Festival**

**Why in News**

- During the recently concluded **20th Dhaka International Film Festival** in Dhaka, **Indian movie Koozhangal** won the best film award in the Asian Film Competition category.
- Apart from this, four more Indian entries were included among the 17 awards given away for the films.

**Key Points**

**Koozhangal:**

- It's a Tamil-language drama directed by director PS Vinothraj and is produced by top South Indian actress Nayanthara and her husband Vignesh Shivan under their banner Rowdy Pictures.
- The film was screened at the 50th International Film Festival Rotterdam held in the Netherlands last year, where it received the Tiger Award at the festival.
- It was also selected as India's entry for the Best International Feature Film at the 94th Academy Awards, but did not make the final nomination.

**Source: newsonair**

**Babar Azam named Captain Of ICC Men's T20I Team of the Year for 2021**

- **Pakistani skipper Babar Azam** has been named as the captain of the **ICC Men's T20I Team of the Year for 2021**.
- The ICC Team of the Year recognises the 11 best players in men's cricket who have impressed one and all with their performances in a calendar year, either with the bat, ball or their all-round performance.
- No Indian male player has found a place in the team of 11.
- However, in ICC Women's T20I Team of the Year for 2021, **Smriti Mandhana** is the only Indian women player named in the 11 member team.
- England's Nat Sciver has been made the captain of ICC Women's T20I Team of the Year for 2021.

**Source: India Today**

### **Lavni artist from Maharashtra wins gold medal at International Folk Art Festival in Dubai**

#### **Why in News**

- A young Lavni artist from Maharashtra, Sumit Bhale has won a gold medal at the **International Folk Art Festival in Dubai**.

#### **Key Points**

- **Lavani** is a genre of music popular in Maharashtra, India.
- Lavani is a combination of traditional song and dance, which is particularly performed to the beats of Dholki, a percussion instrument.
- Lavani is noted for its powerful rhythm. Lavani has contributed substantially to the development of Marathi folk theatre.
- Lavani dance originated from Maharashtra in 18th and 19th century.
- This dance form was popular in the Peshawari Dynasty that was situated in Pune.

**Source: newsonair**

## **Obituaries**

### **Noted Kathakali Dancer & Padma Shri recipient Milena Salvini of France passes away**

- **Noted Kathakali dancer Milena Salvini** of France passed away.
- Italian-born Salvini was a regular visitor to India, especially Kerala where she learnt Kathakali, and ran 'Centre Mandapa', a school for Indian dance forms, in Paris.

- The Government of India conferred the **Padma Shri** award on Salvini in 2019 for her contribution in the field of performing arts.

**Source: Business Standard**

### **Veteran archaeologist and epigraphist Ramachandran Nagasamy passes away**

- Veteran archaeologist and epigraphist **Ramachandran Nagasamy** passed away.
- Nagasamy is known for his epigraphy research on the sculptures in Mahabalipuram.
- He was honoured with the Padma Bhushan award in 2018 for his research work in archeology and was also the recipient of Kalaimamani award — the highest civilian award, from the Tamil Nadu government.
- He was the first director of Tamil Nadu government's Department of Archaeology.

**Source: India Today**

### **Shaoli Mitra, eminent theatre personality, actress passes away**

- **Shaoli Mitra**, an eminent Bengali theatre personality, passed away.
- Mitra, who was the recipient of Sangeet Natak Akademi in 2003, Padma Shri in 2009, and Banga Bibhusan in 2012, will be remembered by her fans and critics alike for her solo performances as Draupadi in "Naathvati Anaathbat" and as Sita in "Sitakatha" or Bitata Bitangso.

**Source: India Today**

### **Renowned cartoonist Narayan Debnath passes away**

#### **Why in News**

- Eminent cartoonist Narayan Debnath — the creator of unforgettable characters like Batul The Great, Nante and Fante — passed away.

#### **Key Points**

- Debnath was conferred with Padma Shri in 2021. He was conferred with the Sahitya Akademi award in 2013 and the West Bengal government also honoured him with Banga Bibhushan.
- The Rabindra Bharati University gave him an honorary D.Litt in 2015.

Source:TOI

### **Kathak maestro Pandit Birju Maharaj passes away**

- Padma Vibhushan awardee and legendary Kathak dancer Pandit Birju Maharaj passed away at 83.
- Pandit Birju Maharaj, better known simply as Birju Maharaj, was an Indian dancer, composer, singer and exponent of the Lucknow "Kalka-Bindadin" Gharana of Kathak dance in India.
- **Kathak** is one of the eight major forms of Indian classical dance.

Source: TOI

### **Padma Shri awardee Shanti Devi passes away**

- Padma Shri awardee and social activist Shanti Devi passed away at 88.
- President Ram Nath Kovind conferred the Padma Shri upon Shanti Devi on January 25, last year, for her social work in the Maoist-hit Rayagada region.
- She served the poor for nearly six decades, dedicating her life to the education and upliftment of tribal girls.
- She was also associated with the Bhoodan movement and worked with Acharya Vinoba Bhave.

Source: TOI

#### **Ranks and Indices**

#### **Books and Authors**

### **A pictorial book on India's Women Unsung Heroes of Freedom Struggle**

#### **Why in News**

- Union Minister of State for Culture Smt. Meenakashi Lekhi released a pictorial book on **India's Women Unsung Heroes** of Freedom Struggle as part of Azadi ka Mahotsav.
- The book has been released in partnership with Amar Chitra Katha which is a household name in India.

#### **Key Points**

- The Ministry of Culture has decided to release pictorial books on 75 Unsung Heroes of the Freedom Struggle in partnership with Amar Chitra Katha.
- The second edition will be on 25 unsung Tribal Freedom Fighters which is under process and will take some time.
- The third and final edition will be of 30 unsung heroes drawn from other areas.

**Source: PIB**

### **A new biography of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose titled 'Bose: The Untold Story of An Inconvenient Nationalist'**

**Why in News**

- A new biography of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose titled 'Bose: The Untold Story of An Inconvenient Nationalist' is all set to release in February, 2022.

**Key Points**

- The biography is authored by researcher and founder of 'Mission Netaji' **Chandrachur Ghose** and published by Penguin Random House India.
- The biography attempts to bring new perspectives on Netaji's thoughts on independent India's development, the problem of communalism, geopolitics, his political ideology, and how he negotiated with the political parties, revolutionary societies, and the government.

**Source: TOI**

## **New Appointments**

### **Vikram Dev Dutt appointed as CMD of Air India**

**Why in News**

- The Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions appointed **Vikram Dev Dutt** as **Chairman and Managing Director (CMD)** of **Air India Limited**.

**Key Points**

- Vikram Dev Dutt is a 1993-batch IAS officer of **AGMUT** (Arunachal Pradesh, Goa, Mizoram and Union Territory) cadre.

**Note:**

- In October 2021, the government accepted the highest bid made by a Tata Sons company for 100 percent equity shares of Air India and Air India Express along with its 50 percent stake in ground-handling company AISATS.
- The government had signed the share purchase agreement with Tata Sons for the sale of national carrier Air India for Rs 18,000 crore.

**Source: Business Today**

## **Roberta Metsola becomes European Parliament's new president**

### **Why in News**

- **Roberta Metsola**, Centre-right Maltese lawmaker, was chosen to head the **European Parliament**.
- Her election comes a week after the shock death of outgoing parliament president David Sassoli.

### **Key Points**

- Roberta Metsola has become the only third woman to hold the position.
- She is also viewed as a political moderate despite the controversy over her anti-abortion stance.
- She is a member of the biggest Parliamentary bloc, the European People's Party.

### **About European Parliament:**

- The European Parliament is one of three legislative branches of the European Union and one of its seven institutions.
- Together with the Council of the European Union, it adopts European legislation, commonly on the proposal of the European Commission.
- The Parliament is composed of 705 members.
- **Headquarters:** Strasbourg, France
- **Founded:** 10 September 1952, Europe

**Source:** newsonair

## **Narendra Goenka takes over as new Chairman of AEPC**

### **Why in News**

- **Narendra Kumar Goenka** took charge of **Apparel Export Promotion Council (AEPC)** as its new Chairman.
- Padma Shri Dr A Sakthivel handed over the charge to him.

### **Key Points**

- Narendra Kumar Goenka was the Vice Chairman of the apex body of Indian apparel exporters before taking charge as Chairman, AEPC.

### **About Apparel Export Promotion Council (AEPC):**

- AEPC is the official body of apparel exporters in India, under the aegis of Ministry of Textiles that provides invaluable assistance to Indian exporters as well as importers/international buyers.

**Source:** PIB

## **Eminent rocket scientist S Somanath appointed new chairman of ISRO**

### **Why in News**

- Eminent rocket scientist **S Somanath** has been appointed the new chairman of the **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** as well as the Space Secretary.

#### **Key Points**

- S Somanath will succeed K Sivan who completes his extended tenure as ISRO chief.
- He will be the 10th chairman of ISRO.
- He is currently Director of Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC).
- The post of the ISRO chairman, the Space Secretary and the Space Commission chief is usually held by one person only.

**Source: newsonair**

### **Alikhan Smailov named Kazakhstan's Prime Minister**

#### **Why in News**

- Kazakhstan President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev nominated **Alikhan Smailov** as the Prime Minister.

#### **Key Points**

- Alikhan Smailov has served as First Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Kazakhstan in 2019.
- This year, he served as the acting Prime Minister after the government resigned due to the fuel protests followed by terrorist uprising.

**Source: TOI**

### **IMF names Pierre-Olivier Gourinchas as next chief economist**

#### **Why in News**

- The **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** said that it has appointed French-born University of California-Berkeley economist Pierre-Olivier Gourinchas as the IMF's next chief economist.
- He will succeed Gita Gopinath, who as previously announced will join the IMF's management team as First Deputy Managing Director.

#### **Key Points**

- Pierre-Olivier Gourinchas will start part-time on January 24, 2022 and transition to full-time Fund work on April 1, 2022.

#### **Facts about IMF (International Monetary Fund):**

- **Headquarters:** Washington, D.C., U.S
- **Formation:** December 1945
- **Membership:** 190 countries
- **Managing Director:** Kristalina Georgieva

**Source: The Hindu**

## **Former RBI Governor Urjit Patel appointed vice-president of AIIB**

### **Why in News**

- Former Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor **Urjit Patel** has been appointed as a vice-president of the **Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB)**.

### **Key Points**

- Urjit Patel will succeed outgoing Vice President D J Pandian.
- Urjit Patel is currently the chairman of the National Institute of Public Finance and Policy.
- He had taken over as the 24th Governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) succeeding Raghuram Rajan in September 2016 and was with RBI till December 2018.
- India has emerged as AIIB's biggest beneficiary by obtaining \$6.8 billion funding for 29 projects.

### **Facts about Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB):**

- It is a multilateral development bank that aims to improve economic and social outcomes in Asia.
- **Headquarters:** Beijing, China
- **Membership:** 104 Members
- **Formation:** 16 January 2016

**Source: newsonair**

## **Chinese diplomat Zhang Ming takes over as new Secretary-General of SCO**

### **Why in News**

- Veteran Chinese diplomat, **Zhang Ming**, has taken over as the new Secretary-General of the **Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)**.

### **Key Points**

- Zhang Ming took over from Vladimir Norov, a former diplomat from Uzbekistan.
- Before joining SCO, Zhang served for four years as the head of the Chinese mission to the European Union.

### **About Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO):**

- SCO or Shanghai Pact is a Eurasian political, economic and security alliance.
- **Formed:** 15 June 2001
- **Members:** China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, India & Pakistan.

- **Headquarter:** Beijing, China
- India became a full member of the SCO in 2017. Prior to that, India had an observer status, which was granted to it in 2005.

**Note:** 2022 will be an important year for India at SCO as, for the first time, it will assume the presidency of SCO, after Uzbekistan, for the period 2022-2023 which will culminate with the SCO Summit to be hosted by the Indian side in 2023.

**Source:** newsonair

### **Justice Ayesha Malik to be Pakistan's first woman Supreme Court judge**

#### **Why in News**

- Pakistan has moved closer to appoint the first woman judge of the Supreme Court, after a high-power panel approved the elevation of Lahore High Court judge **Ayesha Malik** to the apex court.

#### **Key Points**

- The Judicial Commission of Pakistan (JCP) – headed by Chief Justice Gulzar Ahmed – approved Malik's elevation by a majority of five votes against four.
- Justice Malik became a high court judge in March 2012, and currently she is number four on the Lahore High Court (LHC) judge seniority list.

**Source:** Indian Express

### **Important Days**

#### **January 27, International Holocaust Remembrance Day**

#### **Why in News**

- International Holocaust Remembrance Day or the International Day in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust is an international memorial day on 27 January.

#### **Key Points**

- The day commemorates the victims of the Holocaust, which resulted in the murder of one third of the Jewish people, along with countless members of other minorities by Nazi Germany between 1933 and 1945.

- 27 January was chosen to commemorate the date that Auschwitz concentration camp was liberated by the Red Army in 1945.
- It was designated by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) on 1 November 2005.

**Source: un.org**

## January 25, National Voters' Day

### Why in News

- **National Voters' Day (NVD)** is observed on January 25 every year.

### Key Points

- **Theme** for NVD 2022 is 'Making Elections Inclusive, Accessible and Participative'.
- The day was established to mark Election Commission's foundation day on January 25 in 2011, by the Government of India.
- On the occasion, National Awards for the Best Electoral Practices for the year 2021-22 will be conferred on State and District level officers for their outstanding performance in the conduct of elections in different spheres.

### About ECI (Election Commission of India):

- It is a permanent and independent body established by the Constitution of India directly to ensure free and fair elections in the country.
- **Formed:** 25 January 1950
- **Headquarters:** New Delhi
- **Commission executives:**

**Sushil Chandra**, Chief Election Commissioner

**Rajeev Kumar**, Election Commissioner

**Anup Chandra Pandey**, Election Commissioner

**Source: India Today**

## January 25, National Tourism Day

### Why in News

- **National Tourism Day** is celebrated on January 25 every year across the country.

### Key Points

- This day is observed by the Government of India to encourage tourism and explain the essential role of tourism in the growth of the country.

**Note:** The **World Tourism Day** is celebrated on 27 September.

**Source:** India Today

## January 23, Parakram Diwas

### Why in News

- **Parakram Diwas (Bravery Day)** is celebrated in India on January 23rd.
- January 23, 2022, marks the 125th birth anniversary of Subhas Chandra Bose.

### Key Points

- It was introduced by the Government of India in 2021 ahead of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose's 125th birth anniversary.
- The day is celebrated to mark the birth anniversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose.
- The central government has decided to start the Republic Day celebrations from January 23 to include Bose's anniversary.
- Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose was born in Cuttack, Orissa on 23 January 1897.
- He played a pivotal role in the Indian independence movement.
- He was the head of the Japanese-supported Indian National Army (Azad Hind Fouj).
- He was the founder-head of the Azad Hind Government.

**Note:** On this occasion, Prime Minister Narendra Modi unveiled a hologram statue of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose at India Gate.

**Source:** HT

## January 24, National Girl Child Day

### Why in News

- **National Girl Child Day** in India is celebrated on January 24 every year.
- The Ministry of Culture is organizing a rangoli making event 'Umang Rangoli Utsav' on 24th January 2022.

### Key Points

- **History:** National Girl Child Day was first initiated in 2008 by the **Ministry of Women and Child Development**.
- The day is celebrated with organized programs including awareness campaigns about Save the Girl Child, child sex ratios, and the creation of a healthy and safe environment for girls.

**Note:** Every year, October 11 is observed as the **International Day of the Girl Child**.

**Source:** India Today

### January 15, Indian Army Day

#### Why in News

- **Indian Army Day** is celebrated every year on January 15 in recognition of Field Marshal KM Cariappa as the first commander-in-chief of the Indian army.
- This year marks the 74th Army Day.

#### Key Points

- Indian Army Day's theme for the year 2022 was **"In Stride with the Future"**.
- The Indian Army originated from the East India Company, which was known as the British Indian Army and later named the National Army after India's independence.

#### Note:

- **28th Chief of Army Staff:** General Manoj Mukund Naravane
- The new uniform of the Indian Army was unveiled on the occasion of the Army Day Parade.
- On the occasion of 74th Army Day, the world's largest Khadi national flag was displayed on the highest hill near Jaisalmer military station in Rajasthan.

**Source:** India Today

### January 12, National Youth Day

#### Why in News

- **National Youth Day** is celebrated on January 12, every year in India to honor the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda.

#### Key Points

- In 1984 the Government of India declared this day as National Youth Day and since 1985 the event is celebrated in India every year.
- Swami Vivekananda was born on January 12, 1863, in Kolkata.

**Note:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the **25th National Youth Festival** on 12th January, 2022 in Puducherry.

**Source: IndiaToday**

## January 10, World Hindi Day

### Why in News

- **World Hindi Day** is celebrated every year on January 10.

### Key Points

- Hindi is not only the country's most-spoken language, but it is **the third most-spoken language in the world** with 615 million speakers after English, Mandarin, according to the UN.
- Every year on January 10, World Hindi Day is marked to commemorate the anniversary of the first World Hindi Conference that took place in 1975 in Nagpur, Maharashtra. The then Prime Minister of India, Indira Gandhi, had inaugurated the conference.
- World Hindi Day was observed for the first time in 2006.

**Note:** National Hindi Divas is celebrated annually on September 14.

**Source: India Today**

### Sports

## Lucknow's IPL team to be called Lucknow Super Giants

### Why in News

- The Lucknow franchise of the IPL (Indian Premier League) will be called **Lucknow Super Giants**.

### Key Points

- Last year, the franchise was purchased by the Sanjiv Goenka-owned RPSG group for an amount of Rs 7090 Crores.
- The other new team to enter the competition is from Ahmedabad who was bought by the Irelia Company Pvt Ltd. for Rs 5635 Crores.

**Source: Indian Express**

## Smriti Mandhana named ICC Women's Cricketer of 2021

### Why in News

- India's **Smriti Mandhana** has been named the ICC Women's Cricketer of the Year for 2021.

### Key Points

- Smriti has won the Rachael Heyhoe-Flint Trophy awarded to the ICC Women's Cricketer of the year for the second time after 2018.
- Smriti has also become the second women's cricketer after Australia's Ellyse Perry to win the honour more than once.
- Mandhana was also named in the ICC Women's T20 International Team of the Year.

**Source: newsonair**

### Syed Modi India International 2022

- The **Syed Modi India International** is an international badminton tournament, which is held annually in India.
- The tournament was inaugurated by Uttar Pradesh Badminton Association (UPBA) in 1991 as the 'Syed Modi Memorial Badminton Tournament' in memory of the Commonwealth Games champion Syed Modi.
- Venue: Babu Banarasi Das Indoor Stadium, Lucknow, India
- Two-time Olympic medalist, **P.V. Sindhu** has won the **Women's singles title** at the Syed Modi International tournament 2022. Sindhu defeated compatriot Malvika Bansod.

#### List of winners:

Men's singles	Women's singles	Men's doubles	Women's doubles	Mixed doubles
<b>Winner-</b> Not awarded	<b>Winner-</b> P V Sindhu (India)	<b>Winner-</b> Man Wei Chong (Malaysia), Tee Kai Wun (Malaysia)	<b>Winner-</b> Anna Cheong (Malaysia), Teoh Mei Xing (Malaysia)	<b>Winner-</b> Ishaan Bhatnagar (India), Tanisha Crasto (India)

**Source: newsonair**

### Best FIFA Football Awards 2021

- The Best FIFA Football Awards is an association football award presented annually by the sport's governing body, FIFA.

- The first awarding ceremony was held on 9 January 2017 in Zürich, Switzerland

### **Best FIFA Football Awards 2021:**

- The Best FIFA Men's Player: Robert Lewandowski
- The Best FIFA Women's Player: Alexia Putellas
- The Best FIFA Men's Goalkeeper: Edouard Mendy
- The Best FIFA Women's Goalkeeper: Christiane Endler
- The Best FIFA Men's Coach: Thomas Tuchel
- The Best FIFA Women's Coach: Emma Hayes
- FIFA Puskas Award: Erik Lamela
- FIFA Special Award: Cristiano Ronaldo

**Note:** Qatar will host the 2022 FIFA World Cup.

**Facts about FIFA** (Fédération Internationale de Football Association):

**Founded:** 21 May 1904

**Headquarters:** Zürich, Switzerland

**Membership:** 211 national associations

**President:** Gianni Infantino

**Source:** HT

### **India tennis star Sania Mirza to retire after 2022 season**

#### **Why in News**

- Former Wimbledon doubles champion **Sania Mirza**, one of India's most celebrated sports stars, has announced she will retire from tennis after 2022.

#### **Key Points**

- Sania Mirza's comments came after her first-round loss in the women's doubles in the Australian Open.
- She became the first Indian to win a WTA singles title in 2005.
- She has six Grand Slam titles in women's doubles and mixed doubles to her name.

**Source:** HT

### **2022 India Open (badminton)**

- The 2022 India Open (officially known as the Yonex-Sunrise India Open 2022 for sponsorship reasons) was a badminton tournament that took place at the K. D. Jadhav Indoor Hall in New Delhi, India, from 11 to 16 January 2022.
- The 2022 India Open was the first tournament of the 2022 BWF World Tour and was part of the India Open championships, which had been held since 1973.

- The tournament was organized by the Badminton Association of India with sanction from the Badminton World Federation.

**List of winners:**

Men's singles	Women's singles	Men's doubles	Women's doubles	Mixed doubles
<b>Winner-</b> Lakshya Sen (India)	<b>Winner-</b> Busanan Ongbamrunghan (Thailand)	<b>Winner-</b> Satwiksairaj Rankireddy (India), Chirag Shetty (India)	<b>Winner-</b> Benyapa Aimsaard (Thailand), Nuntakarn Aimsaard (Thailand)	<b>Winner-</b> Terry Hee (Singapore), Tan Wei Han (Singapore)
<b>Runner-up-</b> Loh Kean Yew (Singapore)	<b>Runner-up-</b> Supanida Katethong (Thailand)	<b>Runner-up-</b> Mohammad Ahsan (Indonesia), Hendra Setiawan (Indonesia)	<b>Runner-up-</b> Anastasiia Akchurina (Russia), Olga Morozova (Russia)	<b>Runner-up-</b> Chen Tang Jie (Malaysia), Peck Yen Wei (Malaysia)

**Note:** Young shuttler **Tasnim Mir** became the first Indian to grab the **world no 1 ranking in the under-19 girls singles** in the latest BWF junior rankings.

**Source: newsonair**

### Virat Kohli steps down as Indian Cricket Team's Test Captain

#### Why in News

- **Virat Kohli** has stepped down as the Test captain of the Indian Men's cricket team.

#### Key Points

- Less than three months after he decided to step down as skipper of India's T20I and ODI teams, Virat Kohli has relinquished the captaincy of the Test side.
- Kohli replaced MS Dhoni as the captain of the Indian team and became the most successful Test captain with 40 wins in 68 matches.
- He became the first-ever Asian captain to win a Test series in Australia.
- His decision to leave Test captaincy comes a day after India lost the three-match Test series against South Africa.

**Source: newsonair**

## West Indies legend Clive Lloyd awarded knighthood for his services to Cricket

### Why in News

- **Clive Lloyd**, the former Captain of the West Indies Cricket team, has been given the honour of knighthood for his services to the game of Cricket.

### Key Points

- He was also a former West Indies team manager and selector, and ICC Match Referee. In 2009 he was inducted into the ICC Cricket Hall of Fame.
- A **knighthood** is a title that is given to a man by a British king or queen for his achievements or his service to his country. A man who has been given a knighthood can put ' Sir' in front of his name instead of ' Mr'.

Source: ndtv

## Monthly Current Affairs December 2021

मासिक सम सामयिकी दिसंबर 2021

### Important News: World

## Humanitarian trust fund for Afghanistan: Organisation of Islamic Cooperation

### Why in News

- A meeting of foreign ministers from the **Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)** agreed to establish a humanitarian trust fund to address the growing economic crisis in Afghanistan.

### Key Points

- The fund will be set up under the **Islamic Development Bank** to channel aid to Afghanistan in coordination with other groups.
- Allowing Afghanistan access to its financial resources would be pivotal to preventing economic collapse and said realistic pathways to unfreezing billions of dollars in frozen central bank reserves should be explored.

### Trust Fund by United Nation:

- The United Nations has set up a special trust fund to provide urgently needed cash directly to Afghans through a system that has pulled billions of dollars from Afghanistan's closed

central bank reserves since the Taliban takeover in August 2021. Germany is a first contributor to the fund.

**About Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC):**

- OIC, formerly the Organisation of the Islamic Conference, is an international organization (Muslim-majority countries).
- **Membership:** 57 member states
- **Headquarters:** Jeddah, Saudi Arabia
- **Founded:** 1969

**Facts about Islamic Development Bank:**

- **Membership:** 57 countries
- **Headquarters:** Jeddah, Saudi Arabia
- **Founded:** 1975

**Source: Indian Express**

**3rd meeting of the India-Central Asia Dialogue**

**Why in News**

- The **3rd meeting of the India-Central Asia Dialogue** was held in New Delhi on 19 December 2021 under the chairmanship of the External Affairs Minister of India, Dr. S. Jaishankar.
- The Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan took part in the meeting.
- The 2nd meeting was organized by India in October 2020 in digital video-conference format.

**Key Points**

- A joint statement issued at the end of deliberations as part of the third India-Central Asia dialogue.
- The dialogue also decided to explore establishing joint working groups to address issues of free movements of goods and services between India and Central Asian countries.
- They focused on trade and connectivity, development partnership and regional developments, including the situation in Afghanistan.
- Emphasis on optimum usage of the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) as well as Ashgabat Agreement on International Transport and Transit Corridor to enhance connectivity between India and the Central Asian countries.

**Note:** India and the Central Asian countries will mark the 30th anniversary of the establishment of their diplomatic relations next year.

**Source: The Hindu**

### **United Nations grants observer status to International Solar Alliance**

#### **Why in News**

- The **United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)** has granted Observer status to the **International Solar Alliance (ISA)**.
- This is going to give impetus to “One Sun One world One Grid “. This will help in bringing equitable energy solutions to the world.

#### **Key Points**

- This would immensely help towards achieving the goal of net-zero carbon emissions through global co-operations.

#### **Note:**

- The fourth general assembly of the International Solar Alliance (ISA) was held in October 2021.
- A total of 108 countries participated in the Assembly, including 74 Member Countries and 34 Observer and Prospective Countries, 23 Partner Organizations and 33 Special Invitee Organisations.

#### **About International Solar Alliance (ISA):**

- The launch of the ISA was announced by Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of India and Francois Hollande, former President of France on 30th November 2015, at the 21st session of United Nations Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP-21) in Paris, France.
- The U.S. became the 101st country to sign the framework agreement of the ISA.
- **Headquarters:** Gurugram, Haryana, India
- **Founded:** 30 November 2015
- **Director General:** Ajay Mathur

**Source: Business Standard**

### **21st India – Russia Annual Summit**

#### **Why in News**

- 21st India-Russia Annual Summit was held between the Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Russian President Vladimir Putin in New Delhi on 06 December 2021.

### Key Points

- The two leaders expressed satisfaction at the sustained progress in the 'Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership' between both countries despite the challenges posed by the COVID pandemic.
- They welcomed the holding of the first meeting of the **2+2 Dialogue of Foreign and Defence Ministers** and the meeting of the Inter-Governmental Commission on Military & Military-Technical Cooperation in New Delhi on 6 December 2021.
- The role of connectivity through the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) and the proposed Chennai - Vladivostok Eastern Maritime Corridor figured in the discussions.
- 28 MoUs were signed between India and Russia on various sectors.
- The Joint Statement titled India-Russia: Partnership for Peace, Progress and Prosperity aptly covers the state and prospects of bilateral ties.
- Coinciding with the visit, several Government-to-Government Agreements and MoUs, as well as those between commercial and other organizations of both countries, were signed in different sectors such as trade, energy, science & technology, intellectual property, outer space, geological exploration, cultural exchange, education, etc.

**Note:** 22nd India-Russia Annual Summit will be held in Russia in 2022.

**Source: PIB**

### India and Bangladesh celebrates 'Maitri Diwas' on 6 December

#### Why in News

- '**Maitri Diwas**' also known as **India-Bangladesh Friendship day**, was commemorated in 18 countries across the world on 6 December, 2021.
- The day was commemorated in Belgium, Canada, Egypt, Indonesia, Russia, Qatar, Singapore, UK, Australia, France, Japan, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Switzerland, Thailand, UAE, and USA.

#### Key Points

- The Maitri Diwas is a reflection of the deep and abiding friendship between the people of India and Bangladesh.
- Ten days before the liberation of Bangladesh, India had recognised Bangladesh on 06 December 1971.
- India was one of the first countries to establish bilateral diplomatic ties with Bangladesh on December 6, 1971.

**Note:** During the visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Bangladesh in March 2021 to attend the national day of Bangladesh, it was decided to commemorate December 6 as the Maitri Diwas or Friendship Day.

**Source: newsonair**

## **EIU's Worldwide Cost of Living Index 2021**

### **Why in News**

- The **Worldwide Cost of Living Index 2021** released by the **Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU)** has listed the world's most expensive cities to live in 2021.
- **Tel Aviv, Israel** has become the world's most expensive city to live in, surpassing Paris and Singapore.

### **Key Points**

- The index explored the cost of living in 173 cities, 40 more than last year.
- It stated that prices for goods and services have risen by 3.5 percent year-on-year, the highest inflation rate seen in the last five years.

### **List of world's top 10 expensive cities:**

1. Tel Aviv
2. Paris
2. Singapore
4. Zurich
5. Hong Kong
6. New York
7. Geneva
8. Copenhagen
9. Los Angeles
10. Osaka

- **Syria's Damascus** was ranked as the **world's cheapest city.**

### **Facts about Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU):**

- **Headquarters:** London, United Kingdom
- **Founded:** 1946
- **Parent organization:** The Economist Group

**Source: Indian Express**

**Important News: India**

## **Union Minister of Tribal Affairs inaugurates a pictorial chronicle on Van Dhan programme and 14 Honey Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs)**

### **Why in News**

- Union Minister for Tribal Affairs Arjun Munda launched the **'TRIFED Van Dhan- A Chronicle of Tribal Grit & Enterprise'**.
- He launched the formation of **14 Honey Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs)** and a **MIS Portal** for Minimum Support Price (MSP) for Minor Forest Produces (MFP).
- He launched 9 promotional videos for promoting TRIBES INDIA and Van Dhan products.
- In addition, UNICEF and TRIFED signed an MoU on **Tribal Samvaad Network** (Communication campaign).
- The research report titled, 'Tribal Livelihoods: From Sustenance to Sustainability', has also been launched.

### **Key Points**

- In a short span of two years, it has successfully now sanctioned 52976 Van Dhan SHGs subsumed into 3110 VDVKCs covering 9.27 lakh beneficiaries & 27 States/UTs.

### **Formation of 14 Honey Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs):**

- Beekeeping activity has been recognized as one of the important activities by Govt of India for its promotion and development to achieve **"Sweet Revolution"** in the endeavor of enhancing income of farmers.
- A central scheme titled "Formation and Promotion of 10,000 Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs)" was launched to ensure economies of scale for farmers over the next five years.
- The National Bee Board (NBB), under the National Beekeeping & Honey Mission (NHBM), has planned to develop the scientific bee-keeping value chain for honey across 100 clusters in the country.
- TRIFED has been made the implementing agency by the Ministry of Agriculture to undertake the formation of 14 Honey FPOs alongside NAFED and NDDB in the states of Chhattisgarh, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha and Gujarat.

**Source: PIB**

## **Consumer Protection (Direct Selling) Rules, 2021**

### Why in News

- Central Government in exercise of the powers conferred by clause (zg) of sub-section (2) of section 101 read with section 94 of the **Consumer Protection Act, 2019** has notified the **Consumer Protection (Direct Selling) Rules, 2021**.

### Key Points

- These Rules shall apply to all goods and services bought or sold through direct selling, all models of direct selling, all direct selling entities offering goods and services to consumers in India, all forms of unfair trade practices across all models of direct selling and also to also to a direct selling entity which is not established in India, but offers goods or services to consumers in India.
- Existing direct selling entities need to comply of these rules within ninety days from the date of publication of these rules in the Official Gazette.
- The direct sellers as well as the direct selling entities using e-commerce platforms for sale shall comply with the requirements of the **Consumer Protection (e-Commerce) Rules, 2020**.

### The Rules provide for certain obligation upon Direct Selling Entities which inter alia include:-

- incorporation under the **Companies Act, 2013** or if a partnership firm, be registered under the **Partnership Act, 1932**, or if a limited liability partnership, be registered under the **Limited Liability Partnership Act, 2008**
- have a minimum of one physical location as its registered office within India
- make self-declaration to the effect that Direct Selling Entity has complied with the provisions of the Direct Selling rules and is not involved in any Pyramid Scheme or money circulation scheme

**Source: PIB**

### Atal Innovation Mission, NITI Aayog releases 'Innovations For You' & 'The Ingenious Tinkerers'

### Why in News

- **Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), NITI Aayog** released the 2nd edition of – **'Innovations for You'**- a compendium of

innovations focused on agriculture featuring 70 startups supported by Atal incubation Centers (AICs) of AIM and **'The Ingenious Tinkerers'** – a compendium on the innovations on technology featuring 41 innovations from **Atal Tinkering Lab (ATL)** of India.

### Key Points

- The **'Innovations For You'** is a compilation of successful innovations by the entrepreneurial minds of India solving problems of present for future, while as **'The Ingenious Tinkerers'** is a compilation of the top innovations created by young student innovators who participated in the ATL Marathon - which invites school students to address a problem that they see or face on a day-to-day basis.
- The **'Innovations For You'** in its second edition, focuses on the startups and innovations in the field of **Agriculture and Allied services**.
- The book is a compilation of 70 Ag-Tech startups, incubated at Atal Incubation Centres spread across the country.

**Note:** The first edition of this book was focused on innovations in Health Care, which was launched in October, 2021.

**Source: PIB**

### Global State of Democracy Report 2021

#### Why in News

- The number of countries moving towards authoritarianism in 2020 was higher than that of countries going in the other direction, towards democracy according to the **Global State of Democracy Report, 2021**.
- The report is released by the **International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International-IDEA)**.

#### Key Points

- The report aims to influence the global debate and analyses current trends and challenges to democracy, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- It offers specific policy recommendations to spark new and innovative thinking for policymakers, governments and civil society organizations supporting democracy.
- The pandemic placed considerable stress on democracy across the region by imposing inevitable restrictions on movement and—where governments were sensitive to criticism—also restrictions on freedom of expression.

- Democratically elected Governments, including established democracies, are increasingly adopting authoritarian tactics.
- The report highlighted the case of Brazil and India as some of the most worrying examples of backsliding.
- **India** remained in the **category of a mid-level performing democracy** as it has since 2000.

**Source: The Hindu**

## **Union Minister for Jal Shakti launches River Cities Alliance** **Why in News**

- **Union Minister for Jal Shakti Gajendra Singh Shekhawat** launched the **River Cities Alliance (RCA)**, a dedicated platform for river cities in India to ideate, discuss and exchange information for sustainable management of urban rivers.
- This first of its kind Alliance in the world symbolizes the successful partnership of the two Ministries i.e., **Ministry of Jal Shakti and Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.**

### **Key Point**

- The Alliance will focus on three broad themes- Networking, Capacity Building and Technical Support.
- The Secretariat of the Alliance will be set up at the National Institute for Urban Affairs (NIUA), with NMCG's support.
- The participating cities in the River Cities Alliance are Dehradun, Haridwar, Rishikesh, Srinagar, Begusarai, Bhagalpur, Munger, Patna, Berhampore, Hooghly-Chinsurah, Howrah, Jangipur, Maheshtala, Rajmahal, Sahibganj, Ayodhya, Bijnor, Farrukhabad, Kanpur, Mathura-Vrindavan, Mirzapur, Prayagraj, Varanasi, Aurangabad, Chennai, Bhubaneswar, Hyderabad, Pune, Udaipur and Vijayawada.

### **Related Initiatives:**

- Namami Gange Programme
- Ganga Action Plan
- National River Ganga Basin Authority
- Clean Ganga Fund
- Bhuvan-Ganga Web App
- Ban on Waste Disposal

**Source: PIB**

## **SWADESH project, World's First Multimodal Brain Imaging Data and Analytics**

**Why in News**

- **DBT-National Brain Research Centre (DBT-NBRC), Haryana** has recently developed the **SWADESH project, World's First Multimodal Brain Imaging Data and Analytics.**

#### **Key Points**

- SWADESH is a unique brain initiative focusing on certified neuroimaging, neurochemical, neuropsychological data and analytics that are made accessible to researchers for managing brain disorders.
- SWADESH is the **first large-scale multimodal neuroimaging database** designed specifically for the Indian population with big-data architecture and analytics for various disease categories under one platform.

#### **About Department of Biotechnology (DBT):**

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

#### **About National Brain Research Centre (NBRC):**

- National Brain Research Centre is the only institute in India dedicated to Neuroscience Research and Education.
- Scientists and students at NBRC come from diverse academic backgrounds, including biological, computational, mathematical, physical, engineering and medical sciences, and use multidisciplinary approaches to unravel secrets of the brain.

**Source: PIB**

## **India to chair Counter-Terrorism Committee of UNSC in January 2022**

#### **Why in News**

- **India** will chair the **Counter-Terrorism Committee of United Nations Security Council (UNSC)** in January 2022 after 10 years.
- India's Permanent Representative to the United Nations (UN) Ambassador TS Tirumurti had announced in January, 2021 that, India will chair 3 important communities (**Taliban Sanctions Committee, Libya Sanctions Committee and Counter-Terrorism Committee**) at the UNSC in 2021-22.

#### **Key Points**

- The **Counter-Terrorism Committee** was established by Security Council resolution 1373 adopted unanimously on 28 September 2001 in the wake of the 9/11 terror attacks in the US.
- The Committee was tasked with monitoring implementation of resolution 1373 which requested countries to implement a number of measures aimed at enhancing their legal and institutional ability to counter terrorist activities at home and around the world.

#### **Facts about United Nations:**

- **Formation:** 24 October 1945
- **Headquarter:** New York, USA
- **Membership:** 193 member states

#### **The United Nations has six principal organs:**

- The General Assembly
- The Security Council
- The Economic and Social Council
- The International Court of Justice
- The UN Secretariat
- The Trusteeship Council

#### **Facts about UNSC (United Nations Security Council):**

- **Formation:** 24 October 1945
- **Membership:** 15 countries
- **Permanent members:** 5 (China, France, Russia, United Kingdom and United States)
- **Non-permanent members:** 10 including India

**Source:** newsonair

### **State of India's Livelihood (SOIL) Report 2021: Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs)**

#### **Why in News**

- The **State of India's Livelihood (SOIL) Report 2021** has stated that just 1-5 % of **Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs)** have received funding under central government schemes in the last 7 years.

#### **Key Points**

- Access Development Services, a national livelihoods support organisation has prepared the SOIL report.

- It has analysed only Farmer Producer Companies (FPC — FPOs registered under The Companies Act, 2013) since they make up a large majority of the organisations started in recent years.
- The number of FPOs registered as cooperatives or societies is very small.

### **About Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs):**

- The concept of 'Farmer Producer Organisations (FPO)' consists of collectivization of producers especially small and marginal farmers so as to form an effective alliance to collectively address many challenges of agriculture such as improved access to investment, technology, inputs, and markets.
- FPO is one type of Producer Organisation (PO) where the members are farmers.

### **Support for FPOs:**

- FPOs are generally mobilized by promoting institutions/ Resource Agencies (RAs).
- Small Farmers' Agribusiness Consortium (SFAC) is providing support for the promotion of FPOs.
- The resource agencies leverage the support available from governments and agencies like **National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD)** to promote and nurture FPOs.

**Note:** The **Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare** has launched the Central Sector Scheme titled '**Formation & Promotion of 10,000 Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs)**'.

**Source: DTE**

## **India clears 2 new vaccines and Merck's COVID Pill**

### **Why in News**

- **India** cleared two more vaccines and one anti-viral drug to boost the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The two latest vaccines cleared by India are **Corbevax** and **Covovax**. The anti-viral drug **Molnupiravir** can be used during emergency.

### **Key Points**

- **Corbevax** is India's first homegrown "RBD protein sub-unit vaccine". It is made by the Hyderabad-based firm Biological-E.
- It's now the third vaccine developed in India.

- The other two vaccines developed in India are Bharat Biotech's Covaxin and the Serum Institute of India's (SII) Covishield.
- The nanoparticle vaccine, **Covovax**, will be manufactured by the Pune-based SII.
- The anti-viral drug **Molnupiravir** will be manufactured in India by 13 companies for restricted use under emergency situations to treat adult patients with COVID-19.

#### **Number of approved COVID vaccines:**

- With the latest approvals, a total of **eight COVID-19 vaccines** have got emergency use authorisation from India's drug regulator - **Covishield, Covaxin, ZyCoV-D, Sputnik V, Moderna, Johnson and Johnson, Corbevax and Covovax.**

**Source: ndtv**

## **India welcomes Egypt as 4<sup>th</sup> member of BRICS New Development Bank**

### **Why in News**

- India has welcomed **Egypt's** entry as the 4<sup>th</sup> new member of the **BRICS New Development Bank (NDB).**
- The NDB admitted **Bangladesh, United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Uruguay** as its new members in September 2021.

### **Key Points**

- The BRICS set up the bank with an aim to mobilise resources for infrastructure and sustainable development projects in emerging economies.

### **About New Development Bank (NDB):**

- It is a multilateral development bank established by the **BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa)** countries.
- It is headquartered in **Shanghai, China.**
- On 15 July 2014, the first day of the 6th BRICS summit held in Fortaleza, Brazil, the BRICS states signed the Agreement on the New Development Bank.
- **Authorized Capital:** NDB has an authorized capital of US\$ 100 billion, which is open for subscription by members of the United Nations.
- Since the beginning of its operations, the bank approved about 80 projects in all of its members, totalling a portfolio of USD 30 billion.

**Source: ET**

## Defence Ministry restricts import of 351 more items for 'Make in India' push

### Why in News

- The **Ministry of Defence (MoD)** announced curbs on the import of **351 systems and components** to boost indigenisation in defence manufacturing and to ensure foreign exchange savings of ₹3,000 crore a year.
- This was the third such list issued by the defence ministry in the past 16 months as part of efforts to make India a hub for developing and manufacturing military hardware.

### Key Points

- The curbs on the import of 351 items – including components such as a missile approach warning sensor, shells, propellants, electrical parts, missile containers, a torpedo tube launcher and a gun fire control system – will kick in over the next three years.
- The import of 172 systems and components will be stopped from December 2022, while curbs on another batch of 89 items will come into effect from December 2023. The import of a further 90 items will be stopped from December 2024.

### Note:

- The defence ministry announced in August 2020 that India will stop importing 101 weapons and military platforms.
- A second list issued in May, 2021 restricted the import of 108 more weapons and systems.

### Related Initiatives:

- In May 2020, the **Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)** limit under the automatic route in the defence sector was hiked from 49% to 74%.
- In October 2021, the government dissolved the four-decade-old Ordnance Factory Board (OFB) and amalgamated 41 factories under seven new state-owned companies to manufacture defence hardware ranging from munitions to heavy weapons and vehicles.

**Source: HT**

**Centre approves Rs 3,063.21 crore additional assistance to states for natural disasters**

### Why in News

- The **High Level Committee (HLC)**, under the Chairmanship of the Union Home Minister, Amit Shah, has approved additional Central assistance under the **National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF)**, to six States, which were affected by floods, landslides and cyclones during 2021.

### Key Points

The HLC approved additional Central assistance of **Rs. 3,063.21 crore** from the NDRF:

- For Cyclone **'Tauktae'- 2021, Rs.1,133.35 crore to Gujarat;**
- For Cyclone **'Yaas'- 2021, Rs.586.59 crore to West Bengal;**
- For floods/landslides during the South West Monsoon, 2021, **Rs. 51.53 crore to Assam, Rs. 504.06 Crore to Karnataka, Rs. 600.50 crore to Madhya Pradesh and Rs. 187.18 crore to Uttarakhand.**
- This additional assistance is over and above the funds released by the Centre to the States in the **State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF)**, already placed at the disposal of the States.

**Note:** During the year 2021-22, the Central Government had deputed 22 Inter-Ministerial Central Teams (IMCTs) immediately after natural calamities, without waiting for the receipt of a Memorandum from the affected State Governments.

**Source: PIB**

### Vernacular Innovation Program (VIP): NITI Aayog

#### Why in News

- **Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), NITI Aayog** has launched a first of its kind **Vernacular Innovation Program (VIP)** to Empower Innovators, Entrepreneurs.
- The programme will enable innovators and entrepreneurs in India to have access to the innovation ecosystem in **22 scheduled languages** by the Government of India.

#### Key Points

- **Vernacular Innovation Program (VIP)** is an initiative to lower the language barrier in the field of innovation and entrepreneurship such that it will systematically decouple creative expressions and languages of transaction.

- To build the necessary capacity for the VIP, AIM has identified and will be training a Vernacular Task Force (VTF) in each of the 22 scheduled languages.
- Each task force comprises vernacular language teachers, subject experts, technical writers, and the leadership of regional Atal Incubation Centers (AICs).

**Note:**

- According to the 2011 census, only 10.4% of Indians speak English, most as their second, third, or fourth language.
- Only 0.02% of Indians spoke English as their first language.

**Other Initiatives Related to Entrepreneurship/ Innovation:**

- IMPRINT (IMPacting Research INnovation and Technology)
- Uchhatar Avishkar Yojana
- India Innovation Index
- Mission Innovation 2.0
- StartUp India initiative
- AIM-PRIME
- AIM-iCREST: NITI Aayog
- Atal Tinkering Labs
- Atal Community Innovation Center

**Source: PIB**

**Union Agriculture Minister releases the book “Spices Statistics at a Glance 2021”**

**Why in News**

- Union Minister for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Narendra Singh Tomar released the book ‘**Spices Statistics at a Glance 2021**’.

**Key Points**

- The book is a compendium of all the spices statistics like, area, production, productivity, export, import, price and value of output of various spices produced in the country.
- The book is published by the Directorate of Arecanut and Spices Development (DASD), Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, the nodal agency for collection and compilation of area and production estimates of spices at National level.

- The book highlights the growth achieved in the spices sector during the last seven years from 2014-15 to 2020-21 in the country.
- Spices production in the Country grew from 67.64 lakh tonnes in 2014-15 to 106.79 lakh tonnes in 2020-21 with an annual growth rate 7.9%, following an increase in area from 32.24 lakh hectare to 45.28 lakh hectare.
- The export of spices contributes 41% of the total export earnings from all horticulture crops in the country and it ranks fourth among agricultural commodities, falling behind only the marine products, non basmati rice and basmati rice.

**Related Government Initiative:**

- Recently, the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) inaugurated the fifth session of the Codex Committee on Spices and Culinary Herbs (CCSCH) established under Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC).

**Source: PIB**

**Dr. Subhas Sarkar releases the Hindi translation of Tolkāppiyam**

**Why in News**

- Minister of State for Education, Dr. Subhas Sarkar released the Hindi translation of **Tolkāppiyam** and the Kannada translations of 9 books of Classical Tamil literature.

**Key Points**

- Tamil literature goes back to the Sangam Era, named after the assembly (sangam) of poets.
- Tamil writing systems date back to 250 BCE and Tamil *sangam* poetry contains 2381 poems in Tamil composed by 473 poets, some 102 anonymous.
- Most scholars suggest the historical *canakam* literature era spanned from c. 300 BCE to 600 CE to be among the finest of world literature.
- *Tolkappiyam* is the most ancient extant Tamil grammar text and the oldest extant long work of Tamil literature.
- Some in the Tamil tradition place the text in the mythical second *sangam*, variously in 1<sup>st</sup> millennium BCE or earlier.
- *Tolkappiyam*, a unique work on grammar and poetics, in its three parts of nine sections each, deals with *Ezhuttu* (letter), *Col* (word) and *Porul* (subject matter).

- The *Tolkappiyam in Hindi translation in verse (Text, Transliteration, and Translations)* was translated by Dr. H. Balasubramaniam and Prof. K. Nachimuthu.

**Source: PIB**

## **Use of Drone in Pesticide Application for Crop Protection and for spraying Soil and Crop Nutrients**

### **Why in News**

- The Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare released **Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)** for use of **Drone** in Pesticide Application for Crop Protection and for spraying Soil and Crop Nutrients.

### **Key Points**

- The use of **Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs)** commonly known as **drones** have great potential to revolutionize Indian agriculture and ensure the country's food security.
- The drones were used for the first time in warding off locust attacks in various states of the country.

### **Other Uses of Drone Technology in Agriculture:**

- Crop Monitoring
- Optimum Nutrient Delivery
- Better Crop Management

**Rules for Drone Regulations in India:** The National drone policy has been notified and the **Drone Rules 2021** have been made significantly easier for people and companies in the country to now own and operate drones.

**Source: PIB**

## **Sports Ministry released ₹ 6,801.30 crore under various sports development schemes in the last 5 years**

### **Why in News**

- The **Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports** has released ₹ 6,801.30 crore under various sports development schemes in the last 5 years.
- This information was given by the Minister of Youth Affairs & Sports Anurag Thakur in Lok Sabha.

### **Key Points**

- The Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports runs the following schemes for the development of sports in the country, including at the village level:
  - i.Khelo India Scheme
  - ii.Assistance to National Sports Federations
  - iii.Special Awards to Winners in International Sports Events and their Coaches
  - iv.National Sports Awards
  - v.Pension to Meritorious Sportspersons
  - vi.Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay National Sports Welfare Fund
  - vii.National Sports Development Fund
  - viii.Running Sports Training Centres through Sports Authority of India

**Note:**

- During the last five years, a sum of ₹ 7,072.28 crore was allocated and a sum of ₹ 6,801.30 crore was released under the various sports development schemes of this Ministry.

**Source: PIB**

## **NITI Aayog signs a Statement of Intent with United Nations World Food Program**

### **Why in News**

- **NITI Aayog** signed a **Statement of Intent (Sol)** with the **United Nations World Food Program (WFP)**.
- The partnership focuses on mainstreaming of **millets** and supporting India in taking lead globally in knowledge exchange using the opportunity of **2023 as an International Year of Millets**.

### **Key Points**

- Further, the partnership will aim at building resilient livelihoods for small-holder farmers and adaptation capacities to climate change and transforming food systems.
- The Sol focuses on strategic and technical collaboration between NITI Aayog and WFP, to strengthen climate resilient agriculture for enhanced food and nutrition security in India.
- Recognizing the importance of millets, the Government of India observed 2018 as a year of millets.
- Leading this initiative further, Government of India spearheaded the UNGA resolution for declaring 2023 as the International Year of Millets.

- Numerous steps have been taken to promote millets including establishment of centre for Excellence, Integration of nutri-cereals in National Food Security Act and establishment of Millet Mission in multiple states.

**Note:** Recently, **Atal Innovation Mission (AIM)**, **NITI Aayog** and the **United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF)** launched the **first AgriTech Challenge cohort** for its ambitious innovative Agri-tech program that aims to help smallholder farmers across Asia and Africa to address their challenges in the aftermath of the pandemic.

**Source: PIB**

## **PM Modi visits Prayagraj and participates in a programme attended by lakhs of women**

### **Why in News**

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** visited Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh and participated in a programme being held to empower women, especially at the grassroot level.

### **Key Points**

- The Prime Minister transferred an amount of Rs. 1000 crore in the bank account of **Self Help Groups (SHGs)**, benefitting around 16 lakh women members of the SHGs.
- This transfer is being done under the **Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Rural Livelihood Mission (DAY-NRLM)**, with 80,000 SHGs receiving Community Investment Fund (CIF) of Rs. 1.10 lakh per SHG and 60,000 SHGs receiving Revolving Fund of Rs. 15000 per SHG.
- The programme witnessed the Prime Minister encouraging **Business Correspondent-Sakhis (B.C.-Sakhis)**, by transferring Rs. 4000 as first month's stipend in account of 20,000 B.C.-Sakhis.
- During the programme, the Prime Minister also transferred a total amount of over 20 crore to more than 1 lakh beneficiaries under the **Mukhya Mantri Kanya Sumangala Scheme**.
- The Prime Minister laid the foundation stone of 202 Supplementary Nutrition Manufacturing Units.

**Source: PIB**

## **Bajrang Punia to take Prime Minister's 'Meet the Champions' campaign ahead**

### **Why in News**

- **Olympic Bronze Medallist Bajrang Punia** will take Prime Minister's '**Meet the Champions**' campaign ahead.

### **Key Points**

- The unique initiative is part of the Government's 'Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav', and was kicked off by Olympic Gold Medallist Neeraj Chopra in Gujarat this month.
- Taking the Prime Minister Narendra Modi's unique school visit campaign ahead, Indian wrestler and Tokyo Olympics Bronze Medallist Bajrang Punia will visit Haryana's Aarohi Model School in Panipat on December 23rd and meet the young students to talk about the importance of Santulit Aahaar (Balanced Diet), Fitness and Sports.
- The special school campaign is jointly being organized by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports.

**Source: PIB**

## **Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh inaugurates Good Governance Week (20-25 December, 2021)**

### **Why in News**

- Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Science & Technology; Personnel, Public Grievances, Pensions, Dr Jitendra Singh inaugurated the **Good Governance Week (20-25 December, 2021)** to showcase and replicate the best governance practices at Grassroots level.
- The Minister also launched '**Prashasan Gaon ki Aur**'- **A Nationwide campaign** for Redressal of Public Grievances and Improving Service Delivery.

### **Key Points**

- As a part of Azaadi ka Amrut Mahotsav celebrations in the 75th Year of India's Independence, a Good Governance Week is being celebrated with the **Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG)** as the Nodal Department.

- Through “Prashasan Gaon Ki Aur”- a Nation-wide campaign for Redressal of Public Grievances and Improving Service Delivery will be held in all Districts, States, and Union Territories of India.
- Over 700 District Collectors will be participating in “Prashasan Gaon Ki Aur” and during the weeklong event, will visit Tehsil/Panchayat Samiti Headquarters to provide timely grievance redressal and improve service delivery.

**Note:**

- During the event, Dr Jitendra Singh inaugurated the Exhibition on Good Governance Practices – **“Shaasan Ki Badalti Tasveer”**.
- He also launched the **Good Governance Week Portal** and released the booklet on 2 year achievements of DARPG.

**Source: PIB**

### **The Tourism Ministry under ‘Swadesh Darshan’ scheme has sanctioned 5 projects under Buddhist circuit**

#### **Why in News**

- The **Ministry of Tourism** with an objective to create tourism infrastructure in the country, provides financial assistance to the State Governments/ Union Territory Administrations/ Central Agencies under its schemes of **‘Swadesh Darshan’** and **‘Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual, Heritage Augmentation Drive’ (PRASHAD)**.
- This information was given by Minister of Tourism Shri G. Kishan Reddy in Lok Sabha.

#### **Key Points**

- The Ministry under ‘Swadesh Darshan’ scheme has sanctioned 5 projects under Buddhist circuit theme including 1 project in Uttar Pradesh.
- In addition, another project ‘Development of Wayside Amenities in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar’ for an amount of Rs. 17.93 Crore at Varanasi-Gaya; Lucknow-Ayodhya- Lucknow; Gorakhpur Kushinagar; Kushinagar - Gaya Kushinagar routes has also been sanctioned.
- In addition, an Action Plan has been formulated with a view to evolve a coordinated strategy for "Revival of India as a Global Centre of Buddhist Culture and Tourism with Special Focus on Bodhgaya”.

- The Action Plan includes interventions under 4 verticals: i) Connectivity; ii) Infrastructure and Logistics; iii) Cultural Heritage, Research & Education; and iv) Public Awareness, Communication & Outreach and the Ministry of Tourism has been made the nodal Ministry for monitoring the implementation of the Action Plan.

**Source: PIB**

## 19,535 villages declared as “Sampoorna Sukanya Gram” under Sukanya Samridhhi Yojana campaign

### Why in News

- The Government has taken many effective steps for successful implementation of '**Sukanya Samridhhi Yojana**' to ensure maximum benefits to girls.
- This was stated by Union Minister of State for Finance Shri Pankaj Chaudhary in Lok Sabha.

### Key Points

- Giving more details, the Minister stated that the campaign run by DoP is given below:

Sr. No.	Details of Campaign	Duration
1	Balika Shakti Campaign	09.12.2019 to 18.01.2020
2	Mahila Divas Campaign	24.02.2020 to 07.03.2020
3	National Girl Child Day Campaign	January, 2021
4	<b>Sampoorna Sukanya Gram Campaign</b> - To ensure the reach of Sukanya Samridhhi Account (SSA) till last mile, a "Sampoorna Sukanya Gram Campaign" was launched during June 2019. In this campaign at least 5 villages to be enmarking Sampoorna Sukanya Village (Gram). It covers opening of Sukanya Samridhhi Account for all eligible girl child in that village. <b>Till 31.03.2021, a total of 19,535 villages declared as "Sampoorna Sukanya Gram".</b>	

**Source: PIB**

## Cabinet approves Treaty between India and Poland concerning Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters

### Why in News

- The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved the **Treaty on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters** between the Government of the Republic of India and the Republic of Poland.

### Key Points

- The Treaty aims to enhance effectiveness of both the countries in investigation and prosecution of crime, through cooperation and mutual legal assistance in criminal matters.
- In the context of transnational crime and its linkages to terrorism, the proposed Treaty will provide a broad legal framework for bilateral cooperation with Poland in investigation and prosecution of crime as well as in tracing, restrain and confiscation of proceeds and instruments of crime as well as the funds meant to finance terrorist acts.

**Note:** India has entered into Mutual Legal Assistance Treaties/Agreements with 42 countries (November 2019).

### Facts about Poland:

- **Capital:** Warsaw
- **Currency:** Polish złoty
- **President:** Andrzej Duda

**Source: PIB**

### India among most unequal nations; top 1% of population holds 22% of national income: World Inequality Report 2022

#### Why in News

- India is now among the most unequal countries in the world.
- The report, titled '**World Inequality Report 2022**', has been authored by Lucas Chancel, co-director of the World Inequality Lab, and coordinated by several experts, including French economist Thomas Piketty.

#### Key Points

- India stands out as a poor and very unequal country, with the top 1% of the population holding more than one-fifth of the total national income in 2021 and the bottom half just 13%.
- The report pointed out that the average national income of the Indian adult population is ₹2,04,200. While the bottom 50% earns ₹53,610, the top 10% earns more than 20 times (₹1,166,520).

- While the top 10% and top 1% hold respectively 57% and 22% of total national income, the bottom 50% share has gone down to 13%.
- Average household wealth in India stands at ₹983,010.
- It also said gender inequalities in India are very high.
- The female labour income share is equal to 18%.
- This is significantly lower than the average in Asia (21%, excluding China).

**Related Reports:**

- India Inequality Report 2021
- Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI)

**Source: The Hindu**

**Union Minister of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj releases 'Localization of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)' Report**

**Why in News**

- Union Minister of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Giriraj Singh released the Report on **"Localization of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through Panchayati Raj Institutions"**.

**Key Points**

- On this occasion, two dedicated Dashboards namely (i) Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP) Monitoring Dashboard on monitoring the progress of GPDP and (ii) Training Management Portal on Capacity Building and Training of Elected Representatives and Functionaries of Panchayati Raj Institutions were launched.
- Handbook on Training Management Portal was also released.
- This informative report will serve as plan for action towards achieving the SDGs.

**Background:**

- India is a signatory of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030.
- The Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR) is committed to the achievements of SDGs through the Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA) Scheme.
- The RGSA scheme mandates to capacitate elected representatives for good governance through attainment of SDGs through participatory local planning at Gram Panchayat level.

**Source: PIB**

**Assisted Reproductive Technology (Regulation) Bill, 2021P**

**Why in News**

- Rajya Sabha has passed the Assisted Reproductive Technology (Regulation) Bill, 2021.
- The Bill has already been passed by the Lok Sabha.
- The Upper House also passed the Surrogacy (Regulation) Bill, 2020 with amendments moved by the government.

### Key Points

- The Assisted Reproductive Technology (Regulation) Bill, 2021 provides for the regulation and supervision of the assisted reproductive technology clinics and the assisted reproductive technology banks.
- The Bill provides that every Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART) clinic and bank must be registered under the National Registry of Banks and Clinics of India.
- The Legislation also envisages prevention of misuse, safe and ethical practice of assisted reproductive technology services for addressing the issues of reproductive health where assisted reproductive technology is required for becoming a parent or for freezing gametes, embryos, embryonic tissues for further use due to infertility, disease or social or medical concerns.

Source: newsonair

## Three Indian companies among top 100 in arms sales globally: SIPRI Report

### Why in News

- **Three Indian companies** are among the world's top 100 for combined arms sales in 2020, according to a new report by **the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)**.
- The three are: **Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL), Indian Ordnance Factories** and **Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL)**.

**Note:** The three were ranked among the top 100 in arms sales in 2019 as well.

### Key Points

- In the latest rankings, **HAL** is at number 42 with US\$ 2.97 billion, up 1.5 percent from 2019 sales.
- **Indian Ordnance Factories** are at the 60th spot, with US\$ 1.9 billion in sales, up 0.2 percent from the previous year.
- **BEL** is ranked 66, with US\$ 1.63 billion in arms sales, up 4 percent compared to 2019.
- India's share of arms sales globally in 2020 was 1.2 percent.

### Top Countries:

- With 41 arms companies, the **USA** has the highest number of companies in the top 100 worldwide. Together, their arms sales amounted to \$285 billion, an increase of 1.9 percent compared with 2019.
- China was second at 13 percent, followed by the UK at 7.1 percent.

**Source: Indian Express**

## **Launch of the Resource Book on Springshed Management in the Indian Himalayan Region by NITI Aayog**

### **Why in News**

- The **Resource Book on Springshed Management** in the Indian Himalayan Region was released by **NITI Aayog**.
- This Resource Book is a summarised guiding document on best practices in springshed management developed by NITI Aayog in collaboration with IWMI and SDC under the “Strengthening Climate Change Adaptation in Himalayas (SCA-Himalayas)” project.

### **Key Points**

- This resource book offers practical guidance on revival and conservation of mountain springs.
- The resource book is an easy-to-use document building upon the processes, methods, and learnings from more than a decade of spring revival efforts by various agencies in the Indian Himalayan Region (IHR) and neighbouring Nepal and Bhutan.

### **Note:**

- Springs are the primary water source for over 90% of rural communities in the IHR.
- However, there has been increasing concern over the decline of springs and the larger Himalayan groundwater systems, which threatens the water security of the hill populations and the entire Indo-Gangetic plains.

**Source: PIB**

## **NDPS (Amendment) Bill, 2021**

### **Why in News**

- A Bill to replace an ordinance amending the **Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act (NDPS), 1985** was introduced in the Lok Sabha.

### Key Points

- The **NDPS (Amendment) Bill, 2021** would replace an ordinance promulgated in September 2021 to correct a drafting error in a 2014 amendment to the Act.
- Before the 2014 amendment, clause (viii-a) of Section 2 contained sub-clauses (i) to (v), which defined the term “illicit traffic”.

### About Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985:

- The Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985, commonly referred to as the NDPS Act, is an Act of the Parliament of India that prohibits a person the production/manufacturing/cultivation, possession, sale, purchasing, transport, storage, and/or consumption of any narcotic drug or psychotropic substance.

### Initiatives to Tackle Drug Addiction:

- Narco-Coordination Centre
- Seizure Information Management System
- National Drug Abuse Survey
- Nasha Mukh Bharat

Source: The Hindu

### NITI Aayog and Bharti Foundation announce the launch of ‘Convoke 2021-22’

#### Why in News

- **NITI Aayog** in partnership with Bharti Foundation, the philanthropic arm of **Bharti Enterprises**, launched ‘**Convoke 2021-22**’.

#### Key Points

- **Convoke** is a National research Symposium which aims at addressing challenges in imparting education and strengthening its quality with special focus on all teachers, educationists, heads of schools across India.
- Through this platform, **School Teachers/ Heads/Principals of Government Schools** and teachers from Bharti Foundation network will be encouraged to use research-based solutions through scientific approach, and showcase their efforts taken at the grass-root level in improving learning outcomes.

- It will promote the suggestions of the National Education Policy 2020 on recognizing novel approaches to teaching that improve learning outcomes in their classrooms.

**Source: PIB**

## **Atmanirbhar Hastshilpkar Scheme**

### **Why in News**

- Recently, **NEDFi** announced the **Atmanirbhar Hastshilpkar Scheme** for the Artisans under the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region.

### **Key Points**

- With the objective to develop the petty artisans of the North Eastern Region by providing financial assistance in the form of term loan for income generating activities for setting up / expansion / modernization / working capital requirement and other activities related to the sector, NEDFi has introduced **Atmanirbhar Hastshilpkar Scheme** to the grass root Artisans of the region.
- During the launching ceremony, a total of 17 artisans have been provided with credit assistance of Rs.1 lakh per artisan.
- The credit facility is collateral free and carries a subsidized interest rate of 6% p.a., which is repayable in 24 months.
- For regular repayment, an incentive of 1% on the interest rate is provided, which will be refunded to the artisans on successful repayment of loans.

### **About North Eastern Development Finance Corporation Ltd. (NEDFi):**

- NEDFi, a premier financial institution in the North-Eastern Region with its head office at Dispur, Guwahati and branch offices all across North-Eastern Region has completed an eventful twenty-six years since its establishment in 1995.
- Over the years, the Corporation has provided loans to over 7500 projects and taken up several development initiatives through its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities in the eight states of North-East India.

**Source: PIB**

**MoHUA and UNDP sign MoU for strengthening Waste Management Sector under SBM-U 2.0**

### Why in News

- The **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA)**, Government of India signed a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** with the **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)** India to strengthen the waste management sector in India under the **Swachh Bharat Mission- Urban 2.0 (SBM-U 2.0)**.

### Key Points

- The MoU will be operational for a period of five years (2021-26).
- Through this MoU, UNDP India will also be facilitating the setting up of 75 Smart Swachhata Kendras across the country, working with local partners and Urban Local Bodies (ULBs).
- The collaboration between MoHUA and UNDP India is another step towards realizing the vision of 'Clean Air, Clean Water, Clean Land' in urban India through a circular economy approach based on the 3R (reduce, reuse, recycle) principle.
- With concerted focus on source segregation and scientific processing of municipal solid waste, the waste processing capacity in India has gone up by nearly 4 times, from 18% in 2014, to 70% on date.

### About Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban 2.0 (SBM-U 2.0):

- It envisions to make all cities 'Garbage Free' and ensure grey and black water management in all cities other than those covered under AMRUT, make all urban local bodies as ODF+ and those with a population of less than 1 lakh as ODF++, thereby achieving the vision of safe sanitation in urban areas.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched SBM-U 2.0 on October 01, 2021.

Source: PIB

### Ministry of Culture implements Scheme of Financial Assistance for the Development of Buddhist/Tibetan Culture and Art under "Kala Sanskriti Vikas Yojna"

### Why in News

- Recently, the **Ministry of Culture** implemented a Scheme of Financial Assistance for the Development of Buddhist/Tibetan Culture and Art under "**Kala Sanskriti Vikas Yojna (KSVY)**".

### Key Points

- Under this scheme, financial assistance is provided to the voluntary Buddhist and Tibetan Organizations including Monasteries engaged in the propagation and scientific development of Buddhist/ Tibetan Culture and tradition, located in any part of the country.

- The quantum of funding is Rs.30.00 lakhs per year for an organization.
- The Expert Advisory Committee (EAC) on the scheme is empowered to recommend the amount beyond the maximum limit but not exceeding Rs.1.00 crore from this scheme.

**Kala Sanskriti Vikas Yojna (KSVY):**

- It is an umbrella scheme under the Ministry of Culture for the promotion of art and culture in the country. It is a central sector scheme.

**Source: PIB**

**BEE announces 31st National Energy Conservation Awards and 1st National Energy Efficiency Innovations Awards**

**Why in News**

- **Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE)**, under the guidance of Ministry of Power, recognizes and encourages endeavors of industrial units, institutions and establishments in reducing energy consumption by felicitating them with **National Energy Conservation Awards (NECA)** on the occasion of **National Energy Conservation Day**, celebrated on **14<sup>th</sup> December** every year.
- This year, a new award - **National Energy Efficiency Innovation Awards (NEEIA)** is also institutionalized.

**Key Points**

- This year, the NECA and NEEIA awards are being organized as part of the “Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav”.
- The National Energy Conservation Awards are given to the energy-intensive units of various sectors of the Indian economy for their exceptional achievements in reducing the specific energy consumption.

**About Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE):**

- The BEE is a statutory body established through the Energy Conservation Act, 2001 under the Union Ministry of Power.

**Efforts Related to Energy Efficiency and Conservation:**

**Global:**

- International Energy Agency
- Sustainable Energy for All (SEforALL)
- Paris Agreement

**Indian:**

- Energy Conservation Act, 2001
- PAT Scheme: Perform Achieve and Trade Scheme
- Energy Conservation Building Code (ECBC)

- Demand Side Management

**Source: PIB**

## **Data on job loss during the 2020 lockdown for COVID pandemic**

### **Why in News**

- Recently, the **Ministry of Labour and Employment** presented the data on job loss during the 2020 lockdown for COVID pandemic.
- The data is based on the **All India Quarterly Establishment based Employment Survey (AQEES)**.

### **Key Points**

- About 7.5 percent job losses were seen during the lockdown for COVID pandemic last year, with the manufacturing, construction, education and trade sectors bearing the brunt more than white-collared employment in IT/BPOs, financial services and health sectors.
- Among the nine key sectors covered for the AQEES, the manufacturing sector recorded job losses of 14.2 lakh between the pre-lockdown (March 25, 2020) and post-lockdown (July 1, 2020) period.
- Construction sector recorded a loss of 1 lakh, while trade and education sectors registered job losses of 1.8 lakh and 2.8 lakh, respectively.
- Job losses in the financial services sector, on the other hand, were recorded at 0.4 lakh and at 1 lakh for the IT/BPOs sector during the same period.
- Female workers registered a job loss of 7.44 per cent among the nine key sectors, while the job loss figure for male workers between the pre-lockdown and post-lockdown period stood at 7.48 percent, data showed.

### **About All-India Quarterly Establishment-based Employment Survey (AQEES):**

- The **AQEES** has been taken up by the **Labour Bureau** to provide frequent (quarterly) updates about the employment and related variables of establishments, in both organised and unorganised segments of nine selected sectors.
- The 9 sectors are Manufacturing, Construction, Trade, Transport, Education, Health, Accommodation and Restaurants, IT/BPO, Financial Service Activities.

**Components:**

- Quarterly Employment Survey (QES)
- Area Frame Establishment Survey (AFES)

**Related Initiatives:**

- Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana
- Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme
- The Atma Nirbhar Bharat Rojgar Yojana as part of Atma Nirbhar Bharat package 3.0
- Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Urban Livelihoods Mission

**Source: Indian Express**

**Important News: State**

**Amit Shah inaugurates 'Bharat Darshan Park' in Delhi**

**Why in News**

- **Union Home Minister Amit Shah** inaugurated the '**Bharat Darshan Park**' in New Delhi which showcases attractive replicas of several iconic monuments of India built with scrap and waste material.

**Key Points**

- The recreational garden was built by the South Delhi Municipal Corporation on the '**waste-to-wealth**' model.
- A total of 22 replicas have been put up in the park. These include replicas of 21 monuments and a tree.
- The theme of the park is 'Unity and Diversity'.
- These replicas have been built with scrap and waste material such as dumped old vehicles, fans, iron rods, nuts and bolts, lying unused or abandoned.
- Like 'Waste to Wonder Park', 'Bharat Darshan Park' will also become a popular tourist spot of Delhi, where people will be able to see 'mini India' in one place.
- 'Waste-to-Wonder Park' in Sarai Kale Khan Area was opened in February 2019.

**Source: Business Standard**

## PM Modi inaugurates & lays foundation stone of hydropower projects in Himachal Pradesh

### Why in News

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** inaugurated and laid the foundation stone of hydropower projects worth over Rs 11,000 crore in Mandi, Himachal Pradesh.

### Key Points

#### Prime Minister laid the foundation stone of:

- **Luhri Stage- I HEP (210 MW)**, River: Satluj, Location: Near Nirath Village, Distt. Shimla and Kullu (HP)
- **Dhulasidh HEP (66 MW)**, River: Beas, Location: Dhulasidh, Distt. Hamirpur (HP)
- He also laid the foundation stone of **Renukaji Dam project (40 MW)** and inaugurated **Sawra-Kuddu Hydro Power Project (111 MW)**.
- He mentioned that 'In 2016, India had set a target to meet 40 percent of its installed electricity capacity from non-fossil energy sources by 2030'.

**Note:** The first edition of the **three-day Kashi Indian International Film Festival** commenced in Uttar Pradesh's Varanasi on 27<sup>th</sup> December 2021.

**Source: PIB**

## Centre extends AFSPA in Nagaland for six more months

### in News

- The Centre has extended the **Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA)** in **Nagaland** for another six months.

### Key Points

- The AFSPA empowers security forces to conduct operations and arrest anyone without any prior warrant.

### Note:

- Recently, the Union government instituted a high-level committee chaired by a Secretary-level officer to examine the possibility of withdrawing the AFSPA in Nagaland.
- Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India Vivek Joshi will head the five-member committee.

**Source: India Today**

## Indian Army establishes Quantum Laboratory at Mhow (MP)

### Why in News

- The **Indian Army**, with support from the **National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS)** has recently established the **Quantum Laboratory** at Military College of Telecommunication Engineering (MCTE), Mhow (MP) to spearhead research and training in this key developing field.

### Key Points

- Indian Army has also established an Artificial Intelligence (AI) Centre at the same institution with over 140 deployments in forward areas and active support of industry and academia.
- Ideation for Army's involvement in Electromagnetic Spectrum Operations was done in a seminar on Electromagnetic Spectrum and National Security organised in October 2020.
- Since then, an impetus has been given to Indian Army's Technology Institutions for investing in AI, Quantum and Cyber.

**Source: PIB**

## Sankalp Smarak

### Why in News

- **Sankalp Smarak** was dedicated to the nation by Lt Gen Ajai Singh, **Commander-in-Chief Andaman and Nicobar Command (CINCAN)**, exactly 78 years after **Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose's** arrival on 29 Dec 2021.

### Key Points

- In the saga of India's freedom struggle, 30 December 1943 holds a special place etched in time.
- It was on this day that a national flag was hoisted for the first time on Indian soil, at Port Blair.
- It is also significant that Netaji escaped British surveillance from Kolkata on 16 Jan 1941 and stepped back on Indian soil after nearly three years, at Port Blair Aerodrome on 29 Dec 1943 and unfurled a National flag the next day.
- Netaji's visit to the islands as the Head of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind and Supreme Commander of Indian National Army marked a symbolic fulfillment of his promise that the Indian National Army would stand on Indian soil by the end of 1943.

- This historic visit also marked a declaration of Andaman and Nicobar Islands as the “first liberated territory of India”.

**Source: PIB**

## **PM Modi inaugurates and lays the foundation of multiple projects in Varanasi**

### **Why in News**

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** inaugurated and laid the foundation of multiple projects in **Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh**.

### **Key Points**

- The Prime Minister laid the foundation stone of **‘Banas Dairy Sankul’** at the UP State Industrial Development Authority Food Park, Karkhiyaon, Varanasi.
- He laid the foundation stone for the **Biogas based Electricity generation plant** for the Milk Producers Cooperative Union Plant, Ramnagar, Varanasi.
- He launched a Portal and Logo dedicated to the Conformity Assessment Scheme of milk products, developed by the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) with the help of National Dairy Development Board (NDDB).
- He distributed the rural residential rights record **‘Gharauni’** under the **Swamitva scheme** of the Union Ministry of Panchayati Raj, to over 20 Lakh residents of Uttar Pradesh.

**Note:** Rajeev Chandrasekhar- Minister of State, Electronics and Information Technology inaugurated the **7 new internet exchange nodes** in multiple cities of Uttar Pradesh.

**Source: HT**

## **Odisha CM inaugurates longest bridge ‘T-Setu’ over Mahanadi River in Cuttack**

### **Why in News**

- **Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik** inaugurated **Odisha's longest bridge, ‘T-Setu’** over the Mahanadi River at Gopinathpur in Cuttack.

### **Key Points**

- The 3.4 km long bridge, connecting Gopinathpur in Badamba, Baideswar in Banki to Singhanath Pitha located in the middle

of the river, has been built in the shape of the English alphabet 'T' at a cost of Rs 111 crore.

- It will benefit over 5 lakh people as well as contribute to the development of tourism, agriculture and commerce in the region.

**Source: Business Standard**

## **PM Modi inaugurates Kanpur Metro Rail Project**

### **Why in News**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated **Kanpur Metro Rail Project**.
- He inaugurated the **Bina-Panki Multiproduct Pipeline Project**.
- He attended the **54<sup>th</sup> Convocation Ceremony of IIT Kanpur** and issued digital degrees through in-house blockchain-driven technology.

### **Key Points**

#### **About Kanpur Metro Rail Project:**

- The entire length of the Kanpur Metro Rail Project is 32 km and is being built at a cost of over Rs 11,000 crore.
- Kanpur Metro is going to be the fastest built metro project in the country.

#### **About Bina-Panki Multiproduct Pipeline Project:**

- The Multiproduct pipeline from Bina Refinery (Madhya Pradesh) to POL Terminal at Panki, Kanpur (Uttar Pradesh) was dedicated to the nation.
- 356 Km long project has a capacity of around 3.45 million metric tonne per annum.
- Project will cover 5 districts of UP: Lalitpur, Jhansi, Jalaun, Kanpur Dehat and Kanpur Nagar, and 2 of MP: Sagar and Tikamgarh.

**Source: TOI**

## **Centre sets up panel to look into withdrawal of AFSPA in Nagaland**

### **Why in News**

- The Union government instituted a high-level committee chaired by a Secretary-level officer to examine the possibility of withdrawing the **Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA)** in Nagaland.

- Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India **Vivek Joshi** will head the five-member committee.

### Key Points

- The committee will submit its report within 45 days and withdrawal of Disturbed Area and AFSPA from Nagaland will be based on the recommendations of the committee.
- Recently, the demands for repeal of AFSPA – an Act that gives sweeping powers to the armed forces to arrest without warrants and even shoot to kill in certain situations in 'disturbed areas' – from Nagaland and other north-eastern states have been growing louder.

### Note:

- In March 2018, the Union Ministry of Home Affairs ordered removal of AFSPA completely from Meghalaya.
- In Arunachal Pradesh too, AFSPA was removed from several police stations during 2018 and 2019; at present in the state, only three districts and four police stations that border Assam are under AFSPA.

**Source: Indian Express**

## Delhi to get first Teachers' University

### Why in News

- **Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal-led Delhi Cabinet** has approved a proposal to establish the '**Delhi Teachers University**'.

### Key Points

- 'Delhi Teachers University' Bill 2021 will be placed before the Delhi Vidhan Sabha in the coming session.
- Delhi Teachers University' will be a public university dedicated to preparing excellent quality Teachers for the city across different school stages.
- Admission to the new University will start for the academic session 2022-23.

**Source: India Today**

## Nagaland creates three new districts- Tseminyu, Niuland, Chumukedima

### Why in News

- **Nagaland government** created three new districts in the state, taking the total number of districts to 15.

- The three new districts are **Tseminyu, Niuland and Chumukedima.**

#### **Key Points**

- Tseminyu became the 13th, Niuland 14th, and Chumukedima the 15th district of the northeastern state.
- Niuland and Chumukedima have been carved out of Dimapur district, while the Tseminyu sub-division in Kohima district has been upgraded to a district.

#### **Facts about Nagaland:**

- **Capital:** Kohima
- **Governor:** Jagdish Mukhi
- **Chief Minister:** Neiphiu Rio

**Source: Business Standard**

### **Odisha CM inaugurates Mukhyamantri Vayu Swasthya Seva scheme**

#### **Why in News**

- **Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik** inaugurated the **Mukhyamantri Vayu Swasthya Seva scheme** and launched air ambulances for residents of four tribal-dominated districts — Malkangiri, Nabarangpur, Nuapada and Kalahandi.

#### **Key Points**

- Under the new scheme, critical patients can be airlifted to hospitals in Bhubaneswar and Cuttack, and specialised doctors — neurologists, nephrologists and cardiologists from various medical colleges and private hospitals — will fly to the four districts under per a pre-arranged schedule to treat patients.
- A team of doctors, including a cardiologist and urologist, took the inaugural flight from Biju Patnaik airport in Bhubaneswar to Malkangiri.

**Source: Indian Express**

### **Punjab CM declares Sri Krishan Balram Rath Yatra as state festival**

#### **Why in News**

- **Punjab Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi** declared the annual **Sri Krishan Balram Rath Yatra** a state festival.

#### **Key Points**

- The announcement was made during flagging off the 25th Sri Krishan Balram Rath Yatra.

- The yatra was carried out after a gap of two years due to coronavirus restrictions.
- The chief minister also announced Rs 2.51 crore for the ISKCON temple in Ludhiana.

**Source: HT**

## **Indian Desert Cat spotted in Panna Tiger Reserve**

### **Why in News**

- An **Indian Desert Cat** has been spotted for the first time in **Madhya Pradesh's Panna Tiger Reserve (PTR)**.
- It is also known as the Asiatic Wildcat or the Asian Steppe Wildcat.

### **Key Points**

- Its Scientific Name is *Felis silvestris ornate*.
- As the name suggests, this cat is found in deserts and can survive without water.
- The toes of the species have cushion like hair which help it balance the fluctuating desert temperatures.

### **Protection Status:**

- Wildlife Protection Act: Schedule-I
- IUCN Red List: Least Concern
- CITES: Appendix-II

### **About Panna Tiger Reserve:**

- It was established in 1981 and is situated in the Vindhya mountain range in the northern part of Madhya Pradesh.
- Ken River (a tributary of the Yamuna River) flows through the reserve.
- Ken-Betwa river interlinking project will be located within the tiger reserve.
- The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) designated the Panna Tiger Reserve as a Biosphere Reserve on August 25, 2011.

**Source: Indian Express**

## **India's first International Arbitration and Mediation Centre**

### **Why in News**

- India's first **International Arbitration and Mediation Centre (IAMC)** was jointly inaugurated by Chief Justice of India, N.V. Ramana, and Telangana Chief Minister, K. Chandrasekhar Rao in Hyderabad.

### Key Points

- Life trustee of the centre, Justice R.V. Raveendran, Supreme Court judges L. Nageswara Rao, Hima Kohli and judges from the Telangana and Andhra Pradesh high courts attended the event.
- Till now, the complicated legal matters of all regional countries and common people including India used to be resolved in the arbitration centers of **Singapore and UK**, but with the start of this mediation center in Hyderabad, now the process of arbitration can be carried out here.
- The setting up of IAMC at Hyderabad is an important step towards enhancing the ADR (Alternate Dispute Resolution) landscape of the country.

**Source: TOI**

### Central government: 'In-principle' nod for 6 nuclear reactors in Jaitapur

#### Why in News

- The Central government has given "In-principle" approval for setting up of six nuclear power reactors at Jaitapur in Maharashtra.

#### Key Points

- The six nuclear power reactors, which will have a capacity of 1,650 MW each, will be set up with technical cooperation from **France**.
- It will be the country's largest nuclear power generating site with a total capacity of 9,900 MW.

#### Note:

- The present installed nuclear power capacity in the country is 6,780 MW and the share of nuclear power in the total electricity generation in 2020-21 is about 3.1%.
- The nuclear power plants have so far generated about 755 billion units of electricity, saving about 650 million Tons of CO<sub>2</sub> emission.
- In this context, the present nuclear power capacity of 6,780 MW is expected to be increased to 22,480 MW by 2031 on completion of projects.
- The government has also amended the Atomic Energy Act 1962 to enable joint ventures of public sector companies to set up nuclear power projects.

### **Nuclear Power plants in Operation:**

- Rawatbhata (Rajasthan)
- Tarapur (Maharashtra)
- Kudankulam (Tamil Nadu)
- Kakrapar (Gujarat)
- Kalpakkam (Tamil Nadu)
- Narora (Uttar Pradesh)
- Kaiga (Karnataka)

**Source: Indian Express**

### **PM Modi lays the foundation stone of Ganga Expressway in Shahjahanpur, Uttar Pradesh**

#### **Why in News**

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** laid the foundation stone of **Ganga Expressway** in Shahjahanpur, Uttar Pradesh.

#### **Key Points**

- The 594 Km long six-lane Expressway will be built at a cost of over Rs 36,200 crore.
- Starting near the Bijauli village in Meerut, the Expressway will extend till near the Judapur Dandu village in Prayagraj.
- It passes through Meerut, Hapur, Bulandshahr, Amroha, Sambhal, Budaun, Shahjahanpur, Hardoi, Unnao, RaeBareli, Pratapgarh and Prayagraj.
- Upon completion of work, it will become the longest expressway of Uttar Pradesh, connecting the western and eastern regions of the state.
- A 3.5 Km long air strip for assisting emergency take off and landing of Air Force planes will also be constructed on the Expressway in Shahjahanpur.
- An industrial corridor is also proposed to be built along the Expressway.

**Source: PIB**

### **India's first Green Hydrogen Microgrid Project to be set up in Andhra Pradesh**

#### **Why in News**

- **National Thermal Power Corporation Limited (NTPC)** has awarded a project of Standalone Fuel-Cell based Micro-grid with hydrogen production using electrolyser in NTPC Guest House at Simhadri (near Visakhapatnam).
- It is India's first Green Hydrogen based Energy Storage Project.

### Key Points

- This unique project configuration is designed in-house by NTPC.
- It would be a precursor to large scale hydrogen energy storage projects and would be useful for studying and deploying multiple microgrids in various off grid and strategic locations of the country.
- The hydrogen would be produced using the advanced 240 kW Solid Oxide Electrolyser by taking input power from the nearby Floating Solar project.
- The hydrogen produced during sunshine hours would be stored at high pressure and would be electrified using a 50 kW Solid Oxide Fuel Cell.

### Note:

- The project is in-line with the vision of India for becoming carbon neutral by 2070.
- Earlier, NTPC had commissioned the development of India's biggest floating solar plant in Telangana's Ramagundam.

**Source: Business Standard**

## Haiderpur wetland in Uttar Pradesh recognised as Ramsar Site

### Why in News

- The **Haiderpur wetland** in **Uttar Pradesh** has been designated as the country's **47<sup>th</sup> Ramsar site** and 2,463rd Ramsar site internationally.

### Key Points

- Haiderpur Wetland covers an area of 6,908 hectares and is situated on the Muzaffarnagar-Bijnor border in **Uttar Pradesh**.
- It was formed in 1984 by the construction of Madhya Ganga Barrage at the confluence of Solani and Ganga rivers and is a part of Hastinapur Wildlife Sanctuary.
- **Uttar Pradesh** is now home to 9 Ramsar wetlands.

### About Ramsar Convention on Wetlands:

- The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, an international treaty, aims at the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands.
- Named after the city of Ramsar in Iran, the convention was signed in 1971.

**Note:**

- Earlier in August 2021, four more wetlands from India were recognized as Ramsar sites – Thol and Wadhvana from Gujarat and Sultanpur and Bhindawas from Haryana.
- Recently, Askot Wildlife Sanctuary in the Pithoragarh district of Uttarakhand has been declared as the **Askot Wildlife Sanctuary Eco-sensitive Zone (ESZ)**.

**Source: TOI**

### **Kazhuveli Wetland in Tamil Nadu declared as 16th Bird Sanctuary**

**Why in News**

- The **Kazhuveli Wetland** located near Villupuram district of Tamil Nadu has been declared as the 16th Bird Sanctuary by the Ministry of Environment Forest and Climate Change.

**Key Points**

- The Kazhuveli Wetland is referred to as the 2nd largest Brackish Water Lake in South India, only after Pulicat Lake.
- The declaration was made under subsection (1) of section 18 of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

**About Kazhuveli Bird Sanctuary:**

- It covers 3,027.25 hectares of land in Marakkanam taluks and 5,151.60 hectares in Vanur taluk.
- The sanctuary lies adjacent to the Bay of Bengal along the East coast.
- Kazhuveli is a wetland of international importance that is spread over 670 square km in the east coast of Tamil Nadu.

**Source: Indian Express**

### **PM Modi inaugurates the Saryu Nahar National Project in Balrampur, UP**

**Why in News**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Saryu Nahar National Project in Balrampur, Uttar Pradesh.

- Earlier, Prime Minister inaugurated AIIMS, Fertilizer Plant and ICMR Centre in Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh.

### **Key Points**

- Saryu Nahar National Project which will provide assured water for irrigation of over 14 lakh hectares of land and benefit about 29 lakh farmers of the region.
- It will benefit nine districts of eastern Uttar Pradesh, namely Bahraich, Shravasti, Balrampur, Gonda, Siddharthnagar, Basti, Sant Kabir Nagar, Gorakhpur and Maharajganj,
- The project has been built at a total cost of over Rs 9,800 crore.
- The project involves interlinking of five rivers -- Ghaghara, Saryu, Rapti, Banganga and Rohini -- to ensure optimum usage of water resources of the region.

**Source: HT**

## **Cabinet approves Ken-Betwa Interlinking of Rivers Project**

### **Why in News**

- The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has approved the funding and implementation of **Ken-Betwa Inter-Linking of Rivers Project**.

### **Key Points**

- The total cost of Ken-Betwa link project has been assessed at Rs.44,605 crore at 2020-21 price levels.
- This project involves transfer of water from the Ken to the Betwa River through the construction of Daudhan Dam and a canal linking the two rivers, the Lower Orr Project, Kotha Barrage -and Bina Complex Multipurpose Project.
- The project will provide an annual irrigation of 10.62 lakh ha, drinking water supply to a population of about 62 lakhs and also generate 103 MW of hydropower and 27 MW solar power.
- The Project is proposed to be implemented in 8 years with state of the art technology.
- The Project will be of immense benefit to the water starved Bundelkhand region, spread across the states of Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh.
- This project will provide enormous benefits to the districts of Panna, Tikamgarh, Chhatarpur, Sagar, Damoh, Datia, Vidisha, Shivpuri and Raisen of Madhya Pradesh and Banda, Mahoba, Jhansi & Lalitpur of Uttar Pradesh.

### **Background:**

- On 22nd March 2021, a historic agreement was signed between the Union Minister of Jal Shakti and the Chief Ministers of Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh to implement the first major centrally driven river interlinking project in the country.

**Note:**

- Ken and Betwa Rivers originate in Madhya Pradesh and are the tributaries of Yamuna.
- Ken meets with Yamuna in Banda district of Uttar Pradesh and with Betwa in Hamirpur district of Uttar Pradesh.
- Rajghat, Paricha and Matatila dams are over Betwa River.
- Ken River passes through Panna tiger reserve.

**Source: PIB**

## **Delhi's Nizamuddin Basti conservation project wins 2 UNESCO Awards 2021**

### **Why in News**

- **Delhi's Nizamuddin Basti conservation project** won 2 **UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation 2021**.
- The project has won the prestigious **Award of Excellence** and another award in the **Special Recognition for Sustainable Development** category.
- 9 projects from 6 countries — Bangladesh, China, India, Japan, Malaysia, and Thailand — have been honoured by a jury of heritage experts.

### **Key Points**

- The **Nizamuddin Area** comprises the World Heritage Site of Humayun's Tomb, Hazrat Nizamuddin Basti and Sunder Nursery, Batashewala Tomb-Garden Complex, tomb of courtier poet Khan I Khanan 'Rahim' and the Mughal-period caravanserai of Azimganj Serai.
- The Urban Renewal project, which started in 2007, has successfully unified these segregated zones of the conservation area into an urban historic district of considerable cultural significance.
- The conservation is being undertaken by the Aga Khan Trust for Culture (AKTC) in partnership with the South Delhi Municipal Corporation, Archaeological Survey of India, Delhi Urban Heritage Foundation, and the Dargah

Committee/resident community groups of Hazrat Nizamuddin Basti.

**Source: Indian Express**

### Important News: Polity

## Karnataka Protection of Right to Freedom of Religion Bill, 2021

### Why in News

- The Karnataka legislative Assembly has **passed** the **Karnataka Protection of Right to Freedom of Religion Bill, 2021**, commonly referred to as the **anti-conversion Bill**.

### Key Points

- The Bill states, “No person shall convert or attempt to convert either directly or otherwise any other person from one religion to another by use of misrepresentation, force, undue influence, coercion, allurement or by any fraudulent means or by marriage, nor shall any person abet or conspire for conversions.”
- According to the proposed legislation, complaints regarding conversions can be filed by family members or any other person who is related to the individual who is getting converted.
- A jail term of three to five years and a fine of Rs 25,000 has been proposed for those violating the law in the case of people from general categories, and a jail term of three to 10 years and a fine of Rs 50,000 has been mooted for those converting minors, women or persons from SC/ST communities.

### Anti-Conversion Laws in India:

- **Constitutional Provision:** The Indian Constitution under Article 25 guarantees the freedom to profess, propagate, and practise religion, and allows all religious sections to manage their own affairs in matters of religion; subject to public order, morality, and health.
- **Existing Laws:** There has been no central legislation restricting or regulating religious conversions.

**Note:** Other States like Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh have also passed laws restricting religious conversion.

**Source: Indian Express**  
**Maharashtra Legislative Council passes Public University Act, 2016 (Third Amendment) Bill**

**Why in News**

- The **Maharashtra Legislative Council** passed the **Maharashtra Public University Act, 2016 (Third Amendment) bill** which gives more powers to the Higher and Technical Education Minister with regard to the state-run universities.

**Key Points**

- The bill allows the minister to make recommendations to the governor who is the chancellor of the universities.
- It also proposes appointment of the Higher and Technical Education Minister as pro-chancellor of the universities.

**Source: newsonair**

**Election Laws (Amendment) Bill 2021**

**Why in News**

- The Lok Sabha has passed the **Election Laws (Amendment) Bill 2021.**

**Key Points**

- The bill provides linking of Aadhar number with electoral rolls besides giving four opportunities to enroll in a calendar year as voter upon attaining 18 years of age.
- The amendments are based on the recommendations made by the Election Commission of India and the Parliamentary Standing Committee as well.
- According to the Statement of Objects and Reasons of the Bill, it provides for amendment of section 23 of the Representation of the People Act, 1950 (RP Act, 1950), enabling for the linking of electoral roll data with the Aadhaar ecosystem to curb the menace of multiple enrolment of the same person in different places.
- It also seeks to amend clause (b) of section 14 of the RP Act, 1950 specifying the 1st day of January, 1st day of April, 1st day of July and 1st day of October in a calendar year as qualifying dates in relation to the preparation or revision of electoral rolls.

**Source: Indian Express**

## Raising legal age of marriage for women

### Why in News

- The Union Cabinet took the decision to **raise the legal age of marriage for women** from 18 to 21 years. The legal age of marriage for men is 21 years.
- With this decision, the government will be bringing the age of marriage for both men and women at par.
- The Cabinet's decision to **raise the legal age of marriage** for women is based on the recommendation of a **panel led by Jaya Jaitly**.

### Key Points

- The law prescribes a minimum age of marriage to essentially outlaw child marriages and prevent the abuse of minors.
- For Hindus, The Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 sets 18 years as the minimum age for the bride and 21 years as the minimum age for the groom. In Islam, the marriage of a minor who has attained puberty is considered valid.
- The Special Marriage Act, 1954 and the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006 also prescribe 18 and 21 years as the minimum age of consent for marriage for women and men, respectively.
- The recently released National Family Health Survey (NFHS) 5 revealed that **child marriage has come down marginally** from 27 percent in 2015-16 to 23 percent in 2019-20 in the country, but the government has been pushing to bring this down further.

### About Jaya Jaitly committee:

- In June 2020, the Ministry for Women and Child Development set up a task force to look into the correlation between the age of marriage with issues of women's nutrition, prevalence of anemia and other social indices.
- The committee, headed by former Samata Party president Jaya Jaitly, also had on board NITI Aayog member (Health) Dr V K Paul and secretaries of several ministries.
- The committee has recommended the age of marriage be increased to 21 years.

**Source: Indian Express**

## Biological Diversity (Amendment) Bill, 2021

### Why in News

- The **Biological Diversity (Amendment) Bill, 2021**, introduced in the Lok Sabha, exempts Ayush practitioners from the ambit of the **Biological Diversity Act, 2002**, and facilitates access to biological resources and traditional knowledge by the Indian traditional medicine sector.
- Legal experts have, however, expressed concerns that easing the norms for the sector could be detrimental to ecology and go against the principle of sharing commercial benefits with indigenous communities.

### Key Points

- The **Biological Diversity Act, 2002** was enacted for the conservation of biological diversity and fair, equitable sharing of the monetary benefits from the commercial use of biological resources and traditional knowledge.
- The Bill looks to encourage farmers to increase cultivation of medicinal plants.
- It also seeks to give a fillip to “Indian system of medicine”, and facilitate fast-tracking of research, patent application process, transfer of research results while utilising the biological resources available in India — “without compromising the objectives of United Nation Convention on Biological Diversity and its **Nagoya Protocol**”.
- The Ministry said the “amendment is necessary because on 4th Oct 2012, India ratified **Nagoya Protocol** on access to generic resources and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from their utilization.”

**Source: HT**

### **Dam Safety Bill (2019)**

#### Why in News

- The Rajya Sabha passed the landmark **Dam Safety Bill (2019)**, paving the way for enactment of the Dam Safety Act in the country.
- The Dam Safety Bill (2019) was passed by the Lok Sabha in August 2019.

#### Key Points

##### About Dam Safety Bill:

- The Dam Safety Bill provides for adequate surveillance, inspection, operation, and maintenance of all the large dams in the country so as to prevent dam failure related disasters.

- The Bill provides for an institutional mechanism at both Central and State levels to address structural and non-structural measures required for ensuring the safe functioning of dams.
- As per the provision of the Bill, a **National Committee on Dam Safety (NCDS)** will be constituted to help evolve uniform dam safety policies, protocols, and procedures.
- The Bill also provides for the establishment of a **National Dam Safety Authority (NDSA)** as a regulatory body for ensuring the nationwide implementation of dam safety policies and standards.
- At the State level, the Bill prescribes for the constitution of **State Committees on Dam Safety (SCDS)** and the establishment of the **State Dam Safety Organizations (SDSO)**.

**Note:**

- After China and USA, India is the 3rd largest dam-owning nation in the world.
- There are around 5,700 large dams in the country, of which about 80% are already over 25 years old. Nearly 227 dams that are over 100 years old are still functional.

**Source: PIB**

## **Public Accounts Committee (PAC)**

### **Why in News**

- Recently, the **Public Accounts Committee (PAC)** has completed 100 years.

### **Key Points**

- The **Public Accounts Committee (PAC)** is a committee of selected members of parliament, constituted by the Parliament of India, for the purpose of auditing the revenue and the expenditure of the Government of India.
- This committee along with the Estimates committee (EC) and Committee on Public Undertakings (COPU) are the three financial standing committees of the Parliament of India.

### **About Public Accounts Committee (PAC):**

- The Public Accounts Committee was introduced in 1921 after its first mention in the Government of India Act, 1919 also called Montford Reforms.
- The Public Accounts Committee is now constituted every year under Rule 308 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha.

- It presently comprises 22 members (15 members elected by the Lok Sabha Speaker, and 7 members elected by the Rajya Sabha Chairman) with a term of one year only.
- **Current Chairperson:** Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury
- **Chairperson party:** Indian National Congress

**Source: PIB**

### Important News: Economy

## Centre declares 'Soya Meal' as an Essential Commodity up to 30th June, 2022

### Why in News

- Central Government has notified an Order under the Essential Commodities Act to declare '**Soya Meal**' as an Essential Commodities up to 30th June, 2022 by amending the Schedule of the **Essential Commodities Act, 1955**.

### Key Points

- Government of India has issued a landmark Order where it has mentioned that in the Essential Commodities Act, 1955, in the Schedule, after serial No. (8), the following item shall be added, "**(9) Soya Meal**".
- It will stop unfair market practices and enhance the availability for consumers like Poultry farm and Cattle feed manufacturers.
- **About Soybean Meal:** Soybean meal is the most important protein source used to feed farm animals. Soybean meal is the by-product of the extraction of soybean oil.
- **About Essential Commodities Act 1955:** It was legislated at a time when the country was facing a scarcity of foodstuffs due to persistent low levels of food grains production. To prevent hoarding and black marketing of foodstuffs, the Essential Commodities Act was enacted in 1955.

**Source: PIB**

## India to become 3rd largest economy in 2031: CEBR

### Why in News

- The **Centre for Economics and Business Research (CEBR)** from the UK has predicted that the Indian economy will become the world's third largest by the year 2031.
- In the year 2022, India is set to regain its sixth position in **World Economic League Table (WELT)** from France, as per CEBR.

### Key Points

- China will overtake the US in 2030.
- In the year 2020, India's GDP had witnessed a contraction of 7.3% due to COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdown leading to constraints on economic activity.
- Economic activity has rebounded in 2021, due to a drop in daily new cases of infections.
- The economy is estimated to grow 8.5% in 2021, due to economic recovery after a contraction of 7.3% in 2020.

**Source: TOI**

## Shyama Prasad Mukherji Rurban Mission (SPMRM)

### Why in News

- **Telangana** stood first in the implementation of the **Shyama Prasad Mukherji Rurban Mission (SPMRM)**.
- **Tamil Nadu** and **Gujarat** took the second and third positions respectively.

### Key Points

#### Top 3 State on Performance based Indicator:

State Name	Rank
Telangana	1
Tamil Nadu	2
Gujarat	3

- In Telangana, in as many as 17 clusters (12 non-tribal and 5 tribal), the programme was being implemented at an estimated cost of ₹1,885.12 crore.
- The provision of urban infrastructure in rural areas is the main purpose of the Rurban Mission, with Telangana having the highest points due to the outstanding performance of Panchayat Raj and rural development.
- **Sangareddy** and **Kamareddy** districts in Telangana stood in the first two positions among the 300 clusters across the country where the programme was being implemented.

### About Shyama Prasad Mukherji Rurban Mission (SPMRM):

- It was launched in the year 2016 by the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) in mission mode to develop 300 clusters in the country holistically by provisioning of economic, social and physical infrastructure facilities.
- The main objectives of SPMRM are to stimulate local economic development, enhance basic services, and create well planned Rurban clusters.

**Source: The Hindu**

## **CESL achieves 50 lakhs LED bulb distribution milestone under flagship Gram Ujala programme**

### **Why in News**

- **Convergence Energy Services Limited (CESL)**, a wholly owned subsidiary of **Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL)**, has achieved a remarkable milestone of distributing 50 lakhs LED bulbs under Project Crore of their **Gram Ujala programme**.
- Targets to distribute 10 million LED bulbs under Project Crore in 2 million households till March 31, 2022

### **Key Points**

- **Gram Ujala scheme** is being implemented in rural households in Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, and Telangana.
- CESL is providing high quality 7-Watt and 12-Watt LED bulbs with 3 years guarantee at a cost of INR 10 per bulb in exchange of working incandescent bulbs.
- Every household can exchange a maximum of 5 bulbs.
- The programme is active till March 31, 2022.
- CESL is supported by C-Quest Capital in the entire distribution journey under the SHINE programme.

### **Other Schemes for Encouraging Use of LED Bulbs:**

- Street Lighting National Programme (SLNP)
- Unnat Jyoti by Affordable LEDs for All (UJALA)

**Source: ET**

## **Defence Minister dedicates to the Nation 24 bridges & 3 roads built by BRO**

### **Why in News**



- **Defence Minister Rajnath Singh** dedicated to the Nation **24 bridges and 3 roads**, built by **Border Roads Organisation (BRO)** in four States and two Union Territories.
- To boost tourism and facilitate the Armed Forces personnel in border areas, the Raksha Mantri announced setting up of '**BRO Cafes**' at 75 places, as part of 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' celebrations.

### Key Points

- Of the 24 bridges, nine are in Jammu & Kashmir; five each in Ladakh & Himachal Pradesh; three in Uttarakhand and one each in Sikkim & Arunachal Pradesh.
- Of the three roads, two are in Ladakh and one is in West Bengal.
- The main highlight was the inauguration of **India's first indigenous Class 70 140-foot Double-Lane Modular Bridge**, built at the height of 11,000 feet at Flag Hill Dokala, Sikkim and Chisumle-Demchok road at Umling La Pass at over 19,000 feet in Ladakh which also holds the **Guinness World Record** of world's highest motorable road.
- The e-inauguration has taken the tally of infrastructure projects executed by BRO to a record 102 in a single working season.

**Note:** Earlier in June 2021, Rajnath Singh had dedicated to the Nation 12 roads and 63 bridges – totalling 75 projects - in the 75<sup>th</sup> year of Independence under the aegis of 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav'.

**Source: PIB**

## Global Health Security Index 2021

### Why in News

- Countries across all income levels remain dangerously unprepared to meet future epidemic and pandemic threats, according to the **Global Health Security (GHS) Index 2021**.

### Key Points

- The world's overall performance on the GHS Index score slipped to 38.9 (out of 100) in 2021, from a score of 40.2 in the GHS Index, 2019.
- Some 101 high, middle and low-income countries, including India, have slipped in performance since 2019.
- In South Asia, India, with a score of 42.8 (out of 100) too, has slipped by 0.8 points since 2019.

- But three neighbouring countries — Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Maldives — have improved their score by 1-1.2 points.
- In 2021, no country scored in the top tier of rankings and no country scored above 75.9.

#### **About Global Health Security Index:**

- It was jointly released by non-profits Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI) and the Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security.
- The findings of the GHS Index 2021 are based on a revised framework and updated data collection conducted between August 2020 and June 2021.
- It has assessed countries across 6 categories, 37 indicators and 171 questions, using instantly available information.

**Source: DTE**

#### **SAMPANN project**

##### **Why in News**

- More than One Lakh pensioners are currently being serviced by Principal Controller of Communication Accounts/ Controller of Communication Accounts offices all over India through **SAMPANN project**.
- It has ensured recurring monthly savings to the Government of India on account of Commission being paid to Banks/Post Offices for payment of Pension which approximately amounts to Rs. 11.5 Crores as of June, 2021.

##### **Key Points**

#### **About SAMPANN – ‘System for Accounting and Management of Pension’:**

- SAMPANN is an ambitious project of Government of India being implemented by the Controller General of Communication Accounts, Department of Telecommunications, the Ministry of Communications.
- It was dedicated to the nation by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 29th December, 2018.
- It is a seamless online pension processing and payment system for the Department of Telecommunications pensioners.
- It provides direct credit of pension into the bank accounts of pensioners.
- The system has helped the Department in faster settlement of pension cases, improved reconciliation/auditing and ease of accounting.

**Source: PIB**

## Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana – Gramin (PMAY-G)

### Why in News

- The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved the proposal of the Department of Rural Development for continuation of **Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana – Gramin (PMAY-G)** beyond March 2021 wherein financial assistance is to be provided for the construction of the remaining 155.75 lakh houses within total target of 2.95 crore houses.

### Key Points

#### The details of the approval given by the Cabinet are as follows:

- Continuation of PMAY-G beyond **March 2021 till March 2024** as per the existing norms to complete remaining houses within a cumulative target of 2.95 crore houses.
- The total financial implication for construction of the remaining 155.75 lakh houses is Rs. 2,17,257 crore (Central Share Rs.1,25,106 crore and State Share Rs.73,475 crores) for achieving cumulative targets of 2.95 crore houses in rural areas under the PMAY-G and an additional requirement of Rs.18,676 Crore towards the interest repayment to NABARD.
- Continuation of Program Management Unit (PMU) and National Technical Support Agency (NTSA) till FY 2023-24.

#### About Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana – Gramin (PMAY-G):

- Pradhan Mantri Gramin Awaas Yojana, previously Indira Awaas Yojana, is a social welfare programme, created by the Indian Government, to provide housing for the rural poor in India. A similar scheme for urban poor was launched in 2015 as Housing for All by 2022.

Source: PIB

### Important News: Defence and Science

## Russia's latest nuclear powered icebreaker 'Sibir' to boost India's Arctic plans

### Why in News

- **Russia** has launched a new **nuclear powered icebreaker 'Sibir'** that will contribute to the rapidly growing fleet of lethal icebreakers to keep the Northern Sea Route open for year-round shipping through the Arctic enabling wider presence of India in the region.

- The commissioning of the first-in-series Project 22220 versatile nuclear icebreaker Sibir will strengthen Atomflot's position in the Arctic.

### **Key Points**

- During the 21st edition of the India-Russia summit held on December 6, 2021, the Indian Side also expressed its interest in collaborating with Russia on the Northern Sea Route.

**Note:** Russia has a fleet of six nuclear-powered icebreakers: "Taymyr", "Vaygash", "50 Let Pobedy", "Yamal", "Arktika" and "Sibir". Also, the nuclear-powered cargo ship "Sevmorput" belongs to Rosatomflot's fleet based in Murmansk.

**Source: ET**

## **DRDO conducts maiden launch of indigenously developed new generation surface-to-surface missile 'Pralay'**

### **Why in News**

- **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** successfully conducted maiden flight test of indigenously developed surface-to-surface missile '**Pralay**', from Dr A P J Abdul Kalam Island off the coast of Odisha.

### **Key Points**

- Pralay Missile is powered with a solid propellant rocket motor and many new technologies.
- The missile has a range of 150-500 kilometre and can be launched from a mobile launcher.
- The missile guidance system includes state-of-the-art navigation system and integrated avionics.

**Note:** Earlier, the first set of indigenously developed next generation **Armoured Engineer Reconnaissance Vehicle** was inducted into the Corps of Engineers of Indian Army.

**Source: PIB**

## **Mormugao, Indian Navy's second ship of the Project 15B, sails for maiden sea trials**

### **Why in News**

- **Mormugao**, Indian Navy's second indigenous stealth destroyer of the P15B class, planned to be commissioned in mid 2022, proceeded on her maiden sea sortie.

### **Key Points**

- Mormugao is being built at Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Ltd (MDSL) as part of the Project 15B destroyers.
- The ship incorporates several niche indigenous technologies and is a shining example of Atma Nirbhar Bharat.

**Note:**

- With the recent commissioning in November 2021 of INS Visakhapatnam and the fourth P75 submarine INS Vela, commencement of sea trials of Mormugao is testimony to the cutting-edge capabilities of MDSL and the strong indigenous shipbuilding tradition of a modern and vibrant India.
- Recently, **Aerial Delivery Research and Development Establishment (ADRDE), Agra** conducted a flight demonstration of the **Controlled Aerial Delivery System** of 500 kg capacity (CADS-500).
- ADRDE, Agra is an R&D laboratory of Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).

**Source: PIB**

## **New generation ballistic missile 'Agni P' successfully test-fired by DRDO**

### **Why in News**

- **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** successfully tested the new generation nuclear capable ballistic missile '**Agni P (Prime)**' from Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Island off the coast of Odisha.

### **Key Points**

- **Agni P** is a new generation advanced variant of the Agni class of missiles.
- **Agni P** was developed under the **Integrated Guided Missile Development Program**.
- It is a canisterised missile with range capability between 1,000 and 2,000 kms.
- This was the second test of the Agni Prime missile.

### **About Agni missile:**

- The Agni missile is a family of medium to intercontinental range ballistic missiles developed by India.
- Agni missiles are long range, nuclear weapons capable of surface to surface ballistic missiles.

**The family comprises the following:**

- **Agni-I:** Range: 700–1,200 km (Operational)
- **Agni-II:** Range: 2,000–3,500 km (Operational)
- **Agni-III:** Range: 3,000–5,000 km (Operational)
- **Agni-IV:** Range: 3,500–4,000 km (Operational)
- **Agni-V:** Range: 5,000–8,000 km (Operational)
- **Agni-VI:** Range: 11,000–12,000 km (Under development)

#### **Missiles developed:**

- Intermediate-range surface-to-surface ballistic missile: **Agni**
- Short-range surface-to-surface ballistic missile: **Prithvi**
- Short-range low-level surface-to-air missile: **Trishul**
- Medium-range surface-to-air missile: **Akash**
- Third generation anti-tank missile: **Nag**

**Source: PIB**

#### **Curtain Raiser PANEX-21**

##### **Why in News**

- Recently, a Curtain Raiser Event for Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief exercise, **PANEX-21**, for the member nations of **BIMSTEC countries**, was held at Kothari Auditorium DRDO Bhawan, New Delhi.
- The exercise is planned to be conducted from 20-22 Dec 21 at Pune and will witness participation from subject matter experts and delegates from **India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Thailand.**

##### **Key Points**

- Last two BIMSTEC Disaster Management Exercises are: DMEx-2017 at Delhi, DMEx-2020 at Puri)

##### **About BIMSTEC:**

- The **Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC)** is an international organisation of seven South Asian and Southeast Asian nations, housing 1.73 billion people and having a combined gross domestic product of \$3.8 trillion.
- **Headquarters:** Dhaka, Bangladesh
- **Founded:** 6 June 1997

**Source: PIB**

#### **Pinaka-ER Range System**

##### **Why in News**

- Successful tests of **Pinaka Extended Range (Pinaka-ER)**, Area Denial Munitions (ADM) and indigenously developed fuzes have been carried out at various test ranges.
- The Pinaka-ER Multi Barrel Rocket Launcher System was successfully tested at Pokharan range.

### Key Points

- The system is jointly designed by laboratories of Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) - Armament Research & Development Establishment (ARDE), Pune and High Energy Materials Research Laboratory (HEMRL), Pune.
- The DRDO, after establishing the performance efficacy of the enhanced range Pinaka, transferred the technology of the system to the industry. The Industry Partner has manufactured enhanced Pinaka Mk-1 rockets with DRDO's hand holding during the production and Quality Assurance.
- The Pinaka-ER is the upgraded version of the earlier Pinaka version which has been in service with the Indian Army for the last decade.

Source: PIB

## Supersonic Missile Assisted Torpedo System

### Why in News

- **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** developed the **Supersonic Missile Assisted Torpedo System** which was successfully launched from Wheeler Island in Odisha.

### Key Points

- The system is a next generation missile-based standoff torpedo delivery system.
- The system has been designed to enhance anti-submarine warfare capability far beyond the conventional range of the torpedo.
- This canister-based missile system consists of advanced technologies viz. two stage solid propulsion, electro-mechanical actuators and precision inertial navigation. The missile is launched from a ground mobile launcher and it can cover a range of distances.

### Note:

**A major breakthrough for stand-off capability in anti-submarine warfare:**

- **Project 75** is a programme by the Indian Navy that entails building 6 Scorpene-Class attack submarines (Kalvari, Khanderi, Karanj, Vagir, Vela and Vagsheer).

- **Project 28**, approved in 2003, is a class of anti- submarine warship corvettes currently in service with the Indian Navy. It includes INS Kamorta, INS Kiltan, INS Kadmatt and INS Kavaratti.

**Source: PIB**

### **DRDO & IAF successfully flight-test indigenous Stand-Off Anti-Tank (SANT) Missile**

#### **Why in News**

- **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** and **Indian Air Force (IAF)** flight-tested the indigenously designed and developed Helicopter launched **Stand-Off Anti-Tank (SANT) Missile** from Pokhran ranges.

#### **Key Points**

- The release mechanism, advanced guidance and tracking algorithms, all avionics with integrated software, performed satisfactorily and tracking systems monitored all mission events.
- The SANT missile has been designed and developed by Research Centre Imarat (RCI), Hyderabad in coordination with other DRDO labs and participation from industries.
- This is the third in the series of indigenous stand-off weapons to be tested in recent times after Long Range Bomb and Smart Anti Airfield Weapon (SAAW) for strengthening the arsenal of IAF.
- The indigenous development of various configurations for different applications with advanced technologies is a firm march towards 'Aatmanirbharta' in defence.

**Source: India Today**

### **Defence Minister lays foundation stone for Defence Technology & Test Centre and BRAHMOS Manufacturing Centre in Lucknow**

#### **Why in News**

- **Defence Minister Rajnath Singh** laid the foundation stone for **Defence Technology & Test Centre** and **BRAHMOS Manufacturing Centre**, established by **Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO)** in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh.

#### **Key Points**

- A first of its kind **Defence Technologies & Test Centre (DTTC)**, over approximately 22 acres is being set up to accelerate the growth of the defence and aerospace manufacturing clusters in **Uttar Pradesh Defence Industrial Corridor (UP DIC)**.
- The **BRAHMOS Manufacturing Centre**, announced by BrahMos Aerospace, is a modern, state-of-art facility in the Lucknow node of UP DIC.
- It will cover over 200 acres and produce the new **BRAHMOS-NG (Next Generation)** variant, which carries forward the lineage of the BRAHMOS weapons system.
- India has undertaken jointly in partnership with its closest strategic ally Russia.
- Designed and developed by **India-Russia JV entity BrahMos Aerospace**, supersonic cruise missile BRAHMOS has continued to evolve as the most versatile weapon in its genre.

**Source: PIB**

## **NASA launches world's most powerful space telescope 'James Webb Space Telescope'**

### **Why in News**

- World's largest and most powerful space telescope '**James Webb Space Telescope**' has been launched successfully into orbit to make breakthrough discoveries on the origins of the Universe and Earth-like planets beyond our solar system.

### **Key Points**

- The **James Webb Space Telescope**, NASA's premier space observatory of the next decade, launched in an Ariane rocket from the European Space Agency's base in French Guiana.
- Webb, named after one of the architects of the Apollo Moon landings, is the successor to the Hubble telescope. Jointly built by NASA, the European Space Agency, and the Canadian Space Agency, the new observatory is, however, 100 times more powerful.

**Source: newsonair**

## **DRDO successfully conducts flight test of indigenous Aerial Target 'Abhyas'**

### Why in News

- **DRDO** successfully conducted the flight test of indigenously developed **High-speed Expendable Aerial Target (HEAT) Abhyas** from Integrated Test Range (ITR), Chandipur off the coast, Odisha.

### Key Points

- Two boosters provided initial acceleration during launch and a small turbo jet engine is used to sustain high subsonic speed with long endurance.
- The indigenous data link designed by Bengaluru based Industry partner has been successfully flown and tested during the flight.
- Aeronautical Development Establishment (ADE), Bengaluru based DRDO laboratory along with other DRDO laboratories has developed this indigenous unmanned aerial target system to meet the requirement of aerial targets of Indian Armed Forces.

**Source: PIB**

## INS Khukri decommissioned after 32 years of service to the nation

### Why in News

- **INS Khukri**, the first of the indigenously built Missile Corvettes, was decommissioned after 32 years of glorious service.

### Key Points

- The corvette was built by the Mazagaon Dock Shipbuilders on 23 August 1989 and had the distinction of being part of both the Western and Eastern Fleets.
- During her service, the ship was commanded by 28 Commanding Officers and traversed a distance of over 6,44,897 nautical miles.

**Source: PIB**

## NMCG & TERI launch Centre of Excellence on Water Reuse

### Why in News

- The Director General of **National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG)** and the Director General of the **Energy and Resources Institute (TERI)** launched the **NMCG-TERI's Centre of**

**Excellence (CoE)** on Water Reuse at the TERI Headquarters in New Delhi.

- The CoE on Water Reuse is the **first of its kind** to be established in the country through collaboration between NMCG and TERI.

### Key Points

- The Centre is a quadripartite alliance between NMCG, TERI, industry partners and industry representative bodies, to come up at the TERI campus in Gwal Pahari, Gurugram, will be meeting the objectives of the Ganga Knowledge Centre (GKC) to design and foster research and innovation.
- TERI has developed the **TERI Advanced Oxidation Technology (TADOX®)** for wastewater treatment.

**Source: PIB**

## India International Science Festival (IISF) 2021

### Why in News

- The **7<sup>th</sup> edition of the India International Science festival (IISF) 2021** was held from December 10 to 13, 2021 at Panaji, Goa.
- It was inaugurated by the Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Science & Technology, Dr Jitendra Singh.

### Key Points

- The **theme** of IISF 2021 was 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' – celebrating Creativity, Science, Technology and Innovation for a prosperous India.
- IISF 2021 provided a platform to young students, scientists and technocrats from across India for exchange of knowledge and ideas and also supported flagship programmes like 'Swachh Bharat Abhiyan', Swasth Bharat Abhiyan 'Make in India', 'Digital India', 'Smart Villages', 'Smart Cities' ' NamamiGange', 'Unnath Bharat Abhiyan' initiated by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the last seven years.

### About India International Science festival (IISF):

- It is a joint program of the Ministry of Science & Technology, Ministry of Earth Sciences and Vijnana Bharati (VIBHA) a swadeshi movement of Bharat.
- The first program of IISF was held in 2015 and the sixth edition of this annual event was organised in 2020.

- The main purpose of IISF is to celebrate science along with people in India and across the globe.

**Source: PIB**

### **India successfully test-fires air version of BrahMos supersonic cruise missile**

#### **Why in News**

- India successfully test-fired the air version of the **BrahMos** supersonic cruise missile from the supersonic fighter aircraft Sukhoi 30 MK-I from Integrated Test Range, Chandipur off the coast of Odisha.

#### **Key Points**

- In this copy book flight, the missile launched from the aircraft followed the pre-planned trajectory meeting all mission objectives.
- **BrahMos** is a Joint Venture between India (DRDO) and Russia (NPOM) for the development, production and marketing of the supersonic cruise missile.
- BrahMos is the potent offensive missile weapon system already inducted into the Armed Forces.

**Note:** Earlier, Vertical Launch Short Range Surface to Air Missile (VL-SRSAM) was successfully flight tested by Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO) from Integrated Test Range, Chandipur, off the coast of Odisha.

**Source: HT**

### **“President’s Standard” presented to 22nd Missile Vessels Squadron of the Indian Navy**

#### **Why in News**

- President Ramnath Kovind presented the ‘**President’s Standard**’ to the **22<sup>nd</sup> Missile Vessels Squadron of the Indian Navy** at a ceremonial event in Mumbai.

#### **Key Points**

- The President’s Standard is the highest honour bestowed by the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces to a military unit in recognition of the service rendered to the nation.

#### **About 22<sup>nd</sup> Missile Vessels Squadron:**

- The 22nd Missile Vessel Squadron was formally established at Mumbai in October 1991 with ten Veer Class and three Prabal Class missile boats.

**Source: PIB**

### **‘Sandhayak’, first of the four Survey Vessels (Large) project for Indian Navy launched**

### Why in News

- **'Sandhayak'**, the first of the four Survey Vessels (Large) projects being built for the Indian Navy, was launched in **Kolkata**.

### Key Points

- These survey ships are capable of full scale coastal & deep-water hydrographic survey of Ports & Harbour approaches and determination of navigational channels & routes.
- These ships are also capable of undertaking surveys of maritime limits and collection of Oceanographic & Geographical data for Defence applications, thus boosting the maritime capabilities of the country.
- These Vessels have been designed and developed by Defence Public Sector Undertaking, **Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE) Limited**, which is among the leading warship building companies in India.
- It has over 80 percent indigenous content by cost.
- As per build strategy adopted by GRSE, the first ship is being built at GRSE Ltd and construction of balance three ships is envisaged at M/s L&T Shipbuilding, Kattupalli.

**Note:** The ship has taken its name from the first ship of the erstwhile Sandhayak-class survey ships. The erstwhile Sandhayak, incidentally, was also launched in Kolkata 44 years ago, on April 6, 1977.

**Source: PIB**

## Skyroot test fires India's first privately built cryogenic rocket engine 'Dhawan-1'

### Why in News

- **Skyroot Aerospace**, a space technology startup, has test fired India's first privately developed fully cryogenic rocket engine 'Dhawan-1'.
- It will power the upper stages of its upcoming Vikram-2 orbital launch vehicle.

### Key Points

- The rocket engine, named Dhawan-1 in honour of Indian rocket scientist Satish Dhawan, has been developed using 3D printing technology and is fuelled by liquefied natural gas and liquid oxygen—a high-performance, low-cost and clean rocket fuel.
- This is a completely 'Made-in-India' cryogenic engine.

### **About Skyroot Aerospace:**

- It is backed by the promoters of renewable energy firm Greenko Group, explosives manufacturer and ISRO supplier Solar Industries and Curefit founder Mukesh Bansal.
- **Founded:** 12 June 2018
- **Headquarters:** Hyderabad, Telangana

**Note:** In September, 2021, the company became the first space tech firm to formally enter into an agreement with the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) to utilise its facilities and get access to its expertise for testing and qualification of its small satellite launch vehicles.

**Source: ET**

### **Puneet Sagar' Abhiyan by NCC**

#### **Why in News**

- **National Cadet Corps (NCC)** is carrying out a nationwide campaign, '**Puneet Sagar' Abhiyan** to free seashores/beaches from plastic & other waste materials and increase awareness about the importance of keeping these clean.

#### **Key Points**

- The aim of the month-long Campaign is to propagate the message of 'Importance of Clean Seashores/Beaches' amongst the local population and future generation beginning December 01, 2021.
- A total of 3.40 lakh cadets from 127 coastal Area NCC Units will participate in the month-long activity.

**Source: PIB**

### **Flex Fuel Vehicles (FFV) and Flex Fuel Strong Hybrid Electric Vehicles (FFV-SHEV)**

#### **Why in News**

- Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari called for manufacturing of **Flex Fuel Vehicles (FFV)** and **Flex Fuel Strong Hybrid Electric Vehicles (FFV-SHEV)** complying with **BS-6 Norms** in a time bound manner within a period of six months

#### **Key Points**

- **Flex Fuel Vehicles** are capable to run on a combination of 100% Petrol or 100% bio-ethanol and their blends, along with strong Hybrid Electric technology in case of FFV-SHEVs.
- This move will drastically reduce Greenhouse Gas emissions from vehicles on a Well-to-Wheel basis, helping India to comply with its commitment made at COP26 to reduce the total projected carbon emissions by One Billion Tonnes by 2030.
- In order to accelerate the introduction of Flex Fuel vehicles, the **Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme** has included automobile & auto components and auto components of flex fuel engines.
- **NITI Aayog**, after acknowledging the strong foundation for the **Ethanol blending programme (EBP)**, has formulated the road map for Ethanol blending for the period 2020-2025.

**Related Government Initiatives:**

- **GOBAR (Galvanising Organic Bio-Agro Resources) DHAN Scheme, 2018**
- **National Policy on Biofuels–2018**
- **E100 Project**

Source: TOI

**DRDO hands over technology of extreme cold weather clothing system (ECWCS) to five Indian companies**

**Why in News**

- Secretary, Department of Defence R&D and Chairman **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** Dr G Satheesh Reddy handed over technology for indigenous **extreme cold weather clothing system (ECWCS)** to 5 Indian companies.

**Key Points**

- The DRDO designed ECWCS is ergonomically designed modular technical clothing with improved thermal insulation and physiological comfort based on the insulation required at various ambient climatic conditions in Himalayan regions during different levels of physical activity.
- The three layered ECWCS is designed to suitably provide thermal insulation over a temperature range of +15 to -50°

Celsius with different combinations of the layers and intensity of physical work.

**Source: PIB**

**Important News: Appointment**

**Vikram Misri appointed new Deputy NSA**

**Why in News**

- **Vikram Misri**, who served as envoy in China amid the border dispute, has been appointed as **Deputy NSA (National Security Advisor)** in the National Security Council secretariat.

**Key Points**

- Misri is a 1989 batch Indian Foreign Service officer. He is a seasoned diplomat and an expert on India-China matters.
- At present, Rajinder Khanna, Pankaj Saran and Dattatray Padsalgikar are serving as deputy NSAs.

**Note:**

- Pradeep Kumar Rawat, a 1990 batch IFS officer, has been appointed as India's new envoy to China.
- NSA (National Security Adviser)-Ajit Doval.

**Source: TOI**

**Petr Fiala appointed as new Prime Minister of Czech Republic**

**Why in News**

- The President of Czech Republic, Milos Zeman appointed **Petr Fiala** as the new Prime Minister of the country.

**Key Points**

- The 57-year-old Fiala, who has led the conservative Civic Democratic Party since 2014, served as country's education minister between 2012-13.
- Fiala leads a bloc of five centre and centre-right opposition parties that won an election in October, 2021.

**Source: TOI**

**PV Sindhu appointed BWF's Athletes' Commission member**

**Why in News**

- India's two-time Olympic medallist shuttler **PV Sindhu** has been appointed as a member of the **Badminton World Federation's (BWF) Athletes' Commission**.

#### **Key Points**

- The-26-year-old former world champion was named alongside five others who will serve as members till 2025.
- Iris Wang (USA), Robin Tabeling (Netherlands), Greysia Polii (Indonesia), Kim Soyeong (South Korea), Pusarla V Sindhu (India) and Zheng Si Wei (China) are the ones appointed as members of the BWF Athletes' Commission.
- The Chair and Deputy Chair will be decided among the six members.

#### **Note:**

- **Sindhu**, who won the silver medal at the Rio Olympics in 2016, created history by bagging the bronze medal in the Tokyo Games earlier this year.

**Source: TOI**

### **Gabriel Boric to become Chile's youngest ever president**

#### **Why in News**

- Leftist former student leader, 35-year-old **Gabriel Boric**, will become Chile's youngest president and one of the youngest political leaders in the world.

#### **Key Points**

- Boric won with 56% of the votes, while his opponent 55-year-old José Antonio Kast trailed with 44% of the votes.
- Boric will take office in March 2022.

#### **Facts about Chile:**

- **President:** Sebastian Pinera (Current President)
- **Capital:** Santiago
- **Currency:** Chilean peso
- **Continent:** South America

**Source: Indian Express**

### **Rishabh Pant appointed as Uttarakhand's brand ambassador**

#### **Why in News**

- **Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami** appointed Indian wicket-keeper batsman **Rishabh Pant** as the **state brand ambassador**.

#### **Key Points**

- Rishabh Pant has been appointed the brand ambassador of Uttarakhand with an aim to promote sports and create mental health awareness among the state's youth.
- Pant, 24, was born in the state's Roorkee town in Haridwar district.

**Source: Indian Express**

### **Alka Upadhyaya appointed Chairperson of NHAI**

#### **Why in News**

- The Centre has appointed **Alka Upadhyaya** as **Chairperson of National Highways Authority of India (NHAI)**.

#### **Key Points**

- A 1990-batch IAS officer of Madhya Pradesh cadre, Alka Upadhyaya is currently Additional Secretary, Department of Rural Development.

#### **Other appointments:**

- **Sanjay Bandopadhyay**, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, has been named Chairman **Inland Waterways Authority of India**.
- **G Asok Kumar**, Mission Director, National Water Mission, Department of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation, will be Director General, **National Mission for Clean Ganga**.

**Source: Indian Express**

### **Gita Gopinath to become IMF's first deputy Managing Director**

#### **Why in News**

- **Chief Economist of the International Monetary Fund (IMF)**, Indian-American **Gita Gopinath**, is set to become the organisation's first deputy Managing Director early next year.

#### **Key Points**

- Gopinath will succeed Geoffrey Okamoto as first deputy managing director, serving under IMF chief Kristalina Georgieva.

#### **Facts about International Monetary Fund (IMF):**

- **Formation:** 27 December 1945
- **Headquarters:** Washington, D.C., U.S.
- **Membership:** 190 countries
- **Managing Director:** Kristalina Georgieva

**Source: India Today**

### **Sambit Patra appointed chairman of India Tourism Development Corporation**

#### **Why in News**

- BJP spokesperson **Sambit Patra** has been appointed as the chairman of **India Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC)** by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet.

### Key Points

- The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has recently approved the proposals of the Ministry of Tourism of splitting the post of Chairman and Managing Director (CMD), India Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC) into two posts of Chairman, ITDC and Managing Director (MD) ITDC.
- The Appointment of Dr Sambit Patra as Part-Time Non-Executive Director and Chairman of ITDC for a period of three years from the date of assumption of charge, or until further orders, whichever is earlier.
- It also continued the tenure of 1990 batch IAS officer Ganji Kamala V. Rao to the post of MD, ITDC, till further orders.
- Earlier, Patra had served as an independent Director of ONGC.

**Source: Business Standard**

## Awards and Honours

### Alia Bhatt named PETA India's 2021 Person of the Year

#### Why in News

- Bollywood actress **Alia Bhatt** has been named **People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) India's 2021 Person of the Year** for her work in support of an animal-friendly fashion industry.

#### Key Points

- In addition, **Alia Bhatt's** vegan kidswear line, Ed-a-Mamma, also won a **2021 PETA India fashion award** for helping to nurture kids' love for animals and nature.

**Note:** PETA India has also named the celebrities who won the title of **'Most Beautiful Vegetarians'**. This year, actors **Akshay Kumar and Bhumi Pednekar** have won the coveted title.

### JGU wins "Digital Innovation of the Year" at the Times Higher Education Asia Awards 2021

#### Why in News

- **O.P. Jindal Global University (JGU)** has won the "Digital Innovation of the Year" award at the distinguished **Times Higher Education (THE) Asia Awards 2021**.

#### **Key Points**

- JGU was the Only Indian University to be Shortlisted for the "Digital Innovation of the Year".
- JGU's win at the THE Awards is a recognition of JGU's successful digital transformation and impact over the last two years.

**Source: Business Standard**

### **Viral Sudhirbhai Desai wins “Global Environment and Climate Action Citizen Award 2021”**

#### **Why in News**

- **Viral Sudhirbhai Desai**, an industrialist from Surat, who is popularly known as the Greenman or green man of Gujarat has been honoured with the **Global Environment and Climate Action Citizen Award 2021**.

#### **Key Points**

- Among the 28 personalities from 11 countries (which include the UK, the US, New Zealand, France, and Malaysia,) who were honoured with this award, Viral Desai was the only Indian to win the honour for climate change.

### **PM Modi honoured with Bhutan’s highest civilian award**

#### **Why in News**

- The King of Bhutan, His Majesty Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, conferred its highest civilian award, the **Order of the Druk Gyalpo**, on **Prime Minister Narendra Modi**.
- This was announced on the occasion of the 114th National Day of Bhutan.

#### **Key Points**

- PM Modi becomes the first foreigner to receive the coveted award.
- This is Mr. Modi’s 10th international award given by various governments.

#### **Note:**

- Every year, on **December 17**, Bhutan marks the **national day** in memory of the birth of the Wangchuk dynasty in 1907.

- The **Order of the Dragon King (Druk Gyalpo)** is the highest award of the Kingdom of Bhutan, awarded in recognition of a lifetime of service to the people and Kingdom of Bhutan.

**Source: The Hindu**

### **Avani Lekhara wins 'Best Female Debut' honour at 2021 Paralympic Awards**

#### **Why in News**

- **Indian shooter Avani Lekhara** won the "**Best Female Debut**" honour at the **2021 Paralympic Sport Awards** for her record-breaking gold medal at the 2020 Tokyo Paralympics.

#### **Key Points**

- The Awards were announced by the **International Paralympic Committee**.
- **Avani Lekhara** became the 1<sup>st</sup> Indian woman to win 2 Paralympic medals in a single edition of the Paralympic Games.
- She was awarded Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna, India's highest sporting honour, for the achievement.

**Source: The Hindu**

### **SAIL receives prestigious Golden Peacock Environment Management Award 2021**

#### **Why in News**

- The **Steel Authority of India Ltd. (SAIL)**, under the Ministry of Steel has been awarded with the prestigious **Golden Peacock Environment Management Award for the year 2021** in the Steel Sector by the Institute of Directors.

#### **Key Points**

- SAIL has been the winner of this award for successive three years.
- SAIL is sensitive to global concern for climate change. Carbon footprint reduction has become an integral part of the company's corporate policies and operations.

#### **Facts about Steel Authority of India Ltd. (SAIL):**

- **Founded:** 19 January 1954
- **Headquarters:** New Delhi
- **CEO:** Soma Mondal

### Source: PIB

#### Konkani writer Damodar Mauzo conferred with 57th Gyanpeeth Award

##### Why in News

- Renowned Konkani writer **Damodar Mauzo** has been conferred with **57th Gyanpeeth Award** for the year 2022.
- Noted Assamese poet Nilmani Phookan has bagged 56th Gyanpeeth award for the year 2021.

##### Key Points

- Mauzo is the second Konkani writer to receive the highest literary award, earlier being given to Writer Ravindra Kelekar in 2006.
- Mauzo is a short story writer, novelist and screenplay writer. His novel Karmelin had bagged Sahitya Akademi award in 1983.

##### About Jnanpith Award:

- It is the oldest and the highest Indian literary award presented annually by the Bharatiya Jnanpith to an author for their "outstanding contribution towards literature".
- Instituted in 1961, the award is bestowed only on Indian writers writing in Indian languages included in the Eighth Schedule to the Constitution of India and English, with no posthumous conferral.

### Source: newsonair

#### Balkrishna Doshi honoured with the Royal Gold Medal 2022

##### Why in News

- Ahmedabad-based Balkrishna Doshi will receive the Royal Gold Medal 2022 by the UK's Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA), the world's highest honour for architecture.

##### Key Points

- At 94, Doshi is being recognised for his career spanning seven decades, with over 100 built projects, across India.
- The Royal Gold Medal is "approved personally by Her Majesty The Queen and is given to a person or group of people who have had a significant influence on the advancement of architecture".
- The award will be presented to Doshi at a special ceremony in 2022.
- Many of his iconic buildings include Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore; Sangath, his studio in Ahmedabad; Ahmedabad School of Architecture – renamed CEPT University in 2002 – which promoted collaborative learning; and Aranya Low Cost Housing (1989), Indore, which won the Aga Khan Award for Architecture in 1995.

### Source: Indian Express

#### 2021 DST-ICTP-IMU Ramanujan Prize

### Why in News

- Professor **Neena Gupta**, a mathematician at the Indian Statistical Institute in Kolkata, has been awarded the **2021 DST-ICTP-IMU Ramanujan Prize** for Young Mathematicians from developing countries for her outstanding work in affine algebraic geometry and commutative algebra.

### Key Points

- Professor Gupta is the third woman to receive the Ramanujan Prize, which was first awarded in 2005 and is administered by the Abdus Salam International Centre for Theoretical Physics (ICTP) jointly with the Department of Science and Technology (DST) Government of India and the International Mathematical Union (IMU).
- **Ramanujan Prize** is given annually to an eminent Mathematician who is less than 45 years of age on 31 December of the year of the award and has conducted outstanding research in developing countries.

**Source: PIB**

### Dinyar Patel's biography of Dadabhai Naoroji wins Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay NIF Book Prize 2021

#### Why in News

- **Writer Dinyar Patel** won the **Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay NIF Book Prize 2021** for his book '**Naoroji: Pioneer of Indian Nationalism**' (Harvard University Press).

#### Key Points

- Instituted in 2018, the Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay NIF Book Prize celebrates high-quality non-fiction literature on modern and contemporary India from writers of all nationalities, published in the previous calendar year.
- The prize carries a cash award of Rs 15 lakh and a citation.
- The book is a biography of Naoroji, the nineteenth-century activist who founded the Indian National Congress. He was the first British MP of Indian origin.

**Source: Indian Express**

### Assam to confer state's top civilian award to Ratan Tata

#### Why in News

- The Assam government will confer the state's highest civilian awards to industrialist **Ratan Tata**, Olympian Lovlina Borgohain and an array of personalities from diverse fields.
- **Former Tata Sons chairman Ratan Tata** was named as the recipient of the **Assam Baibhav** award for his contribution towards **cancer care facilities** in the state.

### Key Points

- The state government has decided to confer Assam Baibhav, Assam Saurav and Assam Gaurav Awards, 2021 to 19 personalities and the award ceremony will be held on January 24, 2022.
- The Assam Baibhav award will be worth Rs 5 lakh, the Assam Saurav award will be worth Rs 4 lakh, and the Assam Gaurav award will carry a cash component of Rs 3 lakh.

**Source: India Today**

## Film director Naomi Kawase named UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador

### Why in News

- **UNESCO Director-General Audrey Azoulay** has appointed **Japanese film director Naomi Kawase** as **UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador** for Cultural and Creative Industries.

### Key Points

- Ms Azoulay named Naomi Kawase in recognition of her commitment to culture and creativity at the service of the development of more just societies, especially for girls and women, and of her support for the Organization's objectives.
- In 2020, Naomi Kawase launched the UNESCO-Nara Residency with the Organization, opening up new creative and production opportunities for ten young African women filmmakers.

**Source: unesco.org**

## Athlete Anju Bobby George wins World Athletics Women of Year Award 2021

### Why in News

- The former international long jump star **Anju Bobby George** has been awarded the **Woman of the Year Award 2021** by

**World Athletics (WA)** for grooming talent in the country and advocating gender equality.

### Key Points

- Senior Vice President of the Indian Athletics Federation, Anju Bobby George is also a constant voice for gender equality and mentors schoolgirls for future leadership positions within the sport producing a world U20 medalist.

**Source: newsonair**

## Obituaries

### Desmond Tutu, anti-apartheid icon who won the Nobel Prize, passes away

- **Archbishop Desmond Tutu**, who won the **Nobel Peace Prize** for his opposition to racial discrimination in South Africa, has passed away at 90.
- As South Africa's first Black Anglican archbishop, Tutu used his international profile to lobby for sanctions against the White-minority government.
- From 1996 to 1998, he led the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, aimed at exposing the injustices of the past.

**Source: HT**

### Seven-term Rajya Sabha MP Mahendra Prasad passes away

- Rajya Sabha MP from the Janata Dal (United) and industrialist **Mahendra Prasad** passed away.
- Estimated to be one of the richest members of Parliament, the founder of Aristo Pharmaceuticals was a **seven-term Rajya Sabha MP** from Bihar and was also elected to the Lok Sabha once.
- Prasad was first elected to the Lok Sabha on a Congress ticket in 1980.

**Source: Indian Express**

### Sarada Menon, India's first woman psychiatrist passes away

- **Sarada Menon**, considered India's first woman psychiatrist, passed away at the age of 98.
- She has been a recipient of several awards, including the Padma Bhushan in 1992 for her work in the field of mental health.
- She became the first woman psychiatrist in the country when she began working in 1959 at what is now the Institute of Mental Health (previously government Kilpauk mental hospital) in Chennai.
- Menon founded the Schizophrenia Research Foundation (SCARF) in 1984. SCARF has been affiliated with the World Health Organisation (WHO).

**Source: HT**

### **Senior BJP leader Harbans Kapoor passes away**

- Eight-time MLA and senior BJP leader of Uttarakhand, **Harbans Kapoor** passed away.
- A former Speaker of Uttarakhand assembly from 2007 to 2012, Kapoor has held a ministerial post in Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand.

**Source: TOI**

## **Ranks and Indices**

### **ARIIA 2021 Ranking Results: Seven Institutes from Maharashtra secure positions in Top 10 in 5 categories**

#### **Why in News**

- Union Minister of State for Education, Dr. Subhas Sarkar announced the **Atal Ranking of Institutions on Innovation Achievements (ARIIA) 2021**.

#### **Key Points**

- A total of 1,438 Institutes and Universities from across the country participated.
- **Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IIT Madras)** has been recognized as the Most Innovative Educational Institute in India for the Third Consecutive Year. It has been Ranked 1 in the ARIIA.
- The **seven Institutes from Maharashtra** in the Top 10 positions in various categories are as follows:

1 **CFTIs/Central University/Institute of National Importance (Technical)**

- Indian Institute of Technology Bombay (2nd Rank)
- II **State University & Deemed University (Govt. & Govt. Aided) (Technical)**
  - Institute of Chemical Technology (Rank 6)
  - Savitribai Phule Pune University (Rank 8)
- III **Govt. College/Institution (Govt. & Govt. Aided) (Technical)**
  - College of Engineering Pune ((1st Rank)
  - Veermata Jijabai Technological Institute (Rank 5)
- IV **University & Deemed University (Self-Finance/Private) (Technical)**
  - Symbiosis International (Rank 10)
- V **Private College/Institute (Self-Finance/Private) (Technical)**
  - G H Rasoni College of Engineering (1st Rank)

### **About Atal Ranking of Institutions on Innovation Achievements (ARIIA):**

- It is an initiative of the Ministry of Education, Govt. of India to systematically rank all major higher educational institutions in India on indicators related to Innovation, Start-up and Entrepreneurship Development amongst students and faculties.
- **ARIIA-2021 ranking is announced in various categories:** Centrally funded technical institutions (e.g. IITs, NITs, etc), State Universities, State Standalone Technical colleges, Private Universities, Private Standalone Technical Colleges, Non-Technical Government and Private Universities And Institutions.

**Source: PIB**

### **Good Governance Index 2021**

#### **Why in News**

- **Union Minister of Home Affairs and Minister of Cooperation, Amit Shah** released the **Good Governance Index 2021** prepared by **DARPG (Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances)** on Good Governance Day at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi.

#### **Key Points**

- **Good Governance Index, GGI 2021 Framework** covered 10 sectors and 58 indicators.
- **The sectors of GGI 2020-21 are** 1) Agriculture and Allied Sectors, 2) Commerce & Industries, 3) Human Resource Development, 4) Public Health, 5) Public Infrastructure & Utilities, 6) Economic Governance, 7) Social Welfare & Development, 8) Judicial & Public Security, 9) Environment, and 10) Citizen-Centric Governance.
- The GGI 2020-21 categorises States and UTs into four categories, i.e., (i) Other States – Group A; (ii) Other States – Group B; (iii) North-East and Hill States; and (iv) Union Territories.
- **Gujarat** has topped the composite ranking in the 58 indicator index followed by Maharashtra and Goa.
- **Gujarat** registered 12.3 percent increase over GGI 2019 indicators.
- **Uttar Pradesh** has shown an incremental growth of 8.9 % over GGI 2019 performance.
- In the Union Territories category, **Delhi** tops the composite rank registering a 14 percent increase over the GGI 2019 indicators.
- **Top ranking States in the Sectors as well as in Composite Ranks is as follows:**

Sectors	Group A	Group B	NE & Hill States	UTs
Agriculture & Allied Sector	Andhra Pradesh	Madhya Pradesh	Mizoram	D & N Haveli
Commerce and Industry	Telangana	Uttar Pradesh	J & K	Daman & Diu
Human Resource Development	Punjab	Odisha	Himachal Pradesh	Chandigarh
Public Health	Kerala	West Bengal	Mizoram	A & N Island
Public Infrastructure and Utilities	Goa	Bihar	Himachal Pradesh	A & N Island

Economic Governance	Gujarat	Odisha	Tripura	Delhi
Social Welfare and Development	Telangana	Chhattisgarh	Sikkim	D & N Haveli
Judiciary and Public Safety	Tamil Nadu	Rajasthan	Nagaland	Chandigarh
Environment	Kerala	Rajasthan	Manipur	Daman & Diu
Citizen Centric Governance	Haryana	Rajasthan	Uttarakhand	Delhi
<b>Composite</b>	<b>Gujarat</b>	<b>Madhya Pradesh</b>	<b>Himachal Pradesh</b>	<b>Delhi</b>

**Source: PIB**

## Hurun Global Unicorn Index 2021: With 54 unicorns, India overtakes UK to third spot

### Why in News

- **India** has a total of **54 unicorns**, ranking it third in the world, and overtook the UK, according to **Hurun Global Unicorn Index 2021**.

### Key Points

- The **USA and China** still continue to bag the top ranks in the list.
- India's list of unicorns is led by which is valued at \$21 billion, followed by mobile ad-tech platform InMobi valued at \$12 billion and hospitality major OYO Rooms with a valuation of \$9.5 billion.
- In the **global rankings, ByteDance** tops the list with a valuation of \$350 billion.

### Note:

- Indians founded 119 Unicorns (65 are Outside of India and 54 are in India).

- The Hurun Research Institute's Global Unicorn Index 2021 is a ranking of the world's start-ups founded in the 2000s, are worth at least a billion dollars, and are not listed on a public exchange.

**About Unicorns:** A unicorn is a privately held startup company valued at over \$1 billion.

**Source: Business Today**

### Books and Authors

#### **Ban Ki-moon released his autobiography "Resolved: Uniting Nations in a Divided World"**

##### **Why in News**

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

##### **Key Points**

- The book consists of life experiences and challenges that the author faced in his life & elaborates his tenure in the United Nations (UN).
- Ban Ki-moon served as the 8th Secretary-General of the United Nations for a two 5-year term (2007-2016).
- The book has been published by HarperCollins India.

**Source: Indian Express**

#### **Vice President launched book 'The Midway Battle: Modi's Roller-coaster Second Term'**

##### **Why in News**

- Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu launched a book titled 'The Midway Battle: Modi's Roller-coaster Second Term'.

##### **Key Points**

- The book is authored by **Gautam Chintamani** and published by Bloomsbury India.
- The book mentioned the political scenario of India. It marks the second tenure of the current Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
- The Midway Battle shed light on the various legislations like the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, triple talaq, the Citizenship (Amendment) Act as well as farming laws.

**Source: outlookindia**

### Reports

## New Appointments

### Olaf Scholz sworn in as Germany's new Chancellor

#### Why in News

- **Olaf Scholz** has been sworn in as **Germany's new chancellor**, bringing to an end Angela Merkel's historic 16 years as leader.

#### Key Points

- Scholz's center-left Social Democrats (SPD) emerged as the largest party in September's general election and has since negotiated a coalition deal with the environmentalist Greens and the business-focused Free Democratic Party (FDP).
- He was formally appointed as the ninth federal chancellor by President Frank-Walter Steinmeier.

Source: newsonair

### UN appoints President Joe Biden advisor Catherine Russell to head UNICEF

#### Why in News

- UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres announced the appointment of **Catherine Russell**, an assistant to U.S. President Joe Biden, as the next head of UNICEF.

#### Key Points

- Ms. Russell also heads the White House Office of Presidential Personnel and served as the State Department's Ambassador-at-large for global women's issues from 2013 to 2017.
- She will succeed Henrietta Fore, who resigned in July 2021 because of a family health issue.

#### About UNICEF:

- UNICEF, also known as the **United Nations Children's Fund**, is a United Nations agency responsible for providing humanitarian and developmental aid to children worldwide.
- The agency is among the most widespread and recognizable social welfare organizations in the world, with a presence in 192 countries and territories.
- **Headquarters:** New York, United States
- **Founded:** 11 December 1946

Source: The Hindu

## HUL CMD Sanjiv Mehta to become FICCI presiden

### Why in News

- **Hindustan Unilever Limited (HUL)** Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) **Sanjiv Mehta** will become the president of the **Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI)** after the association concludes its 94th annual general meeting on December 18, 2021.

### Key Points

- Sanjiv Mehta, who is currently holding the position of senior vice president of FICCI, will succeed Uday Shankar, the current president of the association.

### About Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI):

- FICCI is a non-governmental trade association and advocacy group based in India.
- It was established in 1927, on the advice of Mahatma Gandhi by Indian businessman G.D. Birla and Purshottamdas Thakurdas.

Source: HT

## Important Days

### December 27, International Day of Epidemic Preparedness

#### Why in News

- **International Day of Epidemic Preparedness** is celebrated every year on 27<sup>th</sup> December.

#### Key Points

- The United Nations and the World Health Organization (WHO) declared December 27 as International Day for Epidemic Preparedness in an effort to prepare for future outbreaks and raise public awareness about epidemics on all levels.
- The day was first commemorated on December 27, 2020, when the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) emphasised the significance of advocating for epidemic preparedness, prevention, and collaboration against epidemics.

Source: un.org

### December 25, Good Governance Day

### Why in News

- **Good Governance Day** is observed annually on December 25.

### Key Points

- On this day, the country celebrates the birth anniversary of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

### History:

- On December 23, 2014, Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya (posthumously) were announced as recipients of India's highest civilian award, Bharat Ratna.
- After the announcement, the newly elected Prime Minister Narendra Modi has announced to celebrate 25 December as Good Governance Day.

**Source: India Today**

## December 24, National Consumer Day

### Why in News

- **National Consumer Day** is celebrated on 24th December every year.

### Key Points

- On this day the **Consumer Protection Act, 1986** had received the assent of the President. The enactment of this Act is considered as a historic milestone in the consumer movement in the country.

### Note:

- On July 20th, 2020, the new **Consumer Protection Act, 2019** came into force in India, replacing the previous enactment of 1986.
- **World Consumer Rights Day** is celebrated on 15<sup>th</sup> March every year.

**Source: HT**

## December 23, National Farmers Day

### Why in News

- **National Farmers Day, or Kisan Diwas**, is celebrated across the country on **December 23** to honour India's farmers and mark the birth anniversary of the nation's **fifth Prime Minister, Choudhary Charan Singh**.

### Key Points

### History:

- Chaudhary Charan Singh had introduced several welfare schemes for the farmers and wrote several books on farmers and their problems depicting various solutions to improve the lives of the farmers of the nation.
- Therefore the government, in 2001, decided to mark Charan Singh's birth anniversary as Kisan Diwas.

## December 18, International Migrants Day

### Why in News

- Every year on December 18, the **International Migrant Day** is observed to tackle the problem and challenges of global migration.

### Key Points

- The **theme** for the year 2021 is 'Harnessing the potential of human mobility'.

### History:

- The United Nations General Assembly in the year 1999 created the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families.
- But on December 04, 2000, keeping an account of the large and increasing migrants across the globe, December 18 was decided as International Migrants Day.
- International Migrants Day (18 December) this year falls almost exactly 70 years after the Brussels conference that led to the establishment of the organization that, in 1989, was renamed the International Organization for Migration.

**Note:** Approximately 281 million people were international migrants in 2020, representing 3.6 percent of the global population.

**Source:** [un.org](https://www.un.org)

## December 01, World AIDS Day

### Why in News

- December 1 is observed as **World AIDS Day** across the world.

### Key Points

- The theme of World AIDS Day 2021 is '**End inequalities. End AIDS.**'

- With a special focus on reaching people left behind, WHO and its partners are highlighting the growing inequalities in access to essential HIV services.
- The day was first marked in 1988 and was also the first-ever international day for global health.

**About Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS):**

- AIDS is a chronic disease that is caused by the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).
- The immune system of the person who is suffering from the disease gets damaged and also reduces the disease fighting ability of the body.

**Source: un.org**

**Sports**

**Spinner Harbhajan Singh announces retirement from all forms of cricket**

**Why in News**

- Veteran Indian spinner **Harbhajan Singh** has announced retirement from all forms of cricket.

**Key Points**

- The 41-year-old spinner from Punjab, who made his Test debut against Australia in Bangalore back in 1998, took a total of 417 wickets in 103 Tests.
- He also scalped 269 wickets in 236 One Day International and 25 wickets in 28 T20 internationals during his over two-decades-long career.
- Harbhajan last played for the country in March 2016 during a T20I against the UAE at Dhaka.

**Source: newsonair**

**Uttar Pradesh wins 11th Hockey India Junior Men National Championship 2021 title**

- In **Hockey**, **Uttar Pradesh** won the **11th India Junior Men National Championship 2021 title** following a 3-1 victory over Chandigarh in the final at Kovilpatti, Tamil Nadu.

**Source: newsonair**

## Mohammad Shami becomes fifth Indian pacer to take 200 Test wickets

### Why in News

- **Mohammad Shami** has become the fifth Indian pacer to take 200 Test wickets.
- Shami achieved the feat on Day 3 of the first India-South Africa Test match in Centurion.

### Key Points

- Shami has joined Kapil Dev, Javagal Srinath, Zaheer Khan, and Ishant Sharma in the list.
- Shami reached the milestone in 55 Test matches and is the third quickest Indian after Kapil Dev and Srinath to join the list.

**Source: newsonair**

## Vijay Hazare Trophy 2021: Himachal Pradesh beat Tamil Nadu to win maiden title

- **Himachal Pradesh** beat Tamil Nadu by 11 runs in the final to win their maiden **Vijay Hazare Trophy 2021 title**, at the Sawai Mansingh Stadium, Jaipur.
- For the first time ever, Himachal Pradesh has won a domestic cricket title in Indian cricket.

**Source: TOI**

## Nitesh Kumar wins double gold at 4th Para-Badminton National Championship 2021

### Why in News

- World No. 7 **Nitesh Kumar** doubled his gold tally at the **4th Para-Badminton National Championship 2021**, which concluded in Bhubaneswar, Odisha.

### Key Points

- Haryana's Nitesh along with his partner Tarun defeated World No. 1 Paralympic Games gold medallist Pramod Bhagat and Manoj Sarkar in straight sets 21-19, 21-11 in the Men's doubles finals to win the gold.
- Earlier, Nitesh also won the gold medal in the Men's singles category.

- World No 1 SL3 Para-Badminton player Parul Parmar from Gujarat also secured gold while Mandeep Kaur from Uttarakhand won Silver and Mansi won bronze.

**Source: TOI**

## **Bangladesh wins SAFF U-19 Women's Football Championship 2021**

### **Why in News**

- **Bangladesh Under-19 Women's team** defeated **India** to lift the **SAFF U-19 Women's Football Championship 2021** in Dhaka.

### **Key Points**

- Shaheda Akter Ripa of Bangladesh scored the maximum number of goals in the tournament. She was given the 'most valuable player' of the game award.

**Note: India** will host **South Asian Football Federation's (SAFF) U-18 and U-19 Women's Championships** in 2022.

**Source: newsonair**

## **Hockey: India wins bronze, South Korea lift the 2021 Men's Asian Champions Trophy in Dhaka**

### **Why in News**

- In hockey, **South Korea** defeated Japan to lift the trophy in the **Hero Men's Asian Champions Trophy 2021** in Dhaka, Bangladesh.
- **India** won the **bronze medal** beating Pakistan in the Asian Champions Trophy.

### **Key Points**

- Kanta Tanaka of Japan was declared the best player of the tournament while Suraj Karkera of India was adjudged the best goalkeeper.
- Jang Jonghyun of Korea was the top scorer with 10 goals in the tournament.

**Note:** The 2021 Trophy was the sixth edition of the Men's Asian Champions Trophy organized by the Asian Hockey Federation.

**Source: newsonair**

## **Kidambi Srikanth bags historic silver medal in BWF World Championships 2021**

### Why in News

- In Badminton, **Kidambi Srikanth** bagged a historic silver medal after losing to Loh Kean Yew of Singapore in the Men's singles final of **BWF World Championships 2021** at Huelva in Spain.
- Lakshya Sen finished with the bronze medal.

### Key Points

- Former World Number one, Srikanth etched his name in the history books after becoming the first Indian men's badminton player to reach the singles final of a World Championships.

**Note:** Before this, India got two bronze medals in the Men's singles at the Badminton world championships with Prakash Padukone in 1983 and B Sai Praneeth in 2019.

**Source: newsonair**

### 2021 Asia Youth Para Games: Indian badminton contingent finish with 16 medals

#### Why in News

- The Indian badminton contingent finished the campaign at the 2021 Asia Youth Para Games with 16 medals in Bahrain.
- The para-badminton contingent won 4 gold, 7 silver and 5 bronze medals in total.

#### Key Points

- For India, Tokyo Paralympian Palak Kohli, Sanjana Kumari, and Hardik Makkar clinched three medals each.
- Around 750 athletes under 23 years of age from around 30 countries participated across nine sports - Para athletics, Para badminton, boccia, goalball, Para powerlifting, Para swimming, Para table tennis, Para taekwondo, and wheelchair basketball.

**Source: newsonair**

### Ashleigh Barty wins WTA Player of the Year award

#### Why in News

- The World No. 1 **Ashleigh Barty** won the **Women's Tennis Association (WTA) Player of the Year Award 2021**.

#### Key Points

- Australian Ashleigh Barty won the award for the second time.
- Barty, who won the title in 2019, won a tour-leading five tournaments this year including the second Grand Slam trophy of her career at Wimbledon where she beat Czech Karolina Pliskova in the final.

- British player Emma Raducanu won WTA Newcomer of the Year 2021.

**Source: The Hindu**

### **Davis Cup: Russia beats Croatia to win title after 15 year**

#### **Why in News**

- **Russia** defeated Croatia in the final at Madrid to win the **Davis Cup** title after 15 years.

#### **Key Points**

- It is Russia's third Davis Cup title.

**About Davis Cup:** It is the premier international team event in men's tennis. It is run by the International Tennis Federation and is contested annually between teams from competing countries in a knock-out format.

**Source: Indian Express**

### **Argentina wins Men's Junior Hockey World Cup 2021 Title in Bhubaneswar**

#### **Why in News**

- **Argentina junior hockey team** defeated six time winner Germany in the **FIH Men's Junior Hockey World Cup 2021** final at the Kalinga Stadium in Odisha.

#### **Key Points**

- With this win, Argentina became only the third team after Germany (six titles) and India (two titles) to win multiple Junior Hockey World Cup titles.
- Meanwhile, earlier, last editions' champion India lost 1-3 to France to finish fourth in the competition.

**Source: newsonair**

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**मासिक सम सामयिकी नवम्बर 2021**

## Important News: State

### Patalpani railway station to be named after tribal icon Tantya Bhil

#### Why in News

- **Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan** announced to name **Patalpani railway station** near Indore after tribal icon **Tantya Bhil**.

**Note:** Recently, Bhopal's Habibganj railway station was recently named after Rani Kamalapati, a tribal queen.

#### Key Points

- Indore's Bhanwar Kuan intersection and MR 10 bus stand will also be named after Tantya Bhil.
- Known as the Indian Robin Hood by tribals, **Tantya Bhil** is hailed as one of the revolutionaries who waged an armed struggle against British rule for 12 years.
- It is said that Tantya used to loot the treasuries of the British government and distribute the wealth among the poor.

**Source: Business Standard**

### PM Modi lays the foundation Stone of Noida International Airport, Uttar Pradesh

#### Why in News

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** laid the foundation Stone of **Noida International Airport (NIA)** in Jewar, Gautam Buddha Nagar, Uttar Pradesh.
- With this, Uttar Pradesh will become the only state in India to have five international airports.

#### Key Points

- **Noida International Airport (NIA)** will be the second international airport to come up in Delhi NCR.
- The airport will be the logistics gateway of northern India.
- It will be India's first net zero emissions airport.
- The development of the first phase of the airport is being done with a cost of over Rs 10,050 crore. Spread over more than 1300 hectares of land, the completed first phase of the airport will have a capacity to serve around 1.2 crore passengers a year and work on it is scheduled to be completed by 2024.
- It will be executed by the international bidder **Zurich Airport International AG**.

**Source: PIB**

### India's first 'Grass Conservatory' in Uttarakhand

#### Why in News

- **India's first 'Grass Conservatory'** was inaugurated by the research wing of **Uttarakhand forest department in Ranikhet of Almora district**.

#### Key Points

- Established in an area of 2 acre, the project has been funded under central government's **CAMPA (Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority)** scheme.

- Around 90 different grass species have been conserved/demonstrated in this conservation area displaying important scientific, ecological, medicinal and cultural information/aspects related to grass species.
- The project aims to create awareness about the importance of grass species, promote conservation and to facilitate further research in these species, as it has been proved in latest research that grasslands are more effective in carbon sequestration than forest land.

**Source: TOI**

### **FCI's first state of art laboratory in Gurugram**

#### **Why in News**

- **Food Corporation of India (FCI)** under Department of Food and Public Distribution (DFPD) has developed its first state-of-art laboratory for in house testing of food grain samples.
- Ashwini Kumar Choubey, Minister of State for Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution inaugurated the **'Quality Control Laboratory' at Institute of Food Security (IFS), FCI, Gurugram (Haryana).**

#### **Key Points**

##### **About Food Corporation of India (FCI):**

- The Food Corporation of India is a statutory corporation created and run by the Government of India.
- It is under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, Government of India formed by the enactment of Food Corporation Act, 1964 by the Parliament of India.
- **Headquarters:** New Delhi, India
- **Founded:** 14 January 1965

**Source: PIB**

### **India's first Food Museum inaugurated in Tamil Nadu's Thanjavur**

#### **Why in News**

- Union Minister for Commerce, Industry, Food and Public Distribution Piyush Goyal launched **India's first Food Museum at Thanjavur district in Tamil Nadu.**

#### **Key Points**

- The food museum has been established by **Food Corporation of India (FCI)** in association with Visvesvaraya Industrial and Technological Museum (VITM), Bengaluru at a cost of Rs. 1.1 crore.
- Thanjavur is the birthplace of FCI where its first office was inaugurated on January 14, 1965.

**Note:** Currently, India is the fifth largest agricultural exporter in the world

**Source: TOI**

### **Pochampally village in Telangana selected as one of the best Tourism Villages by UNWTO**

#### **Why in News**

- The **Pochampally village in Telangana State** has been selected as one of the best Tourism Villages by the **United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO)**.
- The prestigious award will be given on the occasion of the 24th session of the UNWTO General Assembly on 2nd December 2021 in Madrid, Spain.

### Key Points

#### About Pochampally Village:

- Pochampally, 50 Kms from Hyderabad, is a town in Nalgonda district of Telangana and is often referred to as the **Silk City of India** for the exquisite sarees that are woven through a unique style called **ikat**.
- This style, Pochampally Ikat, received a **Geographical Indicator (GI Status) in 2004**.
- In 2015, to recognise the diversity of weaving techniques and rich handloom tradition, Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the **first National Handloom Day on August 7** as a tribute to the formal proclamation of the Swadeshi Movement that was made in a meeting at the Calcutta Town hall on the same day in 1905.
- Pochampally is also known as Bhoodan Pochampally to commemorate the **Bhoodan Movement** that was launched by Acharya Vinobha Bhave from this village on April 18th, 1951.

#### Note:

- The Ministry of Tourism recommended three villages for the UNWTO Best Tourism Village entry from India.
- These were Kongthong in Meghalaya, Ladhpura Khas, Madhya Pradesh and Pochampally in Telangana. Pochampally, was awarded by UNWTO.

#### About Best Tourism Villages Initiative:

- The Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO Pilot initiative aims to award those villages which are outstanding examples of rural destinations and showcase good practices in line with its specified nine evaluation areas.
- It also aims to support villages to enhance their rural tourism potential through training and access to opportunities for improvement.

#### About United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO):

- The World Tourism Organization is the United Nations specialized agency entrusted with the promotion of responsible, sustainable and universally accessible tourism.
- **Headquarters:** Madrid, Spain
- **Founded:** 1 November 1975

Source: PIB

### Mumbai-Karnataka region consisting of 7 districts renamed 'Kittur Karnataka'

#### Why in News

- The Karnataka government decided to rename the **Mumbai-Karnataka** region comprising 7 districts as '**Kittur Karnataka**'.

#### Key Points

- Mumbai-Karnataka region consists of Uttara Kannada, Belagavi, Dharwad, Vijayapura, Bagalkote, Gadag and Haveri districts.

- The region was under the erstwhile Bomber presidency before Independence and the pro-kannada organisations' demand for renaming the region has been a long-standing one.
- The name "Kittur" is after a historical taluk in Belagavi district that was ruled by Rani Chennamma, who had fought against the British before Jhansi Rani Laxmibai did.

**Note:** Previously, the B S Yediyurappa government in 2019 had renamed Hyderabad-Karnataka region that was previously ruled by Nizams of Hyderabad as "Kalyana-Karnataka".

**Source: India Today**

### **Arunachal Pradesh's State butterfly 'Kaiser-i-Hind'**

#### **Why in News**

- The State Cabinet of **Arunachal Pradesh**, headed by Chief Minister Pema Khandu, approved the **Kaiser-i-Hind** as the **State butterfly**.

#### **Key Points**

- Kaiser-i-Hind is a large and brightly coloured butterfly.
- It is scientifically known as *Teinopalpus imperialis*.
- The insect with a 90-120 mm wingspan is found in the eastern Himalayas.
- The butterfly also flutters in Nepal, Myanmar, Laos, Bhutan, Vietnam and southern China.

#### **Protection Status:**

- Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972: Schedule II
- IUCN: Near Threatened
- CITES: Appendix II

**Source: The Hindu**

### **India's first ISO certified, first PPP model based 'Rani Kamalapati Railway Station' in Bhopal**

#### **Why in News**

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** dedicated to the nation the redeveloped **Rani Kamalapati Railway Station in Bhopal**.
- He also launched the 'Ration Aapke Gram' scheme and Madhya Pradesh Sickle Cell Mission in Madhya Pradesh.
- He also laid the foundation of 50 Eklavya Model Residential Schools across the country.

#### **Key Points**

- **Rani Kamalapati Railway Station** in Bhopal is the country's first ISO certified, first **Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model** based railway station.
- The redeveloped Rani Kamalapati Railway station, named after brave and fearless Queen Kamalapati of the Gond kingdom, is the first world class railway station in Madhya Pradesh.
- The station is also developed as a hub for integrated multi-modal transport.

**Note:** The name of Bhopal's Habibganj Railway Station has been changed to Rani Kamalapati Railway Station.

**Source: PIB**

### **Meghalaya gets its 12th district 'Eastern West Khasi Hills'**

**Why in News**

- The **12th district of Meghalaya – 'Eastern West Khasi Hills'** was inaugurated by Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma.

**Key Points**

- This new district, with its headquarters at Mairang, was bifurcated from its parent district of West Khasi Hills.
- The new district comprises Mairang and Mawthadraishan C&RD blocks respectively.
- Mairang is one of the oldest civil sub-divisions, which was inaugurated on November 10, 1976, and exactly after 45 years, it was upgraded to a new district.

**Source: TOI**

### **Haryana's Bhattu Kalan police station among India's top three**

- The **Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)** has recognised **Bhattu Kalan police station** of Fatehabad district in Haryana among the top three police stations in India in 2021.
- The Union government has adopted a uniform model of ranking police stations in the country.
- The basic objective of the ranking is to improve the quality of policing and make it citizen-friendly.

**Source: HT**

### **India's first National Yogasana Sports Championships organised in Bhubaneswar**

- **India's first Physical National Yogasana Championships** has been organised in Bhubaneswar, Odisha from November 11-13, 2021.
- It has been organised by the National Yogasana Sports Federation (NYSF) in association with the Odisha state.
- Around 560 young Yogasana Sports athletes from across 30 states took part in the event.

**Source: TOI**

### **Srinagar joins UNESCO Creative Cities Network 2021**

**Why in News**

- The **United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)** designated **Srinagar** as a part of **UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN) 2021**.
- Srinagar has been designated the creative city in the field of Crafts and Folk Arts.

**Key Points**

- UNESCO designated 49 cities as part of the creative cities network. With this, the total number of creative cities in the world has reached 295 across 90 countries.

- After Hyderabad, Varanasi, Mumbai, Chennai, and Jaipur, Srinagar is the 6<sup>th</sup> Indian city to achieve this distinction.

**Indian Cities on UCCN:**

- Srinagar - Crafts and Folk Arts (2021)
- Hyderabad – Gastronomy (2019)
- Mumbai – Film (2019)
- Chennai- Music (2017)
- Varanasi- Music (2015)
- Jaipur- Crafts and Folk Arts (2015)

**About UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN):**

- It is a project of UNESCO launched in 2004 to promote cooperation among cities which recognized creativity as a major factor in their urban development.
- UNESCO designates the creative cities in seven fields — Craft, Folk Art, Media Arts, Gastronomy, Film Design, Literature and Music.

**Source: Indian Express**

**India's largest landfill biogas plant launched in Hyderabad**

**Why in News**

- **Ramky Enviro** has inaugurated one of the world's first and India's largest landfill gas-to-compressed biogas plant at the **Hyderabad Integrated Municipal Solid Waste (HiMSW) site, Hyderabad, Telangana.**

**Key Points**

- The project is focused on the conversion of landfill gas into compressed biogas as an automotive fuel.
- The project offers significant benefits such as carbon sequestration and reduced emissions of GHGs (GreenHouse Gases) into the environment and contributes to the greening of the automotive industry.

**Source: The Hindu**

**Arunachal Pradesh to showcase 'heroic village' near the China border**

**Why in News**

- **Arunachal Pradesh** is planning to serve the country one of its most patriotic destinations on the 75th year of Independence — **Kaho**, a village on the China border.

**Key Points**

- The State's Department of Information, Public Relations and Printing has sent a 12-member team to Kaho in Anjaw district for filming a documentary on the village and its people.
- One of seven villages in the Kibithoo block bisected by the Lohit River, Kaho had weathered the Chinese attack in 1962. Its people had assisted the Indian soldiers.

**About Kaho village:**

- Kaho is the first village from the China border in Anjaw district.
- Anjaw is one of the 11 districts of Arunachal Pradesh that share their border with China.

**Source: The Hindu**

## Logos of Darjeeling's 'Toy Train' registered

### Why in News

- More than two decades after the **Darjeeling Himalayan Railway (DHR)** was designated a **UNESCO World Heritage Site**, India has finally registered the **logos of the iconic 'Toy Train'** internationally as its intellectual property.
- DHR was declared a World Heritage Site on December 5, 1999 by UNESCO.

### Key Points

- The use of these logos anywhere in the world will now require written permission from India and the payment of a fee.
- The DHR, which started operations in 1880, more than 140 years ago, has two logos, both of which have been patented.
- Both logos are over a century old, and popular in world heritage circuits.
- The Railway Ministry in Delhi and the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway office in Kurseong, West Bengal, initiated the process of registering the logo with the Controller General of Patents, Designs and Trademarks under the Union Ministry of Commerce and Industry in August 2021.
- The claim was then sent to the **World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO)**, a specialised agency of the United Nations based in Geneva, Switzerland, in accordance with the procedure laid down in WIPO's Vienna Classification (VCL).

**Source: Indian Express**

## Former Punjab CM Amarinder Singh resigns from Congress, announces new party

- **Former Punjab Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh** resigned from the Congress.
- Singh also announced the name of his new political party '**Punjab Lok Congress**'.
- Punjab goes to polls early next year.
- Punjab is slated to go through assembly polls in 2022.

### Facts about Punjab:

- **Governor:** Banwarilal Purohit
- **Capital:** Chandigarh
- **Chief Minister:** Charanjit Singh Channi

**Source: TOI**

## Maharashtra becomes India's first state to release its own Wildlife Action plan

### Why in News

- **Maharashtra** became India's first state to release its own **Wildlife Action plan (2021-30)**.

### Key Points

- The new plan, which will be implemented over the next 10 years, recognises concerns about climate change impacts on wildlife, coastal ecosystems, marine biodiversity, flora and fauna.

- The plan will be a guiding document for an action plan for wildlife conservation for the next decade.
- To develop a Climate Action Plan for the Coastal Region of the state in sync with the 'State Climate Change Action Plan' with special emphasis on 'Climate Change Adaptation' (CCA) and 'Disaster Risk Reduction (DDR)', the plan states.

**Source: Indian Express**

### Important News: India

#### "Ocean Services, Modelling, Application, Resources and Technology (O-SMART)" scheme

##### Why in News

- The **Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA)** chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi approved the continuation of the umbrella scheme "**Ocean Services, Modelling, Application, Resources and Technology (O-SMART)**" of **Ministry of Earth Sciences**, for implementation during the period from 2021-26 at an overall cost of Rs. 2177 crore.

##### Key Points

- The **O-SMART scheme** encompasses seven sub-schemes namely Ocean Technology, Ocean Modelling and Advisory Services (OMAS), Ocean Observation Network (OON), Ocean Non-Living Resources, Marine Living Resources and Ecology (MLRE), Coastal Research and Operation and Maintenance of Research Vessels.
- The O-SMART scheme encompassing oceanographic research activities is being implemented with the objectives for providing forecast and services based on the continuous observation of oceans, development of technologies and exploratory surveys for sustainable harnessing of our oceanic resources (both living and non-living) and promotion of front-ranking research in ocean sciences.
- This continuation of the scheme would contribute significantly towards national policy on the **blue economy** for effective and efficient use of the vast ocean resources in a Sustainable way.
- Efforts towards achieving **United Nations Sustainable Development Goal-14** to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources are being covered through the coastal research and marine biodiversity activities.

**Note:** Recently, the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs chaired has accorded its approval for stipendiary support of Rs. 3,054 crore to apprentices who undergo apprenticeship training under **National Apprenticeship Training Scheme (NATS)** of Ministry of Education for the period from 2021-22 to 2025-26.

**Source: PIB**

## Ganga Connect Exhibition concludes in London: High Level of Engagement & Tangible Outcomes

### Why in News

- The **Ganga Connect Exhibition** that has been running across the UK from 8th November concluded in London on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2021.
- This has been a major effort of the National Mission for Clean Ganga, the High Commission of India and cGanga to engage with the international community of scientists, technology companies, policy makers, industry, investors and finance professionals.

### Key Points

- The exhibition started in Glasgow and moved to Cardiff, Birmingham, Oxford before concluding in London.
- 10 key strategic announcements that summarised the highlights of the two weeks long exhibition:
- **Ganga Connect UK Community Engagement Chapters**
- **Twinning of Rivers**
- **Scotland – India Water Partnership**
- **Impact Project using Arth Ganga Framework**
- **Ganga Finance and Investments Forum**
- **Technologies enrolled into the Environment Technology Verification (ETV) programme**
- **Tech & Innovation Financing**
- **UK-India Scientific Collaboration**
- **Global Youth for Ganga**
- **Finalisation of Clean Ganga Charity in the UK**

Source: PIB

## "Atmosphere & Climate Research-Modelling Observing Systems & Services (ACROSS)" scheme

### Why in News

- The **Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA)** chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi approved the continuation of the umbrella scheme **"Atmosphere & Climate Research-Modelling Observing Systems & Services (ACROSS)"** along with its eight sub-schemes to the next finance cycle (15<sup>th</sup>) of five years i.e. 2021-2026 at an estimated cost of Rs.2,135 crore.

### Key Points

- The scheme is being implemented by the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) through its units namely India Meteorological Department (IMD), National Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecasting (NCMRWF); Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM) and Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS).
- The ACROSS scheme pertains to the atmospheric science programs of the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) and addresses different aspects of weather and climate services.
- Each of these aspects is incorporated as eight sub-schemes under the umbrella scheme "ACROSS". These are:

- (i) Commissioning of Polarimetric Doppler Weather Radars
- (ii) Upgradation of Forecast System
- (iii) Weather & Climate Services
- (iv) Atmospheric Observations Network
- (v) Numerical Modelling of Weather and Climate
- (vi) Monsoon Mission III
- (vii) Monsoon Convection, Clouds and Climate Change (MC4)
- (viii) High Performance Computing System (HPCS)

**Note:** Recently, the Union Cabinet has approved the extension for **the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY-Phase V)** for a period of another 4 months i.e. December 2021 till March 2022.

**Source: PIB**

### **Railway Minister announces introduction of 'Bharat Gaurav Trains'** **Why in News**

- Ashwini Vaishnaw, Minister of Railways, announced the introduction of theme-based tourist circuit trains 'Bharat Gaurav Trains'.

#### **Key Points**

- Bharat Gaurav Trains will showcase India's rich cultural heritage and magnificent historical places to people of India and world.

#### **Scope:**

- Service Providers would be free to decide themes like Guru Kripa trains for covering important places of Sikh culture, Ramayana trains for places connected with Lord Shri Ram etc.
- Service Provider to offer all inclusive packages to tourists including rail travel, hotel accommodation, sightseeing arrangement, visit to historical/heritage sites, tour guides etc.

#### **Other Related Scheme:**

- PRASHAD Scheme
- Swadesh Darshan Scheme
- Dekho Apna Desh Initiative
- Buddhist Conclave

**Source: PIB**

### **India's first Virtual Science Lab for children under CSIR Jigyasa programme**

#### **Why in News**

- **Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Science & Technology Dr Jitendra Singh** launched **India's first Virtual Science Lab** for children under **CSIR Jigyasa programme**, which will also connect students with scientists across the country.

#### **Key Points**

- This Virtual Lab will immensely benefit students from Kendriya Vidyalayas, Navodaya Vidyalayas and Government Schools.
- CSIR has partnered with IIT Bombay to develop a Virtual Lab platform under CSIR Jigyasa programme, which facilitates classroom learning with laboratory research for school students.
- The target audience for the Virtual Lab platform is students of the standard VI to XII (11-18 years).

**Note:** The “Jigyasa” since its launch in 2017, was successful in connecting nearly 3,00,000 students and more than 5,000 teachers with CSIR and they have benefited directly through visits to CSIR labs.

**Source: PIB**

## **PM Modi announces repeal of 3 contentious farm laws**

### **Why in News**

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** announced that the 3 contentious farm laws passed last year would be repealed.
- The process of repealing the laws — which are currently stayed by the Supreme Court — will take place in the upcoming Winter Session of Parliament.

### **Key Points**

#### **About Three Farm Laws:**

- **Farmers Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, 2020**
- **Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Act, 2020**
- **Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act, 2020**
- The Supreme Court stayed the implementation of the three laws in January 2021.
- The farm laws were in force for only 221 days — June 5th 2020, when the ordinances were promulgated to January 12th 2021, when the Supreme Court stayed their implementation.

#### **Note:**

- The Parliament has the authority to enact, amend, and repeal any law.
- **Laws can be repealed in two ways** — either through an ordinance, or through legislation.

**Source: Indian Express**

## **Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana – Gramin completes 5 years**

### **Why in News**

- **Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana – Gramin (PMAY-G)** completed 5 years on 20<sup>th</sup> November, 2021.

### **Key Points**

- To achieve the objective of providing “*Housing for All*” by the year 2022, the Government of India rolled out the revamped rural housing scheme, Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana-Gramin (PMAY-G) was launched on 20th November, 2016 with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016.
- The program envisages the completion of 2.95 crore PMAY-G houses with all basic amenities by the year 2022.
- The total release made to the States/UTs in FY 2021-22 under the PMAY-G scheme is Rs.7775.63 Crore.
- Apart from focusing on providing houses to the eligible beneficiaries, PMAY-G also addresses the basic needs of households through convergence with other Government Schemes.

- The beneficiary is entitled to 90/95 person-days of unskilled labour from MGNREGS.
- Convergence for piped drinking water, electricity connection, LPG gas connection etc. under different Government programmes is also an inherent thematic component.

**Source: PIB**

## **Cabinet approves continuation of PMGSY-I, PMGSY-II and RCPLWEA** **Why in News**

- The **Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA)** chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi gave its approval to the proposals of Department of Rural Development, Ministry of Rural Development for continuation of **Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana-I and II (PMGSY-I, PMGSY-II)** upto **September, 2022** for completion of balance road and bridge works.
- The CCEA also approved continuation of **Road Connectivity Project for Left Wing Extremism Affected Areas (RCPLWEA)** upto **March, 2023**.

### **Key Points**

- A total of Rs. 1,12,419 crore, including state share is likely to be incurred from 2021-22 to 2024-25 for completion of all the ongoing interventions of PMGSY.
- 4,490 Km road length and 105 bridges have already been completed under RCPLWEA since 2016 in 44 districts in 9 states.
- Extension of time upto September 2022 is being granted to help North East and Hill States to complete balance works.

### **About Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY):**

- **PMGSY-I:** PMGSY-I was launched in the year 2000 to provide connectivity to eligible unconnected habitations of 500+ in plain areas and 250+ in North-East and Himalayan states as per census 2001.
- **PMGSY-II:** PMGSY-II, which was approved by the Cabinet in May, 2013, envisaged consolidation of 50,000 Km of existing rural road network.
- **PMGSY-III:** The PMGSY-III was launched in the year 2019 for consolidation of 1,25,000 Km existing through routes and Major rural links connecting habitations, inter-alia, to Gramin Agricultural Markets, Higher Secondary Schools and Hospitals and the implementation period of the scheme is upto March, 2025.

### **About Road Connectivity Project for Left Wing Extremism Affected Areas:**

- Launched in 2016 for construction/upgradation of 5,412 Km road length and 126 bridges of strategic importance in 44 districts in 9 states, viz. Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Telangana and Uttar Pradesh, with an outlay of Rs. 11,725 crore.
- Implementation period was 2016-17 to 2019-20.

**Source: PIB**

## **India launches the 41st Scientific Expedition to Antarctica** **Why in News**

- **India's Ministry of Earth Sciences** launched the **41<sup>st</sup> Scientific Expedition to Antarctica** with the arrival of the first batch of its contingent at the southern white continent.
- The first batch comprising of 23 scientists and support staff reached the **Indian Antarctic station Maitri**.
- Four more batches shall be landing in Antarctica by air using DROMLAN facility and onboard chartered ice-class vessel MV VasiliyGolovnin by mid-January 2022.

#### Key Points

- The 41<sup>st</sup> expedition has **two major programs**.
- The **first program** encompasses geological exploration of the Amery ice shelf at Bharati station. This will help explore the link between India and Antarctica in the past.
- The **second program** involves reconnaissance surveys and preparatory work for drilling of 500 meters of ice core near Maitri. It will help in improving the understanding of Antarctic climate, westerly winds, sea-ice and greenhouse gases from a single climate archive for the past 10,000 years.
- The ice core drilling will be done in collaboration with the British Antarctic Survey and the Norwegian Polar Institute.

#### Note:

- The Indian Antarctic program, which began in 1981, has completed 40 scientific expeditions, and built three permanent research base stations in Antarctica, named Dakshin Gangotri (1983), Maitri (1988) and Bharati (2012).
- As of today, Maitri and Bharati are fully operational.
- The National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research (NCPOR), Goa—an autonomous institute under the Ministry of Earth Sciences—manages the entire Indian Antarctic program.

Source: PIB

### Geographical Information System (GIS) plans for around 75% Gram Panchayats completed

#### Why in News

- The **Ministry of Rural Development** has reached an important milestone with the completion of **Geographical Information System (GIS)** plans for **2 lakh Gram Panchayats (GPs)** out of 2.69 lakh GPs under **Mahatma Gandhi NREGA** using remote sensing technology based on the ridge to valley approach.

#### Key Points

- GIS-based planning under Mahatma Gandhi NREGS is an initiative of the Ministry of Rural Development which helps the Gram Panchayat to ensure a scientific & holistic approach for planning at the Gram Panchayat level.
- The Ministry has provided detailed training on usage of GIS & RS (Remote Sensing) technology to Mahatma Gandhi NREGS functionaries of States/UTs through the initiative of the NIRDPR (National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj).

- Thereafter, all the States/UTs prepared 4 GIS-based plans of GPs per block in FY 2020-21 as pilots, which was extended to all GP's after successful completion.

**Other Initiatives:**

- **'Bhuvan' space technology solution** from the National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC) of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).
- **Yuktdhara Geospatial Planning portal**, developed on Bhuvan Platform by National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC), Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO)

**About Geographical Information System (GIS):**

- The GIS is a computer-based tool for mapping and analyzing the geographic terrain and offers scientific choices of development works suitable to the area.
- This technology integrates common database operations such as query and statistical analysis with the unique visualization and geographic analysis benefits offered by the maps.

**Source: PIB**

**7<sup>th</sup> edition of Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) Conclave**

**Why in News**

- The **7<sup>th</sup> edition of Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS)-2021 Conclave of Chiefs** was hosted by the French Navy at Paris from 15 - 16 Nov 2021.

**Key Points**

- The Conclave of Chiefs was attended by Chiefs of Navies/ Heads of Lead Maritime Agencies of IONS nations.

**Note:**

- The 7<sup>th</sup> edition of IONS Symposium was held at Le-Reunion from 28 Jun - 01 Jul 2021 in hybrid format due to COVID protocols.
- During the Symposium, it was agreed upon to conduct the extant Conclave of Chiefs at Paris.

**About Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS):**

- It is a series of biennial meetings between the littoral states of the Indian Ocean region.
- It provides a forum to increase maritime security cooperation, discuss regional maritime issues, and promote friendly relationships among the member states.
- The symposium was first held in **2008 with India** as host.
- France assumed the Chairmanship in June 2021 for two-year tenure.

**Source: PIB**

**Digital India Land Record Modernisation Programme**

**Why in News**

- Union Minister for Rural Development and Panchayati Raj Giriraj Singh inaugurated **'Bhumi Samvaad'** - National Workshop on **Digital India Land Record Modernisation Programme (DILRMP)**.

- The Minister also launched the **National Generic Document Registration System (NGDRS)** portal and Dashboard.

#### **Key Points**

#### **About Digital India Land Record Modernization Programme (DILRMP):**

- The DILRMP, previously known as the National Land Record Modernization Programme (NLRMP), was launched in 2008 by the Government of India with the purpose to digitize and modernize land records and develop a centralised land record management system.
- The DILRMP is the amalgamation of two projects: Computerisation of Land Records (CLR) and Strengthening of Revenue Administration and Updating of Land Records (SRA & ULR).

#### **About National Generic Document Registration System (NGDRS):**

- NGDRS is an in-house advanced software application for the registration system developed by NIC.
- It ensures transparency, accountability of the officials executing the documents and reduction in cost, time and number of visits and procedures required for the execution of the registration documents.

#### **Other Initiative:**

#### **Unique Land Parcel Identification Numbers (ULPIN):**

- It is a 14-digit identification number accorded to a plot of land.
- In this unique system wherein a unique ID based on Geo-coordinates of the parcels is generated and assigned to the plots.

**Source: PIB**

### **PM Modi addresses 82nd All India Presiding Officers' Conference**

#### **Why in News**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the **82nd All India Presiding Officers' Conference (AIPOC)** on 17 November, 2021.

#### **Key Points**

- The All India Presiding Officers' Conference (AIPOC), the apex body of the Legislatures in India, is celebrating its hundred years in 2021.
- To commemorate the centennial year of AIPOC, the 82nd edition of the All India Presiding Officers' Conference was held in Shimla on 17-18 November 2021.
- The first Conference was also held in Shimla in 1921.

**Source: India Today**

### **National Achievement Survey (NAS) 2021**

#### **Why in News**

- The **National Achievement Survey (NAS) 2021** was successfully conducted across all 36 states and UTs of the country.
- Nearly 1.23 lakh schools and 38 lakh students in 733 districts across 36 States and UTs were covered in the NAS 2021.
- The last NAS was held in November 2017 for assessing the competencies developed by the children at the grade levels III, V and VIII.

#### **Key Points**

### **About National Achievement Survey (NAS) 2021:**

- NAS 2021 is a process of gathering information in order to develop a deep understanding of what students know, understand and can do with their knowledge as a result of their educational experiences.
- There are 3 phases of NAS exercise, namely instrument development, sampling design and actual administration of the test.
- **National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT)**, being a nodal academic body, has done the instrument development, testing, finalization of the test items.
- **Actual Administration of the test** in the sampled schools was conducted by **CBSE (Central Board of Secondary Education)**.
- It will infuse the competency-based assessment system over the content and memory-based assessment as envisaged by NEP 2020.
- The results of it will be prepared in the form of District Report Cards, State/UT reports and National report.

### **Medium and Grades:**

- NAS 2021 was conducted in Language, Mathematics & EVS for class 3 & 5; Language, Mathematics, Science & Social Science for class 8 and Language, Mathematics, Science, Social Science and English for class 10.
- The Test was conducted in 22 mediums of instruction.

### **Government Initiatives:**

- Samagra Shiksha 2.0
- NEP (National Education Policy) 2020
- PM Poshan Scheme
- NIPUN Bharat Mission
- Performance Grading Index
- UDISE (Unified District Information System for Education)

**Source: PIB**

### **Member of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS)**

#### **Why in News**

- The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has approved the restoration and continuation of **Member of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS)** during the remaining part of Financial Year 2021-22 and up to Financial Year 2025-26 co-terminus with the period of 15<sup>th</sup> Finance Commission.

#### **Key Points**

- The Ministry will release MPLADS fund at the rate of Rs. 2 crore per Member of Parliament for the remaining period of FY 2021-22 in one instalment and at the rate of Rs. 5.00 crore per annum per Member of Parliament during FY 2022-23 to FY 2025-26 in two instalments of Rs.2.5 crore each.

#### **About Member of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS):**

- The MPLADS is a Central Sector Scheme fully funded by the Government of India.
- It was announced on 23 December 1993.

- The objective of the scheme is to enable MPs to recommend works of developmental nature with emphasis on the creation of durable community assets in the areas of drinking water, primary education, public health, sanitation and roads, etc. primarily in their Constituencies.

**Source: PIB**

## **PM Modi pledges net zero emissions by 2070**

### **Why in News**

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** pledged at the **COP26 UN climate conference** in **Glasgow** that India will achieve net-zero emissions by 2070.
- The 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP-26) is being hosted by the United Kingdom in Glasgow from 31st of October to 12th of November 2021.

### **Key Points**

- India announced that it will reach carbon neutrality by 2070 as part of a five-point action plan that included reducing emissions to 50% by 2030.
- The country would make one billion-tonne reduction in projected emissions from now until 2030.

### **Infrastructure for Resilient Island States (IRIS):**

- PM Narendra Modi launched **Infrastructure for Resilient Island States (IRIS)** on the sidelines of climate summit in Glasgow.
- It is aimed at achieving sustainable development through a systematic approach to resilient, sustainable and inclusive infrastructure in Small Island Developing States (SIDS).
- **Indian Space Research Organisation** will build a special data window for Small Island Developing States to provide them timely information about cyclones, coral-reef monitoring and coast-line monitoring.
- **'Climate Equity Monitor'**: On Day One of COP26, India launched an online dashboard called the **'Climate Equity Monitor'** for assessing equity in Climate Action, inequalities in emissions, energy and resource consumption across the world.
- More than 100 world leaders have promised **to end and reverse deforestation by 2030**, in the COP26 climate summit's first major deal.

**Source: newsonair**

## **Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Telangana emerge toppers in governance performance: PAC study**

### **Why in News**

- **Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Telangana** have taken the top three slots, emerging winners among the 18 large states in **governance performance**, according to the 6<sup>th</sup> edition of **Public Affairs Index (PAI 2021)** from **Public Affairs Centre (PAC)**, a Bengaluru-based nonprofit think tank.

### **Key Points**

- The index has taken into consideration each State's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Toppers among large states:**

- Kerala (1.618)

- Tamil Nadu (0.857)
- Telangana (0.891)

**Toppers among small states:**

- Sikkim (1.617)
- Meghalaya (1.144)
- Mizoram (1.123)

**Toppers among Union Territories:**

- Puducherry (1.182)
- Jammu and Kashmir (0.705)
- Chandigarh (0.628)

**About Public Affairs Index:**

- The index looks at governance performance in the context of sustainable development defined by three pillars – Equity, Growth and Sustainability, five themes, 14 sustainable development goals and 43 indicators.

**Source: ET**

**NCW launches pan-India Legal Awareness Programme for Women in collaboration With NALSA**

**Why in News**

- The **National Commission for Women (NCW)**, along with **National Legal Services Authority (NALSA)** has launched a pan-India Legal Awareness Program for Women, "**Empowerment of Women through Legal Awareness**".
- The programme was launched in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh by Justice UU Lalit, Judge Supreme Court of India and Executive Chairman, NALSA, Chairperson, National Commission for Women Ms Rekha Sharma.

**Key Points**

- The programme aims to cover all the States and Union Territories across the country through regular sessions to make women aware of the various machineries of the justice delivery system available for redressal of their grievances.
- The programme will sensitize women and girls about their rights as provided under the various laws including the Indian Penal Code.

**Source: PIB**

**Union Education Minister launches Bhasha Sangam initiative for schools**

**Why in News**

- **Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan** launched **Bhasha Sangam initiative for schools** under **Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat** to commemorate Rashtriya Ekta Diwas.
- He also launched **Bhasha Sangam Mobile App** and **Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat Mobile Quiz App**.

**Key Points**

**About Bhasha Sangam:**

- **Bhasha Sangam** is an initiative of the **Ministry of Education** under **Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat**, to teach basic sentences of everyday usage in **22 Indian languages**.

- The idea is that people should acquire basic conversational skills in an Indian language other than their mother tongue.
- It is developed by **National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT)**.
- It is being made available on DIKSHA, ePathshala and through 22 booklets.

**About Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat:**

- It was announced by the Prime Minister on 31st October, 2015 on the occasion of the 140th birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.
- Through this innovative measure, the knowledge of the culture, traditions and practices of different states & UTs will lead to an enhanced understanding and bonding between the states, thereby strengthening the unity and integrity of India

**Source: PIB**

## **Ganga Utsav 2021 – The River Festival**

### **Why in News**

- **Union Minister for Jal Shakti, Gajendra Singh Shekhawat** inaugurated 5th edition of **'Ganga Utsav 2021 – The River Festival'**.
- The festival is being organized from November 1 to 3.

### **Key Points**

#### **Other Initiative/Programme:**

#### **Continuous Learning and Activity Portal (CLAP):**

- CLAP is an initiative by Namami Gange, created and executed by TREE Craze Foundation.
- This is an interactive portal that is working towards initiating conversations and action around the rivers in India.

#### **Ganga Mashal:**

- The Minister also spoke about an expedition 'Ganga Mashal' lead by the Ganga Task Force which was flagged off from Delhi and will travel the route including 23 stations along river Ganga which will help sensitization of the local people and Namami Gange volunteers.

#### **Ganga Atlas:**

- 'Ganga Atlas: River of the Past' developed by Prof Rajiv Sinha, IIT Kanpur documents the changes in River Ganga over the past 5-6 decades in terms of channel morphology, land use & land cover, river dynamics and associated issues.

**National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG)** also got registered in the **Guinness Book of World Records** on the first day of the Ganga Utsav – the River Festival 2021 for most photos of handwritten notes uploaded to Facebook in one hour.

**Note: Ganga** was declared as the National River of India on **November 4, 2008**.

**Source: PIB**

## **Nationwide expansion of Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine (PCV) under the Universal Immunization Programme (UIP)**

### **Why in News**

- **Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare, Mansukh Mandaviya** launched the nationwide expansion of **Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine (PCV)** under the **Universal Immunization Programme (UIP)** as a part of Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav.

### **Key Points**

- It is for the first time in the country that **Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine (PCV)** will be available for universal use.
- Pneumonia is a leading cause of death among children under-5 years old, globally and in India.
- Pneumonia caused by pneumococcus is the most common cause of severe pneumonia in children.
- In India around 16 percent of deaths in Children occur due to pneumonia.
- The nationwide rollout of PCV will reduce child mortality by around 60 percent.

### **About Universal Immunization Programme (UIP):**

- UIP is one of the largest public health programmes targeting close to 26.7 million newborns and 29 million pregnant women annually.
- Under UIP, immunization is being provided free of cost against 12 vaccine preventable diseases.

**Source: PIB**

## **Union Minister of Home Affairs and Cooperation launches the "Dairy Sahakar" scheme**

### **Why in News**

- **Union Minister of Home Affairs and Cooperation Amit Shah** launched the **"Dairy Sahakar" scheme** at **Anand, Gujarat**, during the function organised by Amul for celebration of 75th Foundation Year of Amul.

### **Key Points**

- The Dairy Sahakar with a total investment of Rs 5000 crore will be implemented by NCDC under the Ministry of Cooperation, Government of India to realize the vision, "from cooperation to prosperity".
- Under Dairy Sahakar, financial support will be extended by NCDC to eligible cooperatives for activities such as bovine development, milk procurement, processing, quality assurance, value addition, branding, packaging, marketing, transportation and storage of milk and milk products, exports of dairy products within the overall objectives of "Doubling the farmer's income" and "Atmanirbhar Bharat".

**Source: PIB**

## **Ministry of Food Processing Industries launches 'Dilli Bakes' – First 'One District, One Product' (ODOP) brand under PMFME Scheme**

### **Why in News**

- The **Ministry of Food Processing Industries**, in association with the **National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India**

(NAFED), launched the **first 'One District, One Product' 'Dilli Bakes'** in the bakery products category of the **Pradhan Mantri Formalisation of Micro food processing Enterprises (PMFME) Scheme**.

#### Key Points

- The brand and the product have been exclusively developed under the ODOP concept for the bakery which is one of the ODOPs for Delhi.
- This is the first product, i.e. whole wheat rusks launched under the Dilli Bakes brand and will be followed by the launch of more products.

#### About Pradhan Mantri Formalisation of Micro food processing Enterprises (PMFME) Scheme:

- Launched under the Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan, the PMFME Scheme is a centrally sponsored scheme.
- With an outlay of Rs. 10,000 crore over a period of five years from 2020-21 to 2024-25, the scheme envisions to directly assist the 2,00,000 micro food processing units for providing financial, technical, and business support for upgradation of existing micro food processing enterprises.

Source: PIB

### Indian Railways and Truecaller join hands to build trust in communication for passengers

#### Why in News

- **IRCTC** has partnered with **Truecaller** to provide passengers with greater trust in communication.

#### Key Points

- The integrated National Railways Helpline 139 used by lakhs of Indians daily is now verified by Truecaller Business Identity solutions.
- Truecaller will verify and identity calls, which will reduce fraud by assuring people that critical communication like your booking details & PNR status are being delivered by IRCTC.
- IRCTC started the 139 Enquiry and Helpline Services in 2007 with Bharat BPO Services Limited as its technical partner in the project.

Source: IndiaToday

### India's First Manned Ocean Mission 'Samudrayan'

#### Why in News

- The **Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES)** has launched **India's First Manned Ocean Mission 'Samudrayan'** at Chennai.
- With the launch of this Unique Ocean Mission, India joined the elite club of nations such as the USA, Russia, Japan, France and China to have such underwater vehicles for carrying out subsea activities.

#### Key Points

- The Samudrayan Mission, undertaken by the National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT), will be a part of the ₹6,000 crore **Deep Ocean Mission**.
- This niche technology shall facilitate the Ministry of Earth Sciences in carrying out deep ocean exploration of the non-living resources such as polymetallic manganese nodules, gas hydrates, hydro-thermal sulphides and cobalt crusts, located at a depth between 1000 and 5500 meters.

- The preliminary design of the manned submersible '**MATSYA 6000**' is completed and realization of the vehicle is started with various organizations including ISRO, IITM and DRDO roped-in to support the development.
- Sea trials of 500 metre rated shallow water version of the manned submersible are expected to take place in the last quarter of 2022 and the MATSYA 6000, the deep water manned submersible will be ready for trials by the second quarter of 2024.

**Note:** The Central Government has approved the **Deep Ocean Mission** in June 2021 to be implemented by the Union Ministry of Earth Sciences for 5 years.

**Source:** HT

### Important News: World

#### 9th BRICS Science & Technology Ministers Meeting

##### Why in News

- Recently, India's Minister for Science & Technology Dr Jitendra Singh Chaired the **9th BRICS Science & Technology Ministers Meeting**.

##### Key Points

- Science Ministers from BRICS discussed cooperation in the field of Science, Technology and Innovation.
- India, for its Chairship, chose the overall theme of 'BRICS @ 15: Intra-BRICS Cooperation for Continuity, Consolidation and Consensus'.
- India also recognised the continued importance of cooperation in **Science, Technology and Innovation (STI)** to bring in technological and digital solutions for the achievement of **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**.
- All the member states have adopted the **BRICS innovation Action Plan 2021-24, BRICS STI Declaration 2021** and **Calendar of BRICS STI Activities 2022** which will act as a roadmap to take the cooperation forward.

##### Facts about BRICS:

- **Formation:** 2009
- **Countries:** Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa
- **BRICS** is an important grouping bringing together the major emerging economies from the world, comprising:
  - 41% of world population with 3.14 billion people
  - Total combined area of 29.3% of the total land surface of the world
  - 24% of global GDP
  - 16% of world trade

**Note:** The above data is based on World Bank data (2019).

**Source:** PIB

#### El Salvador plans to build world's first "Bitcoin City"

##### Why in News

- **El Salvador** planned to build the world's first "**Bitcoin City**", funded initially by bitcoin-backed bonds.

### Key Points

- Bitcoin City will be free of income, property and capital gains taxes.
- Bitcoin City will be built near the Conchagua volcano.
- Bitcoin bond issuance will begin in 2022.

**About Bitcoin:** It is a decentralized digital currency, without a central bank or single administrator that can be sent from user to user on the peer-to-peer bitcoin network without the need for intermediaries.

**Note:** El Salvador in September 2021 became the first country in the world to adopt bitcoin as legal tender.

### Facts about El Salvador:

- El Salvador is a country in Central America.
- **Capital:** San Salvador
- **President:** Nayib Bukele

**Source: Business Standard**

## NASA launches world's first planetary defence system: DART Spacecraft

### Why in News

- The world's first planetary defense system called the '**Double Asteroid Redirection Test' (DART) spacecraft** was successfully launched by NASA from the Vandenberg US Space Force Base.
- It was carried aboard SpaceX's Falcon 9 rocket.

### Key Points

- The DART spacecraft was built by the Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Laboratory in Maryland at the direction of NASA's Planetary Defense Coordination Office.
- DART is a planetary defence-driven test of technologies for preventing an impact of Earth by a hazardous asteroid.
- DART will be the first demonstration of the kinetic impactor technique to change the motion of an asteroid in space.

**Source: Indian Express**

## India-US Trade Policy Forum (TPF)

### Why in News

- **India and the United States (US)** held the 12th ministerial-level meeting of the **India-US Trade Policy Forum (TPF)** in New Delhi.
- It was co-chaired by Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal and US Trade Representative Katherine Tai.
- The last Trade Policy Forum (TPF) was held in 2017.

### Key Points

- The Ministers acknowledged the tangible benefits accruing to Indian and US farmers and businesses, by mutually resolving certain outstanding market access issues through increased bilateral engagement.
- Both sides also agreed to continue working to expand bilateral trade in agricultural and food products through the TPF Working Group on Agricultural Goods and committed to holding technical dialogues on animal health, plant health, and food safety and other technical issues in 2022.

- The relaunch of the forum comes at a time when the US has emerged as India's largest trading partner, surpassing China.
- The US is also India's biggest export market, and outbound shipments worth \$52 billion were sent to that country in 2020-21.

**Note:** Recently, India and the United States have agreed for a transitional approach on equalisation levy or digital tax on e-commerce supplies beginning from 1st April, 2022.

**Source: Business Standard**

### **India elected to UNESCO World Heritage Committee for 4-year term**

#### **Why in News**

- India has been elected as a member of the **UNESCO World Heritage Committee** for the term of four years (2021-25).

#### **Key Points**

- The Committee is responsible for the implementation of the World Heritage Convention, defines the use of the World Heritage Fund and allocates financial assistance upon requests from States Parties.

**Note:** Recently, India won re-election to the executive board of the UNESCO for the 2021-25 term.

**Source: TOI**

### **PM Modi inaugurates the first Global Innovation Summit of the Pharmaceuticals sector**

#### **Why in News**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the **first Global Innovation Summit of the Pharmaceuticals sector** on 18th November 2021.

#### **Key Points**

##### **About Summit:**

- This is a distinctive initiative that aims to bring together key Indian and international stakeholders from the government, industry, academia, investors, and researchers to discuss and strategize priorities to foster a thriving innovation ecosystem in the pharmaceuticals industry in India.
- It will also highlight the opportunities in the Indian pharma industry that has huge growth potential.
- The Indian pharmaceutical industry has also risen to the challenge. The global trust earned by the Indian healthcare sector has led to India being called the "pharmacy of the world" in recent times.

**Source: PIB**

### **India becomes world's largest recipient of remittances, received USD 87 billion in 2021: World Bank**

#### **Why in News**

- According to the **World Bank's Remittance Prices Worldwide Database Report 2021**, India has become the world's largest recipient of remittances, receiving USD 87 billion (a gain of 4.6 % from previous year) in 2021.
- India had received over USD 83 billion in remittances in 2020.

#### **Key Points**

- The **United States** was the biggest source of **remittances in India**, accounting for over 20 percent of these funds.
- India is followed by China, Mexico, the Philippines and Egypt.
- In India, remittances are projected to grow three percent in 2022 to \$ 89.6 billion.
- Remittances to low- and middle-income countries are projected to have grown a strong 7.3 percent to reach \$589 billion in 2021.
- **Remittances** are usually understood as financial or in-kind transfers made by migrants to friends and relatives back in communities of origin.

**Source: Indian Express**

### Quasi-satellite Kamo'oalewa

#### Why in News

- Recently, scientists have observed a **quasi-satellite named Kamo`oalewa**, tracking the Earth's orbit around the Sun, could be a fragment from the moon.
- A mission to collect Kamo'oalewa's samples has been scheduled for a launch in 2025.

#### Key Points

- In 2016, the PanSTARRS telescope in Hawaii spotted a quasi-satellite — a near-Earth object that orbits the Sun and yet remains close to the Earth.
- Scientists named it Kamo'oalewa, a word that is part of a Hawaiian chant.
- The asteroid is roughly the size of a Ferris wheel – between 150 and 190 feet in diameter – and gets as close as about 9 million miles from Earth.
- Now, a study in the journal Communications Earth and Environment offers insights into where this satellite could have come from.
- **One possibility** is that Kamo'oalewa was a part of the Earth's Moon, the study suggests.
- **Another possibility** is that Kamo'oalewa was captured in its Earth-like orbit from the general population of Near Earth Objects.
- **A third possibility** could be that it originated from an as-yet-undiscovered quasi-stable population of Earth's Trojan asteroids.

**Source: Indian Express**

### India re-elected to UNESCO executive board for 2021-25 term

#### Why in News

- India was re-elected to the executive board of the **UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization)** for the **2021-25 term** with 164 votes.
- India was re-elected to Group IV of Asian and Pacific States which also include Japan, Philippines, Vietnam, Cook Islands and China.

#### Key Points

- The **executive board of UNESCO** is one of three constitutional organs of the UN agency.
- The other two are the **General Conference** and **the Secretariat**.
- The General Conference elects members of the executive board.

- The **executive board** consists of 58 member-states, each with a four-year term.
- It examines the programme of work for the organisation and corresponding budget estimates submitted to it by the director-general, according to the Unesco website.

**Facts about UNESCO:**

- **Headquarters:** Paris, France
- **Founded:** 16 November 1945
- **Parent organization:** United Nations

**Member states:** 193

**Source:** HT

**BRO feat recognised by Guinness World Records**  
**Why in News**

- **Director General Border Roads (DGBR) Lt Gen Rajeev Chaudhry** received the Guinness World Records certificate on November 16, 2021 for the achievement of **Border Roads Organisation (BRO)** of constructing and black topping the World's highest motorable road at 19,024 feet at **Umlingla Pass in Ladakh.**

**Key Points**

- The 52-kilometre long Chisumle to Demchok tarmac road passes through the 19,024 feet high Umlingla Pass and betters the previous record of a road in Bolivia, which connects volcano Uturuncu at 18,953 feet.
- The Umlingla Pass road is another landmark in resurgent India's achievement as it has been constructed at an altitude higher than the North and South Base Camps of Mount Everest which are at an altitude of 16,900 feet and 17,598 feet respectively.

**Source:** PIB

**2021 TRACE Bribery Risk Matrix (TRACE Matrix)**

**Why in News**

- **India** slipped to 82nd position, five places down from 77th rank last year, in a global list of **2021 TRACE Bribery Risk Matrix (TRACE Matrix).**
- In 2020, India ranked 77 with a score of 45 while this year, the country stood at 82nd position with a score of 44.

**Key Points**

- **North Korea, Turkmenistan, Venezuela and Eritrea** pose the highest commercial bribery risk, while **Denmark, Norway, Finland, Sweden and New Zealand** present the lowest in 2021 Matrix.

**About the TRACE Bribery Risk Matrix:**

- The list by TRACE, an anti-bribery standard setting organisation, measures business bribery risk in 194 countries, territories, and autonomous and semi-autonomous regions.
- This score is based on four factors — business interactions with the government, anti-bribery deterrence and enforcement, government and civil service transparency, and capacity for civil society oversight which includes the role of the media.

- It was originally published in 2014.
- The TRACE Bribery Risk Matrix aggregates relevant data obtained from leading public interest and international organisations, including the United Nations, World Bank, V-Dem Institute at the University of Gothenburg and World Economic Forum.

**Source: Indian Express**

### **Climate Change Performance Index 2022: India ranked 10<sup>th</sup>**

#### **Why in News**

- **India** has retained its **top 10** spot in the best performing countries for the third year in a row in the global **Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI) 2022** and **ranked 10<sup>th</sup>**.
- The report, published by **German-watch**, was released on the sidelines of the **26th Conference of the Parties (CoP26)**.

#### **Key Points**

- No country performed well enough in all index categories to achieve an overall very high rating in CCPI.
- As a result, the **top three places** in the overall ranking remain **empty** once again.
- **Denmark placed 4th** and is the highest ranked country in CCPI 2022.
- **Performance of G20 countries**, responsible for about 75% of the world's GHG emissions, shows the UK (7th), India (10th), Germany (13th), and France (17th) are four G20 countries among the high-performers.
- **China** is the current biggest polluter and figured at 37th position while the second highest current emitter -- **US** -- was at the 55th spot in the CCPI 2022.

#### **About Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI):**

- The CCPI evaluates 60 countries and the European Union, which together generate more than 90 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions.
- The CCPI looks at four categories, with 14 indicators: Greenhouse gas emissions (40 percent of the overall score), renewable energy (20 percent), energy use (20 percent) and climate policy (20 percent).

**Source: DTE**

### **US becomes the 101st member country of the International Solar Alliance**

#### **Why in News**

- John Kerry, U.S. Special Presidential Envoy for Climate announced at the UNFCCC COP26 in Glasgow that the **United States of America (USA)** has joined the **International Solar Alliance (ISA)** as a member country.
- The U.S. becomes the **101st country** to sign the framework agreement of the ISA to catalyze global energy transition through a solar-led approach.

#### **Key Points**

#### **About The International Solar Alliance (ISA):**

- The launch of the International Solar Alliance was announced by Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of India and Francois Hollande, former President of France on 30th November 2015, at the 21st session of United Nations Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP-21) in Paris, France.

**Note:** Earlier at COP26, the United States also joined the Steering Committee of the GGI-OSOWOG comprising of 5 members – USA, Australia, France, the United Kingdom, and India — and endorsed the One Sun Declaration along with 80 countries.

## China launches world's 1st Earth Science Satellite “Guangmu”

### Why in News

- **China** has launched the **world's 1st Earth Science Satellite “Guangmu”** into space from the Taiyuan Satellite Launch Center in the northern Shanxi Province.

### Key Points

- The satellite was launched by a Long March-6 carrier rocket and entered the planned orbit.
- Developed by the Chinese Academy of Sciences, the satellite (**SDGSAT-1**) is the world's first space science satellite dedicated to serving the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- It was the 395th flight mission of the Long March rocket series.

**Note:** Recently, **Wang Yaping** became the **first Chinese woman astronaut** to walk in space.

**Source: ET**

## Delhi Regional Security Dialogue on Afghanistan

### Why Delhi in News

- The **Delhi Regional Security Dialogue on Afghanistan** was held in New Delhi.
- The Regional Security Dialogue which was held on 10<sup>th</sup> November, 2021 in an expanded format and attended by National Security Advisers / Secretaries of the National Security Councils of **India, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russian, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.**
- The meeting was chaired by the National Security Adviser Ajit Doval.
- This is the third meeting of the process that was initiated by Iran in 2018.

### Key Points

- After the withdrawal of US forces and the Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan, India is concerned about security in the region.
- The Dialogue on Afghanistan called for “urgent humanitarian assistance” to the Afghan people.
- A joint statement titled the **‘Delhi Declaration’** issued after the meeting called for “collective cooperation” against terrorism and drug trafficking in the region and “expressed concern over the deteriorating socio-economic and humanitarian situation in Afghanistan and underlined the need to provide urgent humanitarian assistance to the people of Afghanistan”.

**Source: The Hindu**

## India launches E-Amrit Portal on EVs at COP26

### Why in News

- On **Transport Day (November 10)** at COP26 Summit, India, represented by NITI Aayog, participated in the fourth ministerial dialogue of the **Zero-Emission Vehicle Transition Council (ZEVTC)**.
- India launched '**E-Amrit**', a **web portal** on electric vehicles (EVs), at the ongoing COP26 Summit in Glasgow, UK.

#### **Key Points**

- ZEVTC brings together ministers and representatives of some of the world's largest automobile markets to collectively address key challenges in the transition to ZEVs, to enable faster, cheaper, and easier transition to EVs for all.

#### **About E-Amrit Portal:**

- E-Amrit is a one-stop destination for all information on electric vehicles— busting myths around the adoption of EVs, their purchase, investment opportunities, policies, subsidies, etc.
- The portal has been developed and hosted by NITI Aayog under a collaborative knowledge exchange programme with the UK government and as part of the UK-India Joint Roadmap 2030, signed by the Prime Ministers of the two countries.

**Note:** Earlier, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson have jointly launched a 'green grids' initiative—the **One Sun One World One Grid (OSOWOG) project**—on the sidelines of the COP26 summit.

**Source: PIB**

### **Goa Maritime Conclave – 2021**

#### **Why in News**

- The **3<sup>rd</sup> edition of Goa Maritime Conclave (GMC)**, conducted from 07 to 09 November 2021 at Goa, brought together the Chiefs of Navy/ Heads of Maritime Agencies of Indian Ocean Region - IOR, namely, Bangladesh, Comoros, Indonesia, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritius, Myanmar, Seychelles, Singapore, Sri Lanka and Thailand.

#### **Key Points**

- The theme for GMC-21, "*Maritime Security and Emerging Non-Traditional Threats: A Case for Proactive Role for IOR Navies*", was derived keeping in mind the necessity of '*winning everyday peace*' in the maritime domain.
- The Conclave also saw declaration of 'Common Maritime Priorities', which had been identified during the Goa Maritime Symposium 21, earlier this year.

**Source: PIB**

### **Covaxin gets WHO approval for Emergency Use Listing**

#### **Why in News**

- The Technical Advisory Group of WHO has recommended the Emergency Use Listing (EUL) status for **Bharat Biotech's Covaxin**.

#### **Key Points**

- This decision will ease international travel and the export of the indigenous vaccine.

- According to WHO, Covaxin, developed by the Indian biotechnology company Bharat Biotech in partnership with the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), has a 77.8 percent efficacy rate against COVID-19 and is "extremely suitable" for low- and middle-income countries because it is easy to store.
- Bharat Biotech's Covaxin and AstraZeneca and Oxford University's Covishield are the two widely used vaccines in India.

**Note:**

- Recently, the Central government launched the '*Har Ghar Dastak*' mega-vaccination campaign against coronavirus disease (COVID-19).
- The month-long door-to-door vaccination campaign aims to inoculate the entire population in poor-performing districts.

**Source: news18**

**Diwali Day Act introduced in US Congress to declare festival of lights as federal holiday**

- Led by Congresswoman Carolyn B Maloney from New York, lawmakers announced that a bill has been introduced in the House of Representatives to declare Diwali, the festival of lights, a federal holiday.
- The historic legislation was co-sponsored by a number of lawmakers including Indian-American Congresswoman Raja Krishnamoorthi.

**Source: India Today**

**'Vax' chosen as Word of the Year 2021 by the Oxford Dictionary**

**Why in News**

- The **Oxford English Dictionary (OED)** has declared '**Vax**' as the word of the year 2021.

**Key Points**

- According to 'a report into the language of vaccines' by Oxford Languages, the word 'vax' had appeared more than 72 times by September than the same time last year.
- The word Vax is defined as, "a colloquialism meaning either vaccine or vaccination as a noun and vaccinate as a verb."
- The appearance of the word 'vaccine' itself doubled between September 2020 and September 2021 according to the report by Oxford Languages.

**Source: India Today**

**World's largest Hydrogen Fuel Cell Power Plant inaugurated in South Korea**

- The Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy of South Korea announced that the '**Shinincheon Bitdream Fuel Cell Power Plant**' at the Shinincheon Bitdream headquarters of Korea Southern Power in Seo-gu, Incheon has been inaugurated.
- The fuel cell power plant is operated by South Korea's independent power production company, POSCO Energy and Doosan Fuel Cell.
- The power plant has a capacity of 78 MW constructed in 4 stages from 2017.

**Source: Indian Express**

## Britain approves world's first oral pill to treat COVID-19

### Why in News

- **Britain's health regulators** have approved the world's first pill to treat cases of symptomatic COVID-19.

### Key Points

- Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) said, the antiviral Lagevrio (**Molnupiravir**) has been found to be safe and effective at reducing the risk of hospitalisation and death in people with mild to moderate COVID-19.
- Molnupiravir, originally created to treat flu, could go on to be prescribed twice a day to vulnerable patients recently diagnosed with COVID-19 after it proved effective in clinical trials.

**Source: newsonair**

## New Zealand passes climate change disclosure laws for financial firms in world first

### Why in News

- **New Zealand** has become the first country to pass laws requiring banks, insurers and investment managers to report the impacts of climate change on their business.

### Key Points

- The new laws will require financial firms to explain how they would manage climate-related risks and opportunities, and the disclosure requirements will be based on standards from New Zealand's independent accounting body.
- The standards will be based on the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD), and the disclosures will become mandatory for financial years beginning in 2023.

**Source: Indian Express**

## World's first-ever FIFA Football for School Programme launched at KISS

- **Naveen Patnaik, Chief Minister of Odisha** launched the **world's first-ever FIFA Football for School Programme** at **Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences (KISS), Bhubaneswar**.
- **Football for Schools (F4S)** is an ambitious world-wide programme run by FIFA, which aims to contribute to the education, development and empowerment of around 700 million children.

## Indo-Pacific Regional Dialogue 2021

### Why in News

- Recently, **Defence Minister Rajnath Singh** delivered a keynote address at **Indo-Pacific Regional Dialogue (IPRD) 2021**.
- The **theme** of **IPRD 2021** was 'Evolution in Maritime Strategy during the 21st Century: Imperatives, Challenges and Way Ahead'.

### Key Points

**Defence Minister' Address:**

- India is fully determined to protect its maritime interests, while it supports the maintenance of rule-based maritime systems, as mandated under **UN Convention on the Law of Seas (UNCLOS), 1982**.
- The Dialogue will further the country's shared and collective vision for the Indo-Pacific.

#### **About Indo-Pacific Regional Dialogue (IPRD):**

- First conducted in 2018, the IPRD is the apex international annual conference of the Indian Navy and is the principal manifestation of the Navy's engagement at the strategic-level.
- The **National Maritime Foundation** is the **Navy's knowledge partner** and **chief organiser** of each edition of this annual event.

**Source: India Today**

### **Prime Minister Modi co-chairs the 18th India-ASEAN Summit**

#### **Why in News**

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** participated in the **18th India-ASEAN Summit** at the invitation of His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah of **Brunei**, the current Chair of ASEAN on October 28, 2021.

#### **Key Points**

- Highlighting the milestone of **30th anniversary of India-ASEAN Partnership**, the leaders announced the Year 2022 as **India-ASEAN Friendship Year**.
- PM Modi underlined the centrality of ASEAN in **India's Act East Policy** and in India's Vision for the wider **Indo-Pacific Vision**.
- Building upon the synergies between the **ASEAN Outlook for the Indo-Pacific (AOIP)** and India's **Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI)**, PM Modi and ASEAN leaders welcomed the adoption of the **India-ASEAN Joint Statement** on cooperation for peace, stability and prosperity in the region.
- To further strengthen India-ASEAN cultural connectivity, the Prime Minister announced India's support for establishing the **ASEAN Cultural Heritage List**.
- On trade and investment, he underlined the importance of diversification and resilience of supply chains for post-COVID economic recovery and in this regard, the need to revamp the **India-ASEAN FTA**.

#### **Facts about Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN):**

- **The 10 member countries of ASEAN** are Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Brunei, Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar and Cambodia.
- **Headquarters:** Jakarta, Indonesia
- **Founded:** 8 August 1967

**Source: PIB**

### **G-20 Leaders' Summit-2021**

#### **Why in News**

- The **G20 Leaders' Summit 2021** was held in **Rome, Italy** on 30–31 October 2021 under the **Italian Presidency**.

- For 2021, the G20 focused on three broad, interconnected pillars of action: **People, Planet, and Prosperity.**
- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** participated in the G-20 Summit 2021.

#### Key Points

- The G-20 aims to take the lead in ensuring a swift international response to the COVID-19 pandemic - able to provide equitable, worldwide access to diagnostics, therapeutics and vaccines - while building up resilience to future health-related shocks.

#### About the G-20:

- The G-20 is the international forum that brings together the world's major economies.
- Its members account for more than 80% of world GDP, 75% of global trade and 60% of the population of the planet.
- The G-20 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: PIB

### CII Asia Health 2021 Summit

#### Why in News

- Recently, **Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare, Mansukh Mandaviya** addressed the inaugural session of **CII Asia Health 2021 Summit.**
- The **theme** of the summit is '**Transforming Healthcare for a better tomorrow**'.

#### Key Points

- The Union Minister exhorted that the Government is committed to Access, Affordability, Accountability, Adoption and Awareness for a better future of Healthcare sector and has been working diligently to achieve these objectives.
- He mentioned that the government has launched various schemes such as **Ayushman Bharat Jan Arogya Yojana** (health insurance scheme), **Ayushman Health and Wellness Centres, Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP)** for generic medicines, **Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM)** etc to make healthcare accessible and affordable.
- He added that the Government is focusing on the theme of '**From Token to Total Health**'. **PM Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission**, which was launched on 25<sup>th</sup> October 2021 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi is another such initiative in this regard.

Source: PIB

### Facebook changes its name to Meta

- **Facebook Inc** has changed its corporate name to **Meta Platforms Inc** "**Meta**" as part of a major rebrand.

- Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg announced the new name as he unveiled plans to build a "metaverse" - an online world where people can game, work and communicate in a virtual environment.
- However, the social network will still be called as Facebook.

**Source: HT**

### Important News: Ecology & Environment

#### Glacier in Antarctica named after Glasgow climate summit

##### Why in News

- The 100-km long body of ice in **Antarctica**, which has been experiencing rapid melting, was formally named **Glasgow Glacier** after the **Glasgow climate summit**.
- The **26th Conference of Parties (COP26)** of the **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)** is being held in **Glasgow, United Kingdom** from 31st of October to 12th of November.

##### Key Points

- Besides Glasgow, the eight newly named glaciers are Geneva, Rio, Berlin, Kyoto, Bali, Stockholm, Paris and Incheon all named after cities hosting important UN climate meetings.

**Source: India Today**

### Important News: Economy

#### Cabinet approves USOF scheme for Aspirational Districts in 5 States

##### Why in News

- The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has given its approval for provisioning of 4G based mobile services in Uncovered Villages of **Aspirational Districts** across **5 States of Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Maharashtra & Odisha**.
- The project would be funded by the **Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) scheme**.
- **USOF** was created under the Ministry of Communications in 2002. It is a non-lapsable fund.

##### Key Points

- The Project envisages to provide 4G based mobile services in the **7,287 uncovered villages of 44 Aspirational Districts** across 5 States of Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Maharashtra & Odisha at an estimated cost of implementation about Rs 6,466 crore including operational expenses for 5 years.
- It will enhance digital connectivity useful for self-reliance, facilitate learning, dissemination of information and knowledge, skill upgradation and development, disaster management, e-Governance initiatives, establishment of enterprises & e-commerce facilities, provision of adequate support to educational institutes for knowledge sharing & availability of job opportunity and fulfilling the vision of Digital India

promoting domestic manufacturing and fulfilling the objectives of Atmanirbhar Bharat etc.

**Related Schemes:**

- National Broadband Mission
- BharatNet Project
- Submarine Cable Connectivity to Andaman and Nicobar Islands
- National Optical Fibre Network
- National Digital Communications Policy, 2018
- Digital India

**Source: PIB**

**Special Credit Linked Capital Subsidy Scheme (SCLCSS) for Services Sector  
Why in News**

- The **Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSME)** launched the Special Credit Linked Capital Subsidy Scheme (SCLCSS) for the services sector.
- It was launched by Union Minister for MSME, Narayan Rane during the MSME North East Conclave.

**Key Points**

**About Special Credit Linked Capital Subsidy Scheme (SCLCSS):**

- The scheme will help in meeting the technology related requirements of enterprises in the services sector and has a provision of 25% capital subsidy for procurement of Plant & Machinery and service equipments through institutional credit to the SC-ST MSEs without any sector specific restrictions on technology upgradation

**Other Initiatives/Schemes to Promote MSME Sector:**

- Scheme of Fund for Regeneration of Traditional Industries (SFURTI)
- Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme
- Credit Guarantee Scheme for Micro and Small Enterprises
- A Scheme for Promoting Innovation, Rural Industry & Entrepreneurship (ASPIRE)
- Interest Subvention Scheme for Incremental Credit to MSMEs
- Micro and Small Enterprises Cluster Development Programme
- CHAMPIONS portal
- Udyam Registrations Portal

**Source: PIB**

**Nationwide AHDF KCC campaign launched for providing Kisan Credit Card facility**

**Why in News**

- As part of Aazadi Ka Amrit Mahostav, **Nationwide AHDF KCC campaign** launched by Union Minister of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying Parshottam Rupala.

**Key Points**

- In order to expand the benefit of Kisan Credit Card to all eligible animal husbandry, dairy and fishery farmers in the country, this department, in association with the Department of Fisheries (DOF) and the Department of

Financial Services (DFS), is organizing a **“Nationwide AHDF KCC Campaign”** from 15<sup>th</sup> November 2021 to 15<sup>th</sup> February 2022.

**Note:**

- The Union Minister of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying also launched the **“LINAC-NCDC Fisheries Business Incubation Centre” (LIFIC)** at LINAC-NCDC in Haryana’s Gurugram.
- LIFIC is being started by the National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC), which is the End Implementation Agency for Cooperatives under the flagship scheme Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY) of the Department of Fisheries, Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying, Government of India.

**Source: ET**

**TVS Motor: First Indian two-wheeler maker in United Nations Global Compact**

**Why in News**

- **TVS Motor Company**, the flagship company of the TVS Group, has joined the **United Nations Global Compact**, the world’s largest sustainability initiative.
- TVS Motor Company has become the first Indian two-wheeler and three-wheeler manufacturer to be a part of UN Global Compact.

**Key Points**

**About United Nations Global Compact:**

- The United Nations Global Compact is a call to companies to align their operations and strategies with ten universally accepted principles in the areas of human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption, and to take action in support of UN goals and issues embodied in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- Launched in 2000, the UN Global Compact is the largest corporate sustainability initiative globally, with more than 14,000 companies and 3,000 non-business signatories in over 160 countries and more than 70 Local Networks.

**Source: Business Standard**

**PM Modi launches two innovative customer centric initiatives of RBI**

**Why in News**

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** launched two innovative customer centric initiatives of the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)**.
- These initiatives are the **RBI Retail Direct Scheme** and the **Reserve Bank - Integrated Ombudsman Scheme**.

**Key Points**

**About RBI Retail Direct Scheme:**

- The RBI Retail Direct Scheme is aimed at enhancing access to the government securities market for retail investors.
- It offers them a new avenue for directly investing in securities issued by the Government of India and the State Governments.

**About Reserve Bank - Integrated Ombudsman Scheme:**

- The Reserve Bank - Integrated Ombudsman Scheme aims to further improve the grievance redress mechanism for resolving customer complaints against entities regulated by RBI.
- The central theme of the scheme is based on 'One Nation-One Ombudsman' with one portal, one email and one address for the customers to lodge their complaints.

**Note:** RBI's alternate grievance redress mechanism currently comprises of three ombudsman schemes viz - the Banking Ombudsman Scheme (BOS), launched in 1995, the Ombudsman Scheme for Non-Banking Financial Companies (OS-NBFC), 2018 and the Ombudsman Scheme for Digital Transactions (OSDT), 2019

**Source: ET**

### **RBI to organise its first global hackathon 'HARBINGER 2021'**

#### **Why in News**

- **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has announced its first global hackathon '**HARBINGER 2021 - Innovation for Transformation**' with the theme '**Smarter Digital Payments**'.
- Registration for the hackathon starts from November 15, 2021.

#### **Key Points**

- For the Hackathon, RBI invites participants to identify and develop solutions that have the potential to make digital payments accessible to the under-served, enhance the ease of payments and user experience, while strengthening the security of digital payments and promoting customer protection

**Source: newsonair**

### **Ministry of Rural Development signs MoU with Flipkart**

#### **Why in News**

- **Flipkart**, India's homegrown e-commerce marketplace, has signed a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** with the **Ministry of Rural Development of the Government of India**, for their ambitious **Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Rural Livelihood Mission (DAY-NRLM) program**, to help empower local businesses and **Self-Help Groups (SHGs)** - especially those that are led by women - by bringing them into the e-commerce fold.

#### **Key Points**

- MoU will enable rural women to sell their products to more than 10 crore Flipkart's customers.
- This MoU is a part of the **Flipkart Samarth program**.
- The **Flipkart Samarth program** was launched in 2019 as a sustainable and inclusive platform to empower underserved domestic communities and businesses with better opportunities and livelihoods.

**Source: PIB**

### **IREDA launches 'Whistle Blower' portal**

#### **Why in News**

- **Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Ltd. (IREDA)**, a PSU under the Ministry of New & Renewable Energy (MNRE) launched a **'Whistle-blower Portal'**.

#### Key Points

- Whistle-blower portal is a part of IREDA's "zero tolerance" of corruption.
- IREDA employees can raise concerns related to fraud, corruption, abuse of power etc.

**Note:** In India, whistleblowers are protected by the **Whistleblowers Protection Act, 2014**.

**Source: PIB**

### **Union Minister of Home Affairs launched Mukhyamantri Ghasiyari Kalyan Yojana in Dehradun, Uttarakhand**

#### Why in News

- The **Union Minister of Home Affairs and Minister of Cooperation, Amit Shah** recently launched the **Mukhyamantri Ghasiyari Kalyan Yojana** and **computerization of cooperative societies** in Dehradun, Uttarakhand.

#### Key Points

- Under the Mukhyamantri Ghasiyari Kalyan Yojana, animal feed will be given at the rate of two rupees per kg on 30 percent subsidy and as a result, women will be saved from many calamities.
- The Union Home Minister launched computerization of 670 PACS (Primary Agricultural Credit Society).
- He also inaugurated the Cooperative Training Center.

**Source: PIB**

### **India's first 'Skill Impact Bond' launched**

#### Why in News

- The **National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC)** launched India's first and the largest **Skill Impact Bond (SIB)** in collaboration with global partners.
- Along with the NSDC, the global coalition comprises of HRH Prince Charles's British Asian Trust, the Michael & Susan Dell Foundation (MSDF), The Children's Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF), HSBC India, JSW Foundation and Dubai Cares, with FCDO (UK Government) & USAID as technical partners.

#### Key Points

- The coalition has brought together a **US\$14.4 million fund to benefit 50,000 young people in India over four years**.
- The target group includes 60 percent women and girls and to equip them with skills and vocational training and provide access to wage-employment in COVID-19 recovery sectors including retail, apparel, healthcare, and logistics.
- **Impact bonds** are innovative financing instruments that leverage private sector capital and expertise, with a focus on achieving results.

**Source: Business Standard**

## Sixth Edition of National Formulary of India (NFI)

### Why in News

- **Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare Mansukh Mandaviya** launched the **Sixth Edition of National Formulary of India (NFI) 2021**.
- **NFI** has been published by **Indian Pharmacopoeia Commission (IPC)** to promote rational use of medicines in the country.

### Key Points

- NFI 2021 would act as a guidance document for all the healthcare professionals such as clinicians, pharmacists, nurses, dentists etc.
- It will play a crucial role in daily clinical practices.
- NFI 2021 has been drafted by adopting the principle 'do not miss critical and do not overload' the information by revising the appendices, chapters and drug monographs.

### The main salient feature of this edition includes:

- 34 therapeutic categories chapters including 591 drug monographs and 23 appendices are included in this edition.
- The NFI is aligned with National Health Programmes and National List of Essential Medicines (NLEM).
- Important Weblinks related to NLEM, Drugs banned in India, NHP, Drugs banned in sports, Immunization schedule, wherever necessary are provided for information to readers.

Source: PIB

## MeitY organises "AI Pe Charcha" on "AI for Data Driven Governance"

### Why in News

- The **National e Governance Division (NeGD)** of the **Ministry of Electronics and IT (MeitY)** recently organised yet another **AI Pe Charcha (AI Dialogue)** on the theme, "**AI for Data Driven Governance**".

### Key Points

- **AI Pe Charcha** is a series of panel discussions involving various global and domestic leaders from the Government and industry, researchers and academicians sharing their views & experiences around Artificial Intelligence, related case studies, global best practices, breakthrough innovations and the challenges faced in the field of Artificial Intelligence.
- The 'AI for Data Driven Governance' session had covered the importance of data driven and AI-enabled governance along with the global best practices.

Source: ET

## Central Government notifies Indian Telegraph Right of Way (Amendment) Rules, 2021

### Why in News

- The Central Government has recently notified the **Indian Telegraph Right of Way (Amendment) Rules, 2021** to incorporate the provisions related to nominal one-time compensation and uniform procedure for establishment of Overground Telegraph Line in the **Indian Telegraph Right of Way Rules, 2016**.

### Key Points

- The amount of one-time compensation for establishment of an overground telegraph line will be maximum one thousand rupees per kilometre.
- Documentation for the Right of Way application for the overground telegraph line has been made simple.
- Also, there will be no fee other than Administrative fee and Restoration charges for establishing, maintaining, working, repairing, transferring or shifting the underground and overground telegraph infrastructure.
- These amendments will ease Right of Way related permission procedures for establishment and augmentation of Digital Communications Infrastructure across the country.

**Source: Business Standard**

## Science

### Ministry of Culture launches Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav Mobile App Why in News

- **Minister of State for Culture and External Affairs, Meenakshi Lekhi** launched the **Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav Mobile App** to enable all single point access to all information related to the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations of India's independence.

### Key Points

- The Home page enables users to get an overview of the interesting and wide-ranging content inside the app.
- These include among others links to sections such Digital District Repository and Unsung Heroes which are part of an overall section titled History Corner.
- Sections like 'What's New' and 'Weekly Highlights' allow the users to stay connected to all current Amrit Mahotsav celebrations and event details across India and the world.

### Note:

- The Ministry of Culture will hold a 'Vande Bharatam- Nritya Utsav', an All-India dance competition as part of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav.
- The objective of this competition is to select dancers who will perform during the cultural programme at the Republic Day Parade of 2022.

**Source: PIB**

### "Tech NEEV/नीव @75"

#### Why in News

- Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Science & Technology, Dr Jitendra Singh inaugurated **"Tech NEEV/ नीव @75" as part of Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav.**

### Key Points

- “Tech NEEV/ नीव @ 75” is a year-long celebration highlighting the impact of Science Technology Innovation (STI) in empowering communities for creating equitable inclusive economic growth.
- The Government will be setting up 30 Science Technology and Innovation (STI) Hubs in different parts of the country for Scheduled Tribes (STs) by the end of 2022 to promote scientific talent among tribal communities and for their overall socio-economic development.
- Out of 75 proposed STI Hubs for SCs/STs, 20 have already been established by the Department of Science and Technology which will directly benefit 20,000 people through various interventions spreading across farm, non-farm and other allied livelihood sectors.

**Note:** India has been on a rising trajectory in the **Global Innovation Index (GII)** as it improved its ranking from 81 in 2015 to 46 in 2021.

**Source: PIB**

### **Citizens' Tele-Law Mobile App** **Why in News**

- **Union Minister of Law and Justice Kiren Rijju** launched the Citizen's Tele-Law Mobile App.
- He also felicitated the Tele-Law 124 Frontline Functionaries which includes Para Legal Volunteers, Village Level entrepreneurs, Panel Lawyers and State Coordinators representing from different corners of the country.

#### **Key Points**

- The Citizens' Tele-Law Mobile App would be a first of its kind wherein as part of constitutional mandate for providing equal opportunities before law, every citizen would now be entitled to have access to lawyer on a touch of a finger.

#### **About Tele-Law:**

- Reaching the Unreached e-interface platform was launched in 2017 by the Department of Justice, to strengthen the pre-litigation mechanism in the country.
- This is operational in 51,434 Common Service Centres across 50,000 Gram Panchayats in 633 districts Tele-Law leverages technology (viz. tele-video conferencing facilities) to connect the beneficiary with the Panel Lawyer to seek legal advice and consultation for an early redressal of their grievance.

**Note:** Recently, “Tele-Law on Wheels” campaign along with “Login Week” was flagged off from the Department of Justice premises with the resolve to empower the people to seek legal advice and consultation at the pre-litigation stage.

**Source: PIB**

### **India's first Centre for Excellence in Research on Drone Technology and Artificial Intelligence** **Why in News**

- Minister of State Civil Aviation and retired general VK Singh inaugurated **India's first Center for Excellence in Research on Drone/UAV**

## **Technology and Artificial Intelligence** at the **Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Guwahati.**

### **Key Points**

- IIT Guwahati's other initiatives-- Skill development center for drone/UAV (Unmanned Aerial Vehicles) operation and maintenance, Nodal center for overall administrative drone data management for northeast region and "AXOMDroneports"
- The AXOMDroneports will be used to support cargo drones delivering urgent/medical and emergency supplies and precious supplies to remote areas of the North East.

**Source:** ndtv

## **Telecom Department sets up 6G Technology Innovation Group, chaired by K Rajaraman**

### **Why in News**

- The **Department of Telecommunications (DoT)** has formed a **Technology Innovation Group** on the **sixth generation (6G)**.
- The Technology Innovation Group has **22 members**.
- **Telecom secretary K Rajaraman** has been named the **chairperson** of the group.

### **Key Points**

- The group aims to create vision and objectives as well as develop a roadmap for research and development (R&D), pre- standardisation, development of applications and products, and action plans for 6G technology.
- The 6G technology is expected to make its first commercial move before 2030.

**Note:** Chinese Huawei, and Korean Samsung and LG have already started work on 6G technology.

**Source:** ET

### **Important News: Défense**

## **Fourth submarine of Project-75 'INS Vela' commissioned at Naval Dockyard, Mumbai**

### **Why in News**

- **INS Vela, the fourth submarine** in the series of six submarines of Project-75, was commissioned on 25 Nov 21 in the presence of Admiral Karambir Singh, Chief of the Naval Staff.
- The formal commissioning ceremony took place at the Naval Dockyard in Mumbai.

### **Key Points**

- The Scorpene Class submarines are being built in India by the Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL) Mumbai, under collaboration with M/s Naval Group (earlier DCNS), France.
- INS Vela would form part of the Western Naval Command's Submarine fleet and would be another potent part of its arsenal.
- These submarines have a state of the art SONAR and sensor suite permitting outstanding operational capabilities. They also have an

advanced Permanent Magnetic Synchronous motor (PERMASYN) as its propulsion motor.

- The commissioning of the submarine is coinciding with 'Azaadi ka Amrit Mahotsav' and 'Swarnim Vijay Varsh' celebrations.

**Source: PIB**

### **37th edition of India - Indonesia Coordinated Patrol** **Why in News**

- The **37th edition of India - Indonesia Coordinated Patrol (IND-INDO CORPAT)** was conducted between the Indian Navy and Indonesian Navy from 23 to 24 Nov 2021.

#### **Key Points**

- Indian Naval Ship (INS) *Khanjar*, an indigenously built Missile Corvette along with Dornier Maritime Patrol Aircraft participated in coordinated patrol with Indonesian Naval Ship KRI *Sultan Thaha Syaifuddin*, (376), a Kapitan Patimura-Class Corvette.
- India and Indonesia have been carrying out Coordinated Patrols (CORPAT) along the International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL) twice in a year since 2002, with an aim of keeping this vital part of the Indian Ocean Region safe and secure for commercial shipping, international trade and conduct of legitimate maritime activities.

**Source: PIB**

### **India, Maldives and Sri Lanka trilateral exercise 'Dosti 2021'**

#### **Why in News**

- The **15th edition of the biennial trilateral coast guard exercise 'Dosti 2021'** involving India, the Maldives and Sri Lanka was conducted in the Maldives.

#### **Key Points**

- 2021 marks 30 years since these exercises were first launched.
- Indian Coast Guard vessels, the ICGS Vajra and ICGS Apoorva joined the Sri Lanka Coast Guard, SLCGS Suraksha for the 5 day exercise (20-24 November, 2021).
- For many years after it was first launched in 1991, these exercises were bilateral, involving the Indian and the Maldives Coast Guards. In 2012, however, Sri Lanka joined these exercises for the first time and since then, it has been a trilateral exercise.

#### **Exercise between India and Maldives:**

- Exercise Ekuverin (Military Exercise)

#### **Exercise between India and Srilanka:**

- SLINEX (Naval exercise)
- Exercise MITRA SHAKTI (Military Exercise)

**Source: Indian Express**

### **INS Visakhapatnam commissioned into Indian Navy** **Why in News**

- **INS Visakhapatnam**, a P15B stealth guided missile destroyer, was commissioned into the Indian Navy at the Naval Dockyard, Mumbai.

#### Key Points

- The event marks the formal induction of the first of the four 'Visakhapatnam' class destroyers, indigenously designed by the Indian Navy's in-house organisation Directorate of Naval Design and constructed by Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited, Mumbai.
- INS Visakhapatnam measures 163m in length, 17m in breadth with a displacement of 7,400 tonnes and can rightfully be regarded as one of the most potent warships to have been constructed in India.
- The ship is packed with sophisticated state-of-the-art weapons and sensors such as Surface-to-Surface missile and Surface-to-Air missiles.
- A unique feature of this ship is the high level of indigenisation incorporated in the production, accentuating the national objective of 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat'.
- The ship will be under the command of Captain Birendra Singh Bains, a Navigation & Direction specialist.

Source: ET

### Raksha Mantri unveils plaque to rename Institute for Defence Studies & Analyses after late Manohar Parrikar

#### Why in News

- **Defence Minister Rajnath Singh** recently unveiled a plaque at the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses in New Delhi to rename the institute after former Defence Minister late Manohar Parrikar.

#### Key Points

- The renaming as **Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (MP-IDSA)** by the Defence Minister, who is the President of the Institute, follows the unanimous decision by the general body earlier this year to effect the change in the memory of the former Defence Minister.

Source: PIB

### PM Modi attends 'Rashtra Raksha Samparpan Parv' in Jhansi, Uttar Pradesh

#### Why in News

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi attended '**Rashtra Raksha Samparpan Parv**' in Jhansi, Uttar Pradesh.
- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurated the three-day '**Rashtra Raksha Samarpan Parv**' in Jhansi on November 17, 2021.
- It was organised from November 17-19, 2021 in Jhansi, Uttar Pradesh.

#### Key Points

- The Prime Minister dedicated several new initiatives of the Ministry of Defence to the Nation in a grand ceremony celebrating 'Rashtra Raksha Samarpan Parv' organised in the precincts of Jhansi Fort.

#### New Initiatives:

- Launch of NCC Alumni Association, the Prime Minister was registered as the first member of the association

- Launch of National Programme of Simulation Training for NCC Cadets
- Kiosk to pay tribute to the fallen heroes at National War Memorial
- Mobile app of National War Memorial
- DRDO Designed and Developed Advanced Electronic Warfare Suite 'Shakti' for Indian Naval Ships
- Light Combat Helicopter and drones
- Rs 400 crore project of Bharat Dynamics Ltd at Jhansi Node of the UP Defence Industrial Corridor
- 600 MW Ultramega Solar Power Park at Garautha in Jhansi
- Atal Ekta Park in Jhansi

**Note:**

- The Prime Minister also dedicated to the Nation various developmental projects in Mahoba, Uttar Pradesh.
- These projects include the Arjun Sahayak Project, Ratauli Weir Project, Bhaoni Dam Project and Majhgaon–Chilli Sprinkler Project.

**Source: PIB**

### **India, Singapore and Thailand Trilateral Maritime Exercise 'SITMEX-2021'**

#### **Why in News**

- The 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of India, Singapore and Thailand Trilateral Maritime Exercise 'SITMEX – 21' was conducted from 15 to 16 Nov 2021 in the Andaman Sea.
- The exercise was hosted by Thailand.

#### **Key Points**

- Indian Naval Ship (INS) Karmuk, an indigenously built Missile Corvette participated in SITMEX – 21.
- The two days of maritime drills witnessed the three navies engaged in various tactical exercises including naval manoeuvres and surface warfare drills.

#### **Note:**

- SITMEX is being conducted annually since 2019 with an aim to enhance mutual inter-operability and imbibing best practices between Indian Navy (IN), Republic of Singapore Navy (RSN) and Royal Thai Navy (RTN).
- The maiden edition of SITMEX was hosted by the Indian Navy (IN) off Port Blair in September 2019.
- Singapore hosted the second edition of the exercise in November 2020.

#### **Other Military Exercises between India and Singapore:**

- SIMBEX (Navy)
- Bold Kurukshetra (Army)
- Joint Military Training (Air Force)

#### **Other Military Exercises between India and Thailand:**

- Indo-Thai CORPAT (Navy)
- MAITREE (Army)
- SIAM BHARAT (Air Force)

**Source: PIB**

### **32nd edition of Indo-Thai CORPAT**

#### **Why in News**

- The **32nd edition of India-Thailand Coordinated Patrol (Indo-Thai CORPAT)** between the Indian Navy and the Royal Thai Navy was conducted from 12 – 14 November 2021.

#### **Key Points**

- Indian Naval Ship (INS) Karmuk, an indigenously built Missile Corvette and His Majesty's Thailand Ship (HTMS) Tayanchon, a Khamrosin Class Anti-submarine Patrol Craft, along with Maritime Patrol Aircraft from both navies participated in the CORPAT.
- CORPAT builds up understanding and interoperability between navies and facilitates institution of measures to prevent and suppress unlawful activities like Illegal Unreported Unregulated (IUU) fishing, drug trafficking, maritime terrorism, armed robbery and piracy.

**Note:** Towards reinforcing maritime links between the two countries and with an aim of keeping this vital part of the Indian Ocean safe and secure for international trade, the two navies have been undertaking CORPAT bi-annually since 2005 along their International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL).

#### **Other Military Exercises between India and Thailand:**

- Exercise SIAM BHARAT (Air Force)
- Exercise MAITREE (Army)

**Source: PIB**

### **DRDO & Israel sign Bilateral Innovation Agreement for development of dual use technologies**

#### **Why in News**

- **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and Directorate of Defence Research and Development (DDR&D), Ministry of Defence, Israel** have entered into a **Bilateral Innovation Agreement (BIA)** to promote innovation and accelerated R&D in startups and MSMEs of India and Israel for the development of dual use technologies.

#### **Key Points**

- Under the agreement, startups and industry of both countries will work together to bring out next generation technologies and products in the areas such as Drones, Robotics, Artificial Intelligence, Quantum technology, Photonics, Biosensing, Brain-Machine Interface, Energy Storage, Wearable Devices, Natural Language Processing, etc.
- The development efforts will be jointly funded by DRDO and DDR&D, Israel.

**Note:** Recently, **Indian Army** has signed a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** with **Rashtriya Raksha University (RRU)** and **Bhaskaracharya National Institute for Space Applications and Geo-Informatics (BISAG-N), Gandhinagar, Gujarat** to collaborate in different sectors of Research and Development.

**Source: PIB**

### **India's fourth Scorpene submarine: INS Vela**

#### **Why in News**

- **INS Vela**, India's fourth Scorpene-class submarine of the **Project – 75**, was delivered to the Indian Navy.
- **Project – 75** includes construction of six submarines of Scorpene design.

#### Key Points

- INS Vela was launched in May 2019.
- These submarines are being constructed at Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL) Mumbai, under collaboration with M/s Naval Group, France.

#### Other Submarines under Project-75:

- The **first** submarine, **INS Kalvari**, was commissioned in December 2017.
- The **second** submarine, **INS Khanderi**, was commissioned in September 2019.
- The **third** submarine, **INS Karanj**, was commissioned in March 2021.
- The **fifth** submarine, **INS Vagir**, was launched in November 2020 and has commenced harbour trials.
- The **sixth** submarine, **INS Vagsheer**, is in the advanced stage of outfitting.

Source: HT

### India & US hold 11th Defence Technology & Trade Initiative Group meeting Why in News

- The **11<sup>th</sup> Defence Technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI) Group meeting** between **India** and **the United States (US)** was held virtually on November 09, 2021.

#### Key Points

- The DTTI Group meetings are normally held twice a year, alternating between India and the US.
- However, this DTTI meeting was held via Video Teleconferencing consecutively for a second time on account of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The aim of the DTTI Group is to bring sustained leadership focus to the bilateral defence trade relationship and create opportunities for co-production and co-development of defence equipment.
- **Four Joint Working Groups** focused on land, naval, air and aircraft carrier technologies have been established under DTTI to promote mutually agreed projects within their domains.

**Note:** The co-chairs were also pleased to note that since the last DTTI Group meeting in September 2020, the first Project Agreement for **Air-Launched Unmanned Aerial Vehicle** under the Joint Working Group Air Systems was signed which is a major accomplishment for DTTI.

Source: PIB

### Vice Admiral R Hari Kumar to be the next Chief of the Naval Staff

#### Why in News

- The Government has appointed **Vice Admiral R Hari Kumar** presently Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief Western Naval Command as the next **Chief of the Naval Staff**.

#### Key Points

- The present Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Karambir Singh retires from service on 30th November, 2021.

- Vice Admiral R Hari Kumar was commissioned on 1st January, 1983 into the Executive Branch of the Indian Navy.
- During his long and distinguished service spanning nearly 39 years, he has served in a variety of Command, Staff and Instructional appointments.

**Source: PIB**

## **President Ram Nath Kovind confers honorary rank of General of Indian Army to Nepal Army Chief**

### **Why in News**

- **President Ram Nath Kovind** conferred the **honorary rank of General of Indian Army** to **Nepal Army Chief Prabhu Ram Sharma** at a special function at Rashtrapati Bhavan.

### **Key Points**

- Nepal Army Chief General Prabhu Ram Sharma arrived on a four-day visit to India at the official invitation of Chief of Army Staff, General Manoj Mukund Naravane.
- During his visit to India, General Sharma met his Indian counterpart in New Delhi on 9 November 2021.

**Note: Indian Army Chief General Manoj Naravane** was conferred the rank of **Honorary General of the Nepal Army** in November 2020 by Nepal's President Bidya Devi Bhandari.

**Source: newsonair**

## **DRDO & IAF carry out successful flight tests of indigenously-developed Smart Anti-Airfield Weapon (SAAW)**

### **Why in News**

- Two flight tests of indigenously-developed **Smart Anti-Airfield Weapon (SAAW)** have been carried out jointly by **Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO)** and **Indian Air Force (IAF)**.
- The weapon was launched by an IAF aircraft from Chandan ranges at Jaisalmer, Rajasthan.

### **Key Points**

- The two different configurations based on satellite navigation and electro optical sensors have been successfully tested.
- Electro optical seeker based flight test of this class of bomb has been conducted for the first time in the country.
- The system is designed for a maximum range of 100 kilometres.
- The SAAW has been designed and developed by Research Centre Imarat (RCI) in coordination with other DRDO Laboratories and extensive support from IAF.

**Source: HT**

## **Y 12704 (Visakhapatnam), the first ship of Project 15B delivered to the Indian Navy**

### **Why in News**

- **Y 12704 (Visakhapatnam)**, the first ship of Project 15B stealth guided missile destroyers was delivered to the **Indian Navy**.

- The contract for 4 ships of Project 15B, as the Visakhapatnam class ships are known, was signed on 28 January 2011.
- This project is a follow-on of the Kolkata class (Project 15A) destroyers commissioned in the last decade.

#### Key Points

- Designed by Directorate of Naval Design, Indian Navy's in-house design organisation; and built by **M/s Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Ltd, Mumbai**; the four ships are christened after major cities from all four corners of the country viz. **Visakhapatnam, Mormugao, Imphal and Surat**.
- The 163 metres long warship has a full load displacement of 7400 tonnes and maximum speed of 30 knots.
- The overall indigenous content of the project is approx. 75%.

Source: HT

### 7th Indian Navy Frigate of P1135.6 class 'Tushil'

#### Why in News

- The **7th Indian Navy Frigate of P1135.6 class** was launched at Yantar Shipyard, Kaliningrad, **Russia**.
- The ship was formally named as '**Tushil**'. Tushil is a Sanskrit word meaning Protector Shield.

#### Key Points

- Based on an Inter-Governmental Agreement (IGA) between the Government of Republic of India and Government of Russian Federation for construction of two ships of Project 1135.6 ships in Russia and two ships in India at M/s Goa Shipyard Limited (GSL), the contract for construction of two ships was signed between India and Russia in October 2016.
- They feature "stealth technology" in terms of low radar and under water noise signatures.

#### About P1135.6 class frigates:

- Project 1135.6 also known as Krivak or Talwar-class frigates are a class of stealth-guided missile frigates that are designed and built by Russia for the Indian Navy.
- To date, the Indian Navy already operates six of these ships namely INS Talwar, Trishul, Tabar, Teg, Tarkash and Trikand. INS Tushil is the 7<sup>th</sup>.

Source: PIB

### Indian Coast Guard Ship 'Sarthak' dedicated to the Nation

#### Why in News

- The indigenously built **Indian Coast Guard Ship (ICGS) 'Sarthak'** was commissioned and dedicated to the nation at **Goa**.
- **ICGS Sarthak** will be based at **Porbandar in Gujarat** and operate on India's Western Seaboard under the Operational and Administrative Control of the Commander, Coast Guard Region (Northwest).

#### Key Points

#### About Indian Coast Guard Ship (ICGS) 'Sarthak':

- ICGS Sarthak is 4<sup>th</sup> in the series of five OPVs (Offshore Patrol Vessels) being built by Goa Shipyard Limited for the ICG.

- The 105-meter-long ship displacing 2,450 tons is propelled by two 9,100 kilowatt diesel engines designed to attain a maximum speed of 26 knots.
- The ship is fitted with state-of-the-art equipment, machinery, sensors and weapons which enables it to function as a command platform and undertake mandated Coast Guard charter of duties including search & rescue, combating maritime crimes and preserving & protecting the marine environment.

**Other OPVs:** Vighraha, Sajag, Varaha, Yard 45006 VAJRA

**Source:** PIB

### **DRDO & IAF jointly flight test Long-Range Bomb successfully**

#### **Why in News**

- **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** and **Indian Air Force (IAF)** team jointly flight tested indigenously developed **Long-Range Bomb (LRB)** successfully from an aerial platform.

#### **Key Points**

- The **Long-Range Bomb (LRB)**, after release from the IAF fighter aircraft, guided to a land-based target at a long range with accuracy within specified limits.
- The LR Bomb has been designed and developed by **Research Centre Imarat (RCI)**, a **DRDO laboratory located at Hyderabad** in coordination with other DRDO laboratories.

**Source:** PIB

### **India successfully test-fires surface to surface Ballistic Missile 'Agni-5'**

#### **Why in News**

- India successfully test-fired a surface-to-surface ballistic missile '**Agni-5**' from APJ Abdul Kalam Island off Odisha coast.

#### **Key Points**

- The missile, which uses a three-stage solid fuelled engine, is capable of striking targets at ranges up to **5,000 kilometres** with a very high degree of accuracy.
- The successful test of Agni-5 is in line with India's stated policy to have 'credible minimum deterrence' that underpins the commitment to 'No First Use'.
- The missile was developed by the DRDO.

**Note:** At present, India has 5 missiles under the Agni series – Agni-1 with 700 km range, Agni-2 with 2,000 km range, Agni-3 and Agni-4 with 2,500 km to over 3,500 km range and Agni-5 with up to 5,000 km range.

**Source:** India today

## **Awards and Honours**

### **BWF selects Prakash Padukone lifetime achievement award 2021**

#### **Why in News**

- Indian badminton legend **Prakash Padukone** has been selected for the prestigious **Lifetime Achievement Award 2021** by the **Badminton World Federation (BWF)** Council.

#### **Key Points**

- The BWF Council shortlisted the Indian legend based on the award commission's recommendation.
- The former world no 1 and the first-ever Indian world championships medallist, Padukone has contributed immensely to the game.
- In 2018, he was also honoured with the Badminton Association of India (BAI)'s Lifetime Achievement Award.

**Source: Indian Express**

### **International Emmy Awards 2021**

#### **Why in News**

- The **49th International Emmy Awards 2021** was held in New York City.

#### **Key Points**

- Nawazuddin Siddiqui, Vir Das and Sushmita Sen-starrer Aarya were among the eminent nominees from India, however, they were not able to register any big win.
- Till date, the only Indian show to bag an Emmy is filmmaker Richie Mehta's Delhi Crime which won Best Drama in 2020.

#### **List of some main Winners of 2021 International Emmy Awards:**

- Best Actress: Hayley Squires for Adult Material (UK)
- Best Actor: David Tennant for Des (UK)
- Best Drama Series: Tehran (Israel)
- Best Comedy Series: Call My Agent Season 4 (France)
- Best Documentary: Hope Frozen: A Quest To Live Twice (Thailand)
- Best TV Movie / Mini-Series: Atlantic Crossing (Norway)

**Source: India Today**

### **NGO Pratham awarded Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament and Development for 2021**

#### **Why in news**

- The **Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament and Development for 2021** has been awarded to civil society organisation '**Pratham**'.

#### **Key Points**

##### **About Pratham:**

- Set up in 1995 in Mumbai by Madhav Chavan and Farida Lambay, Pratham has sought to give practical shape to its belief that every child should be in school and learning.
- Its Annual Status of Education Report (ASER), based on surveying 6,00,000 rural Indian children, is now used as a model to assess education outcomes and learning deficiencies in 14 countries over three continents.

##### **About Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament and Development:**

- It was instituted in the memory of the former prime minister by a trust in her name in 1986.
- It consists of a monetary award of Rs 25 lakh along with a citation.

Source: ET

## UNESCO-ABU Peace Media Awards 2021 - Doordarshan and All India Radio win big

### Why in News

- In yet another remarkable feat which has showcased the world Prasar Bharati's excellence in quality content creation, TV and Radio shows produced by **Doordarshan and All India Radio** respectively got multiple awards at the recently held **ABU - UNESCO Peace Media Awards 2021** at Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia.

### Key Points

- Doordarshan's programme 'DEAFinitely Leading the Way' won an award under 'Living Well with Super Diversity' category, while All India Radio's programme 'Living on the edge – The coastal lives' won another award in the category of 'Ethical & Sustainable Relationship with Nature'.
- The awards were given by UNESCO in collaboration with Asia Pacific Broadcasting Union (ABU) under the 'Together for Peace' (T4P) initiative.

Source: PIB

## Swachh Survekshan 2021 Awards: Indore wins the title of 'Cleanest City' for fifth consecutive time

### Why in News

- **President of India, Ram Nath Kovind** felicitated the awardees of the cleanest cities of India at the '**Swachh Amrit Mahotsav**' hosted as part of **Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban 2.0** by the **Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs (MoHUA)**.
- The award ceremony, organized to recognize the good work done for Swachhata by towns/ cities, States and Union Territories under various initiatives of the Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban), viz. Swachh Survekshan 2021, Safaimitra Suraksha Challenge, and certifications for Garbage Free Star rating for cities.

### Key Points

- For the **fifth consecutive year**, **Indore** was awarded the title of **India's Cleanest City** under Swachh Survekshan, while **Surat** and **Vijayawada** bagged the **second and third spots respectively** in the '**more than 1 lakh population**' category.
- In the **population category of 'less than 1 lakh'**, **Vita, Lonavala and Sasvad**, all from Maharashtra, bagged the **first, second and third positions respectively**.
- **Varanasi** emerged as the '**Best Ganga Town**' while **Ahmedabad Cantonment** won the title of '**India's Cleanest Cantonment**', followed by **Meerut Cantonment and Delhi Cantonment**.
- In the category of '**Fastest Mover**', **Hoshangabad (Madhya Pradesh)** emerged as the '**Fastest Mover City**' (in the 'more than 1 lakh population' category) with a jump of 274 ranks from **361<sup>st</sup> position in the 2020 rankings to the 87<sup>th</sup> position this year**, thus securing a place among the top 100 cities.

- In the **State awards, Chhattisgarh**, for the **third consecutive year** emerged as the '**Cleanest State**' in the category of "more than 100 Urban Local Bodies" while **Jharkhand**, for the **second time**, won the **Cleanest State** award in the "less than 100 ULBs category".
- **Karnataka and Mizoram became the 'Fastest Mover States'** in the big (more than 100 ULBs) and small (less than 100 ULBs) state category respectively.
- **Maharashtra has successfully bagged a total of 92 awards**, the highest by any State in this year's Survekshan, followed by Chhattisgarh with 67 awards.
- **Additionally, under the Prerak Daaur Samman, a new performance category introduced under Swachh Survekshan 2021, five cities – Indore, Surat, Navi Mumbai, New Delhi Municipal Council and Tirupati were categorized as 'Divya' (Platinum).**

#### About Swachh Survekshan 2021 Awards:

- This year's Survekshan, participated by 4,320 cities, also saw an unprecedented number of citizens' feedback – over 5 crores, compared to 1.87 cores last year. SS 2021 has also helped identify over 6,000 innovations and best practices in sanitation and waste management from across urban India.

Source: PIB

#### Indian Film Personality of the Year Award 2021 Why in News

- Union Minister for Information and Broadcasting Anurag Singh Thakur has announced that the **Indian Film Personality of the Year Award for 2021** will be conferred on **Hema Malini** and **Prasoon Joshi**.

#### Key Points

- Hema Malini is an Actor, Member of Parliament from Mathura, Uttar Pradesh.
- Prasoon Joshi is a Lyricist and Chairperson, Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC).
- They shall be conferred this honour at the 52nd International Film Festival of India in Goa.

Source: PIB

#### Malayalam writer M Mukundan's 'Delhi: A soliloquy' wins 2021 JCB Prize

#### Why in News

- **Malayalam writer M Mukundan** has been selected for the prestigious **JCB Prize for Literature 2021** for his novel 'Delhi: A Soliloquy'.

#### Key Points

- Known as the Indian Booker Prize, the award carries Rs 25 lakh.
- Delhi: A Soliloquy, published by Westland Books, is the English translation of his Malayalam novel Delhi Gaathakal.
- It was translated by Fathima E V and Nandakumar K.

**Note:** This is the third translation that has won the JCB Prize after S Hareesh's 'Moustache (2020) and Benyamin's 'Jasmine Days' (2018).|

Source: TOI

## Saurabh Kirpal set to be first gay judge of Delhi High Court

### Why in News

- The Supreme Court collegium has recommended **Saurabh Kirpal**, a senior advocate, as a judge to the **Delhi High Court**, a historic first as Kirpal is self-professed gay.

### Key Points

- The SC collegium led by Chief Justice of India (CJI) NV Ramana took a decision on Kirpal's elevation and sent the recommendation to the Law Ministry.
- Kirpal's name was in the reckoning for a judge's post since 2017 but was stalled due to that he was gay.
- The collegium deferred taking a call on his elevation at least four times despite the HC's recommendation.

**Note:** His father B N Kirpal was Chief Justice of India in 2002

**Source:** ET

## 2020 Padma awards

### Why in News

- President Ram Nath Kovind presented the **Padma awards** to **119 recipients** — some of them posthumously — for the **year 2020** at Rashtrapati Bhavan.

### Key Points

- The list comprises **7 Padma Vibhushans, 10 Padma Bhushans and 102 Padma Shri awards.**
- Of the total awardees, 29 were women and one was transgender, while 16 were posthumous awardees.
- Among the personalities awarded the **Padma Vibhushan** were BJP stalwarts Arun Jaitley and Sushma Swaraj, former Union minister George Fernandes (all posthumously), and Hindustani classical singer Pandit Chhannulal Mishra.
- Badminton player P V Sindhu won the **Padma Bhushan** award, along with Dr Anil Prakash Joshi for social work, Dr S C Jamir for public affairs and Mumtaz Ali for spiritualism.
- Actress Kangana Ranaut and singer Adnan Sami also received the Padma Shri

**Source:** Indian Express

## Swarnajayanti Fellowships: DST

### Why in News

- **17 scientists** from scientific institutions across India have been awarded the **Swarnajayanti Fellowships** by the **Department of Science & Technology (DST)** for their innovative research ideas and the potential of creating impact on R&D in different disciplines.

### Key Points

#### About Swarnajayanti Fellowship scheme:

- The Swarnajayanti Fellowship scheme was instituted by Government of India (GOI) to commemorate India's fiftieth year of Independence.

- Under the scheme the awardees are facilitated by the Department of Science & Technology, GOI with support for all the requirements for performing the research including a fellowship of Rs. 25,000/- per month for 5 years.
- In addition, DST supports the awardees by giving them a research grant of 5 lakh Rupees for 5 years.

**Note:**

- **Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Science & Technology Dr Jitendra Singh** recently launched the **first-ever Mentorship Programme for Young Innovators** to mark the 75th Year of India's independence.
- The **DBT-Star College Mentorship Programme** will help towards the concept of networking, hand holding and outreach.

**Source: PIB**

### **South African author Damon Galgut wins Booker Prize 2021**

#### **Why in News**

- **South African author Damon Galgut** has won the **Booker Prize 2021** for his novel **'The Promise'**.

#### **Key Points**

- Galgut was also nominated for this award in the years 2003 and 2010.
- Galgut has become the third writer from South Africa to win the prize.

#### **About The Booker Prize:**

- The Booker Prize, formerly known as the Booker Prize for Fiction and the Man Booker Prize, is a literary prize awarded each year for the best novel written in English and published in the United Kingdom or Ireland.
- The winner receives a £50,000 (\$68,000) prize.

**Source: newsonair**

## **Obituaries**

### **Eminent Novelist Mannu Bhandari passes away**

- **Mannu Bhandari**, a famous **Hindi litterateur**, passed away at the age of 90.
- Mannu Bhandari has been credited with writing many books, which date back to the late 1950s and early 1960s India.
- Two of her most renowned Hindi novels, however, remain 'Aapka Banti' and 'Mahabhoj'.
- She received awards such as Delhi's Shikhar Samman, Bharatiya Bhasha Parishad, Vyas Samman, Rajasthan Sangeet Natak Akademi, and Uttar Pradesh Hindi Sansthan.

**Source: Indian Express**

### **Eminent Cricket Coach Tarak Sinha passes away**

- **Eminent Cricket Coach and Dronacharya Awardee Tarak Sinha** passed away at 71.
- Tarak Sinha trained stalwarts including Manoj Prabhakar, Raman Lamba, Ajay Sharma, Atul Wassan, Surinder Khanna, Sanjiv Sharma, Aakash

Chopra, Anjum Chopra, Rumeli Dhar, Ashish Nehra, Shikhar Dhawan and Rishabh Pant.

**Source: newsonair**

### **Kannada film actor Puneeth Rajkumar passes away**

- Puneeth Rajkumar, colloquially known as Appu, was an Indian actor, playback singer, television presenter, and producer who worked primarily in Kannada cinema.

**Source: TOI**

## **Ranks and Indices**

### **National Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI): Baseline Report** *Why in News*

- **National Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI): Baseline Report** based on **National Family Health Survey (NFHS)-4 (2015-16)** has been developed by **NITI Aayog** in consultation with 12 Line Ministries and in partnership with State governments and the index publishing agencies –Oxford University's Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).
- According to **Global MPI 2021**, India's rank is 66 out of 109 countries.

#### **Key Points**

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

- The MPI seeks to measure poverty across its multiple dimensions and in effect complements existing poverty statistics based on per capita consumption expenditure.
- It has three equally weighted dimensions – health, education, and standard of living – which in turn are represented by 12 indicators such as nutrition, school attendance, years of schooling, drinking water, sanitation, housing, bank accounts among others.
- **Bihar** has the highest proportion of people, at 51.91 percent of the state's population, who are multidimensionally poor, followed by Jharkhand at 42.16 percent and Uttar Pradesh at 37.79 percent.
- **Kerala** registered the lowest population poverty levels (0.71%), followed by Goa (3.76%) and Sikkim (3.82%).
- Among the **Union Territories (UTs)**, Dadra and Nagar Haveli (27.36 percent), Jammu & Kashmir, and Ladakh (12.58), Daman & Diu (6.82 percent) and Chandigarh (5.97 percent), have emerged as the poorest UTs in India.
- The proportion of poor in Puducherry at 1.72 percent is the lowest among the Union Territories, followed by Lakshadweep at 1.82 percent, Andaman & Nicobar Islands at 4.30 percent and Delhi at 4.79 percent.

**Source: PIB**

### **NITI Aayog releases inaugural SDG Urban Index and Dashboard 2021-22** *Why in News*

- **NITI Aayog** under the **Indo-German Cooperation** released the inaugural **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Urban Index and Dashboard 2021-22**.

#### **Key Points**

##### **About SDG Urban Index and Dashboard:**

- The index and dashboard are a result of the NITI Aayog-GIZ and BMZ collaboration focused on driving SDG localization in cities, under the umbrella of Indo-German Development Cooperation.
- It ranks 56 urban areas on 77 SDG indicators across 46 targets of the SDG framework.

##### **Methodology:**

- The statistical methodology for the SDG Urban Index is drawn from the globally accepted methodology developed by the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN).
- Urban areas have been classified as below based on their composite score:  
Aspirant: 0-49  
Performer: 50-64  
Front-Runner: 65-99  
Achiever: 100

##### **Results:**

- **Top 3 Performers:** Shimla, Coimbatore and Chandigarh
- **Worst 3 Performers:** Dhanbad, Meerut and Itanagar

**Source:** PIB

### **IPF Smart Policing Index 2021**

#### **Why in News**

- **Bihar** has scored the **lowest** in overall policing, followed closely by Uttar Pradesh, according to findings of a nationwide survey conducted by independent think-tank **Indian Police Foundation (IPF)**.

#### **Key Points**

##### **Findings of Smart Policing Index 2021:**

- **The top five states** with the highest score on overall policing are Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Assam, Kerala and Sikkim.
- **From bottom** upwards are Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Punjab.
- In Police Accountability, the top states are Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Assam, Kerala and Odisha, while Uttar Pradesh, Nagaland, Uttarakhand, Bihar and Chhattisgarh are at the bottom.
- Southern states and some in the Northeast fared better on most policing indices compared to states in the north.

##### **About the Survey:**

- The survey is an attempt to assess the performance of various states on the Prime Minister's Smart Policing initiative.
- The survey had 10 sets of questionnaires, which included six indices of "Competence-Based Indicators" dealing with issues such as police sensitivity, accessibility, responsiveness and technology adoption among

others; and three indices of “Value-Based indicators” dealing with integrity of the police; and one index of “Trust”.

**Source: Indian Express**

### **First ever All India Survey on Domestic Workers**

#### **Why in news**

- **Union Minister for Labour and Employment, Bhupender Yadav** flagged off the first ever **All All India Survey on Domestic workers** being conducted by Labour Bureau, Chandigarh.
- **Domestic workers (DWs)** constitute a significant portion of total employment in the informal sector.

#### **Key Points**

- On the occasion, the Minister also released instruction manual with questionnaire for All India Survey on Domestic workers.
- This is for the first time in Independent India that such a nationwide survey is being conducted.
- The All India Survey on Domestic Workers is aimed to estimate the number and proportion of domestic workers at National and State level, percentage distribution of domestic workers with respect to Live-in/Live-out, formal/ Informal Employment, Migrant/Non-Migrant, their wages and other socio-economic characteristics.

#### **Scope of the Survey:**

- All India States/UTs of India covered are 37 and Districts covered are 742
- Unit of Enumeration is Villages as per Census 2011 and Urban Blocks as per latest phase of UFS.
- At the all-India level, a total number of 12766 First Stage Units (FSUs) i.e., 6190 villages and 6576 UFS blocks will be covered in the survey.
- 1,50,000 Households i.e., the Ultimate Stage Units (USU) will be covered.

**Note:** The result of the All-India Survey on Domestic Workers is expected within a time-span of 1 year.

#### **Status of Domestic Workers:**

- India is a signatory of the International Labour Organisation Convention C-189 (Domestic Workers Convention, 2011).
- According to the latest data on the e-Shram portal, around 8.8% of the registered 8.56 crore informal sector workers fall in the category of domestic workers.
- India has around 38 crore workers in the informal sector.

**Source: PIB**

### **Global Drug Policy Index 2021**

#### **Why in News**

- The inaugural **Global Drug Policy Index 2021** ranks Norway, New Zealand, Portugal, the UK and Australia as the 5 leading countries on humane and health-driven drug policies.
- The 5 lowest-ranking countries are Brazil, Uganda, Indonesia, Kenya, and Mexico.
- India's rank is 18 out of 30 countries.

- The index is released by the **Harm Reduction Consortium**.

#### **Key Points**

- **India** has an overall score of 46/100. On the criteria of use of extreme sentencing and responses, it has a score of 63/100, on health and harm reduction, 49/100; on proportionality of criminal justice response, 38/100; on availability and access of internationally controlled substances for the relief of pain and suffering, 33 /100.

#### **About Global Drug Policy Index:**

- The index is a data-driven global analysis of drug policies and their implementation.
- The index is composed of 75 indicators running across 5 broad dimensions of drug policy: criminal justice, extreme responses, health and harm reduction, access to internationally controlled medicines, and development.

**Source: Indian Express**

### **State Energy Efficiency Index 2020**

#### **Why in News**

- The **State Energy Efficiency Index (SEEI) 2020** was released by the **Ministry of Power**.
- **Karnataka** has topped the Index.

#### **Key Points**

- **Rank 1:** Karnataka (Score- 70)
- **Rank 2:** Rajasthan (61)
- **Rank 3:** Haryana (59.5)
- Rajasthan has registered 61 points, which is a tremendous rise from the score of 18.5 at the previous year index, SEEI 2019.

#### **About State Energy Efficiency Index (SEEI):**

- It has been developed by the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) and Alliance for an Energy Efficient Economy (AEEE).
- This year's Index has 68 indicators covering all demand sectors – buildings, industry, municipalities, transport, agriculture – and DISCOMs.
- Thirty-six states and union territories have been assessed in SEEI 2020.
- Based on their efforts and achievements, states have been classified as 'Front runner', 'Achiever', 'Contender' and 'Aspirant'.

**Source: Business Standard**

### **Times Higher Education World Reputation Rankings 2021**

- **4 Indian institutes** have made it to the **Times Higher Education (THE)'s World Reputation Rankings 2021** that lists the world's top 200 universities based on votes from leading academics around the world.
- **Indian Institute of Science (IISc) Bangalore** ranked among the top 100 (91-100 band) has topped the Indian institutes.
- **Globally:**

#### **Ranking**

<b>Ranking</b>	<b>Institute</b>
<b>1</b>	Harvard University (US)
<b>2</b>	Massachusetts Institute of Technology (US)
<b>3</b>	University of Oxford (UK)

- **Ranking of Indian Institutes:**

**Ranking Institute**

**91-100** IISc Bangalore

**126-150** IIT Bombay

**176-200** IIT Delhi

**176-200** IIT Madras

**Source: ET**

**EdelGive Hurun India Philanthropy List 2021**

- The **8th EdelGive Hurun India Philanthropy List 2021** has been prepared by **Hurun India** in partnership with **EdelGive Foundation** to identify the most generous individuals in India.
- **Indian business tycoon, Wipro Founder, Azim Premji** has retained top spot on the EdelGive Hurun India Philanthropy List 2021.
- He donated Rs 9,713 crore in FY21, earning him the title of “India’s most generous” for the second year in a row.
- The amount donated by Premji and his family is 27 percent higher than FY20.

**The top 3 Philanthropist:**

Rank	Person (Donation)
1	Azim Premji (Rs 9,713 crore)
2	Shiv Nadar (Rs 1,263 crore)
3	Mukesh Ambani (Rs 577 crore)

**Source: India Today**

**Books and Authors**

**Smriti Irani authored her first Novel ‘Lal Salaam: A Novel’**

**Why in News**

- **Union Minister for Women and Child Development, Smriti Zubin Irani** has turned author with her debut novel ‘**Lal Salaam: A Novel**’.

**Key Points**

- The novel, inspired by the tragic killings of 76 CRPF personnel in Dantewada in April 2010, is a tribute to the exceptional men and women who have given a lifetime of service to the country.
- The book is published by Westland Publications.

**Source: India Today**

**Jason Mott won 2021 National Book Award for fiction**

- The **72nd edition of the National Book Award** was organized by the National Book Foundation.
- Jason Mott won the 2021 National Book Award for fiction for his novel “Hell of a Book”.

**Winners of 2021 National Book Awards:**

Category	Author	Book
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Fiction	Jason Mott	Hell of a Book
Non-Fiction	Tiya Miles	All That She Carried: The Journey of Ashley's Sack, a Black Family Keepsake
Poetry	Martín Espada	Floater
Young People's Literature	Malinda Lo	Last Night at the Telegraph Club
Best Translated Literature	Elisa Shua Dusapin and Aneesa Abbas Higgin	Winter in Sokcho

**Source: nationalbook.org**

### **P. Gopi Chand launches his autobiography 'Shuttler's Flick: Making Every Match Count'**

#### **Why in News**

- India's chief national badminton coach **P. Gopi Chand** formally launched his autobiography **'Shuttler's Flick: Making Every Match Count'**.

#### **Key Points**

- The book has been co-authored by Priya Kumar.
- It narrates his journey into badminton as a player, coach and the challenges he faced in producing top players, including Olympic medallists Saina Nehwal, P.V. Sindhu, B. Sai Praneeth and former World No.1 K. Srikanth.
- The book is published by Simon & Schuster India.

**Source: The Hindu**

## Reports

### **India has made no progress on anaemia, childhood wasting: 2021 Global Nutrition Report**

#### **Why in News**

- India** has made no progress on anaemia and childhood wasting according to the **2021 Global Nutrition Report**.

#### **Key Points**

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

- The country featured among the 161 countries documented in the report as having made no progress or said to be worsening with regards to reducing anaemia.
- Over half of Indian women in the age group 15-49 years are anaemic.
- There has been a rise in anaemic Indian women since 2016. In 2016, 52.6 percent of Indian women were anaemic. But in 2020, 53 percent were found to be anaemic.
- India is also among 23 countries that have made no progress or are worsening on reducing 'childhood wasting'. Wasting refers to children whose weight is low-for-their height.
- India is 'off-course' in meeting 7 of the 13 global nutrition targets.

- Some 6.2 percent of adult (aged 18 years and over) women and 3.5 percent of adult men are living with obesity in the country.
- In fact, no country in the world was 'on course' to achieve the target for obesity.
- India is among 53 countries 'on course' to meet the target for stunting.

#### **About Global Nutrition Report:**

- The Global Nutrition Report was conceived following the first Nutrition for Growth Initiative Summit (N4G) in 2013.
- The annual Global Nutrition Report sets out progress towards global nutrition targets.
- The first report was published in 2014.

**Source: DTE**

### **Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) survey 2021**

#### **Why in News**

- The **16th edition of the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) survey**, which is released by **Pratham Education Foundation**, is the oldest survey of its kind in the country.

#### **Key Points**

- The report was prepared on the basis of the telephonic survey conducted in rural areas of 581 districts across 25 states and three union territories between September and October. As many as 76,706 households, 7,299 schools in 17,184 villages across India were covered in the survey.

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

- There has been an overall increase in the proportion of children enrolled in government schools between 2018 and 2020 i.e from 64.3% to 65.8%. However, in the year 2021, the enrollment suddenly went up to 70.3%.
- The enrolment rate in private schools has however come down from last year. In 2020, the enrolment rate was 28.8% and in 2021 the enrolment rate went down to 24.4%.
- About 73.1% school respondents have received training for implementation of COVID prevention measures in 2021.
- According to the report, even though availability of smartphones increased from 36.5% in 2018 to 67.6% in 2021, more children in private schools had smartphone at home (79%) compared to government school going children (63.7%).

**Source: Indian Express**

### **Logistics Ease Across Different States (LEADS) Report 2021**

#### **Why in News**

- The **Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI)** has released the **Logistics Ease Across Different States (LEADS) Report 2021**.
- **Gujarat, Haryana and Punjab** have emerged as the top performers in the LEADS 2021 index respectively.

#### **Key Points**

- Proactive policies, well-developed infrastructure and services driven by a responsive Government have helped **Gujarat** to maintain its rank.

- Haryana has secured the second position, followed by Punjab.
- Within the **North Eastern States and Himalayan Region, Jammu and Kashmir** is the top ranker followed by Sikkim and Meghalaya.
- **Delhi** stands at the top rank among Other UTs.
- **Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Jharkhand** have witnessed a remarkable improvement in their ranks compared to 2019 LEADS ranking and have emerged as the **top improvers**.
- The inputs given by LEADS Report 2021 can lead the way to bring down logistics cost by 5% over the next 5 years.
- India's logistics costs account for 13-14 percent of GDP, compared to 7-8 percent in developed countries.

#### **About Logistics Ease Across Different States (LEADS) Report:**

- The LEADS report is aimed at gauging the logistics performance of states and Union Territories (UT) and identifying areas where they can improve logistics performance.
- States are ranked based on quality and capacity of key infrastructure such as road, rail and warehousing as well as on operational ease of logistics including security of cargo, speed of terminal services and regulatory approvals.
- The first version of the report, LEADS 2018, focused on export-import trade and assessed the efficiency of the logistics ecosystem in each State and UT.
- The second edition of the study – LEADS 2019, covered both international and domestic trade.
- The LEADS 2021 exercise has gone one-step ahead in analyzing the domestic and EXIM logistics ecosystem of the state.

**Source: Indian Express**

#### **'State of Global Climate 2021': WMO report**

##### **Why in News**

- The last 7 years have been the warmest on record and global sea-level rise accelerated since 2013, reaching a new high in 2021, according to a provisional report titled **'State of Global Climate 2021'** released by the **World Meteorological Organisation (WMO)**.

##### **Key Points**

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

- Greenhouse gas concentrations reached new highs in 2020.
- Levels of carbon dioxide were 413.2 parts per million, methane at 1889 parts per billion (ppb) and nitrous oxide at 333.2 ppb.
- These levels respectively were 149 percent, 262 percent and 123 percent more than pre-industrial levels. The increase has continued in 2021.
- The global mean temperature for 2021 (based on data from January to September) was about 1.09°C above the average during the 1850-1900 period. Moreover, 2016 was the warmest year on record according to most of the datasets surveyed.
- The global mean sea-level rise was 2.1 mm per year between 1993 and 2002, but it jumped to 4.4 mm per year between 2013 and 2021, mostly due to the accelerated loss of ice mass from glaciers and ice sheets.

- The Arctic-wide sea-ice extent was at a record low in the first half of July, 2021.

**Source: Indian Express**

## **Emissions Gap Report 2021: UNEP**

### **Why in News**

- The **United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)** launched the **Emissions Gap Report 2021**.
- It is the 12th edition of the Emissions Gap Report.

### **Key Points**

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

- The Report shows that new national climate pledges combined with other mitigation measures put the world on track for a global temperature rise of 2.7°C by the end of the century.
- That is well above the goals of the Paris climate agreement and would lead to catastrophic changes in the Earth's climate.
- To keep global warming below 1.5°C this century, the aspirational goal of the Paris Agreement, the world needs to halve annual greenhouse gas emissions in the next eight years.
- If implemented effectively, net-zero emissions pledges could limit warming to 2.2°C, closer to the well-below 2°C goal of the Paris Agreement. However, many national climate plans delay action until after 2030.
- As of September 30, 2021, 120 countries — representing just over half of global greenhouse gas emissions — had communicated new or updated NDCs.
- Only three G20 members have announced other new mitigation pledges for 2030.

#### **Initiatives to Reduce Emissions in India:**

- Distribution of LED bulbs under the UJALA scheme
- Shift from Bharat Stage-IV (BS-IV) to BS-VI emission norms
- Formation of International Solar Alliance
- Roadmap for Ethanol Blending in India by 2025
- Launch of the National Action Plan on Climate Change

**Source: unep.org**

## **NITI Aayog releases Report on 'Health Insurance for India's Missing Middle'**

### **Why in News**

- **NITI Aayog** released a comprehensive report titled **'Health Insurance for India's Missing Middle'** which brings out the gaps in the health insurance coverage across the Indian population and offers solutions to address the situation.

### **Key Points**

- The report is an effort to re-invigorate the dialogue on increasing financial protection for health and the broader goal of **Universal Health Coverage**.
- The **Ayushman Bharat – Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY)** - a flagship scheme towards **Universal Health Coverage**, and State

- Government extension schemes—provides comprehensive hospitalization cover to the bottom 50% of the population.
- Around **20% of the population** is covered through social health insurance, and private voluntary health insurance primarily designed for high-income groups.
  - The remaining **30% of the population**, devoid of health insurance, is termed as the **“missing middle”**.
  - The report highlights the need for designing a low-cost comprehensive health insurance product for the missing middle.
  - The report has also suggested sharing of the government scheme data with the private insurance companies.

**Source: Indian Express**

### New Appointments

#### India's candidate, Praveen Sinha, elected as Delegate for Asia on Executive Committee of INTERPOL

##### Why in News

- India's candidate, **Praveen Sinha**, Special Director of Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has been elected as Delegate for Asia on the Executive Committee of the **International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL)**.

##### Key Points

- The elections were held in Istanbul, Turkey during the ongoing 89th INTERPOL General Assembly.

##### About International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL):

- INTERPOL is a global organisation that allows police in its 194 member countries to work together to fight international crime including terrorism and cyber-crime.

**Note:** Inspector General Ahmed Naser Al-Raisi (UAE) has been elected as the President of INTERPOL.

**Source: The Hindu**

#### BCCI president Sourav Ganguly replaces Anil Kumble as chairman of ICC Cricket Committee

##### Why in News

- Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) president and former India captain **Sourav Ganguly** has been appointed as the chairman of the **International Cricket Council (ICC) Cricket Committee**.

**Note:** Johnny Grave, CEO of Cricket West Indies has been appointed to the ICC Women's Cricket Committee.

##### Key Points

- Ganguly replaced Anil Kumble, who stepped down after serving a maximum of three, three-year terms.

- He was president of the Cricket Association of Bengal between 2015 and 2019 and took over as BCCI president in October 2019.

**Source: India Today**

### **Professor Bimal Patel elected to International Law Commission**

#### **Why in News**

- **Professor Bimal Patel** has been elected to the **International Law Commission**.
- He will serve a 5 year term starting January 1, 2023.

#### **Key Points**

- Bimal Patel is the Vice-Chancellor of the Rashtriya Raksha University and a Member of the National Security Advisory Board of India.

#### **About International Law Commission (ILC):**

- It is a body of experts responsible for helping develop and codify international law.
- It is composed of 34 individuals recognized for their expertise and qualifications in international law, who are elected by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) every 5 years.
- **Founded:** 1947

**Source: ET**

### **UN Secretary-General appoints Shombi Sharp as United Nations Resident Coordinator in India**

#### **Why in News**

- [ **United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres** appointed **Shombi Sharp** of the United States as the United Nations Resident Coordinator in India.

#### **Key Points**

- Shombi Sharp will serve as the secretary-general's representative for development at the country level and lead the UN team on the ground, including for support to India's COVID-19 response plans to recover better for the Sustainable Development Goals.
- He recently served as United Nations Resident Coordinator in Armenia.

**Source: newsonair**

### **Daniel Bruhl named Global Goodwill Ambassador for the UN World Food Programme**

#### **Why in News**

- Golden Globe-nominated actor and director **Daniel Bruhl** was appointed a Goodwill Ambassador for the **United Nations World Food Programme (WFP)**.

#### **Key Points**

- As conflict, climate change and the impact of the pandemic increase global hunger, Bruhl joins the world's largest humanitarian organization in its mission to reach a world with Zero Hunger.

**Facts about United Nations World Food Programme:**

- The World Food Programme is the food-assistance branch of the United Nations.
- **Headquarters:** Rome, Italy
- **Founded:** 1961

**Note:** The United Nations World Food Programme is the 2020 **Nobel Peace Prize** Laureate.

**Source:** [wfp.org](http://wfp.org)

### **VVS Laxman to become National Cricket Academy head**

#### **Why in News**

- **Former India batsman VVS Laxman** will be the new head of the **National Cricket Academy (NCA)**.

#### **Key Points**

- Laxman will take over from his former teammate Rahul Dravid, who was recently appointed as the head coach of the Indian men's cricket team following the end of Ravi Shastri's tenure.
- Laxman is a batting consultant for Bengal in domestic cricket and is also a team mentor for SunRises Hyderabad in the Indian Premier League.
- Laxman took retirement from international cricket in 2012.

**Source:** [India Today](http://india.com)

### **IPS Sheel Vardhan Singh appointed CISF chief**

- **Senior IPS officer Sheel Vardhan Singh** was appointed as **Director-General** of the **Central Industrial Security Force (CISF)**.
- Mr. Singh has been appointed as the Director-General up to 31.08.2023, the date of his superannuation, an order issued by the Personnel Ministry.
- Mr. Singh, a 1986 batch Indian Police Service officer of Bihar cadre, is currently Special Director in the Intelligence Bureau.

**Source:** [India Today](http://india.com)

### **IPS Atul Karwal appointed NDRF chief**

- **Senior IPS officer** and director of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel National Police Academy, **Atul Karwal**, has been appointed **Director-General** of the **National Disaster Response Force (NDRF)**.
- The appointment committee of the Cabinet has approved the proposal of the Ministry of Home Affairs for the appointment of Mr. Karwal, a 1988 batch IPS officer of Gujarat cadre.

**Source:** [The Hindu](http://thehindu.com)

### **Satya Narayan Pradhan appointed as NCB Chief**

- **Satya Narayan Pradhan, Senior Indian Police Service (IPS) officer**, has been appointed as the full-time **Director-General** of **Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB)**.
- His appointment has been done on a deputation till August 31, 2024, or until further orders.

- Previously, despite being the Director-General of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), Pradhan was also holding the additional charge of NCB Chief.
- He is a 1988 batch IPS officer from Jharkhand Cadre.

**Source: news18**

### **Fumio Kishida re-elected Japan's Prime Minister in parliamentary vote**

#### **Why in News**

- **Fumio Kishida** was re-elected as Japan's Prime Minister after his governing party scored a major victory in key parliamentary elections.

#### **Key Points**

- Elected just over a month ago by parliament, Fumio Kishida called a quick election in which his governing party secured 261 seats in the 465-member lower house.
- Kishida has also presided over the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) since 29 September 2021.
- Kishida succeeded Yoshihide Suga who resigned as Prime Minister of Japan in September 2021.

**Source: Indian Express**

### **Justice (retd) Ashok Bhushan appointed as NCLAT Chairperson**

#### **Why in News**

- The Centre has appointed **retired Supreme Court judge Ashok Bhushan** as the Chairperson of the **National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT)**.

#### **Key Points**

- Justice Ashok Bhushan has been given a term of four years or until he attains the age of 70 years, whichever is the earliest.
- He has been associated with several landmark judgments, including Ram Mandir, COVID Management and registration of migrant workers.

**Note:** Meanwhile, the Centre has approved the appointment of **Justice Ramalingam Sudhakar** as the **President of National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT)**.

**Source: The Hindu**

### **K V Kamath appointed as NaBFID chairperson**

#### **Why in News**

- The Central Government announced the appointment of veteran banker **K. V. Kamath** as chairperson of the newly set up ₹20,000-crore **National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development (NaBFID)**.

#### **Key Points**

- Parliament had in March 2021 cleared the **National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development (NaBFID) Bill 2021** to support the development of long-term non-recourse infrastructure financing in India, including the development of the bonds and derivatives markets necessary for infrastructure financing.

- Mr. Kamath, the first head of the New Development Bank set up by the BRICS group of emerging market economies, had completed his five-year tenure last year.

**Source: The Hindu**

### **Central Government extends RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das's tenure for 3 years** **Why in News**

- The Central Government has extended the tenure of **Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Shaktikanta Das** for a period of 3 years.
- With the second term of three years, Das will head the RBI till December, 2024.

#### **Key Points**

- The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved the reappointment of Shaktikanta Das as Governor, RBI, for a period of three years beyond 10.12.2021.
- Mr. Das was appointed as RBI's 25th Governor on December 11, 2018 for a period of three years.

**Source: The Hindu**

## **Books and Author**

### **Ramesh Pokhriyal gifted his book 'AIIMS Mein Ek Jang Ladte Hue' to Prime Minister Modi**

- The **former Union Minister of Education Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank'** has gifted his book titled '**AIIMS Mein Ek Jang Ladte Hue**' to Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
- The book was written by Pokhriyal while he was battling COVID-19 at AIIMS in Delhi.
- It was published by Prabhat Prakashan Pvt. Ltd.

### **A new Book titled "Kamala Harris: Phenomenal Woman" written by Chidanand Rajghatta**

- **Renowned journalist and writer Chidanand Rajghatta** authored a new book "**Kamala Harris: Phenomenal Woman**".
- It is a biography of Kamala Harris, the first women Vice President of the United States of America (USA).
- The book features the life incidents of Kamala Harris, a woman of mixed race (India and Jamaica) who has become the first Indian descent, the first woman to become the vice president of the USA.

## **Important Days**

### **November 26, National Milk Day**

#### **Why in News**

- The country observes **November 26** as **National Milk Day** since 2014 to commemorate the birthday of **Dr. Verghese Kurien, the father of India's white revolution.**

#### **Key Points**

- This year is also the birth centenary year of Dr. Kurien, also known as the 'Milk Man of India', who was the man behind Operation Flood-known as the world's largest agricultural program.
- In addition to establishing numerous institutions that are run by various farmers and workers, Dr. Kurien played a key role in the establishment and success of the popular dairy brand Amul.
- This year, as part of the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, the Union government is commemorating National Milk Day by distributing **National Gopal Ratna Awards** in a ceremony at the National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) campus in Anand.

**Note:** India is the world's largest milk producer, with 22 percent of global production, followed by the United States of America, China, Pakistan, and Brazil

**Source:** newsonair

### **November 27, National Organ Donation Day**

#### **Why in News**

- **National Organ Donation Day** is celebrated on 27th November every year.

#### **Key Points**

- It is being celebrated on 27th of November every year in India since 2010.

#### **Note:**

- The total number of organ transplants done per year in the country has increased from 4990 in the year 2013 to 12746 in the year 2019 and India now ranks third in the world only behind the US and China as per the data available on the Global Observatory on Donation and Transplantation (GODT) website.
- Similarly, the organ donation rate has increased to about four times as compared to 2012-13.

**Source:** PIB

### **November 26, Constitution Day (India)**

#### **Why in News**

- **Constitution Day (Samvidhan Divas)**, also known as **National Law Day**, is celebrated in India on 26 November every year to commemorate the adoption of the Constitution of India.

#### **Key Points**

- On 26 November 1949, the Constituent Assembly of India adopted the Constitution of India, and it came into effect on 26 January 1950.
- The Government of India declared 26 November as Constitution Day on 19 November 2015 by a gazette notification.
- The Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi made the declaration on 11 October 2015 while laying the foundation stone of the B. R. Ambedkar's Statue of Equality memorial in Mumbai.

**Source: India Today**

## **November 25, International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women** **Why in News**

- International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women is celebrated on 25 November every year.

### **Key Points**

- **2021 Theme:** Orange the World: End Violence against Women Now!
- The United Nations General Assembly has designated November 25 as the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.
- The International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women will mark the launch of the UNiTE to End Violence against Women campaign (Nov 25- Dec 10) — an initiative of 16 days of activism concluding on the day that commemorates the International Human Rights Day (10 December).

**Source: un.org**

## **November 21, World Fisheries Day**

### **Why in News**

- World Fisheries Day is celebrated on 21st November every year to demonstrate solidarity with all fisher folk, fish farmers and concerned stakeholders throughout the world.
- It started in 1997 where “World Forum of Fish Harvesters & Fish Workers” met at New Delhi leading to formation of “World Fisheries Forum” with representatives from 18 countries and signed a declaration advocating for a global mandate of sustainable fishing practices and policies.

### **Key Points**

#### **In India:**

- Several awards were given by the **Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying**, in Bhubaneswar on the occasion of **World Fisheries Day 2021**.
- **Balasore, Odisha** was awarded as the Best Marine District in the country.
- Andhra Pradesh was awarded the Best Marine State while Best Inland State Award was given to Telangana.
- Balaghat in Madhya Pradesh received the Best Inland District award; and Best Hilly and Northeastern State and District awards were taken away by Tripura and Bongaigaon, Assam respectively.

#### **Note:**

- Fisheries sector has tremendous potential of growth and the Government of India is providing all necessary support to achieve the one lakh crore export target from the sector by 2024-25.
- India is the second major producer of fish through aquaculture in the world.
- India is the 4th largest exporter of fish in the world as it contributes 7.7% to the global fish production.

#### **Government's Effort to Improve Fisheries:**

- Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana

- Seaweed Park
- Palk Bay Scheme
- Marine Fisheries Bill
- Fisheries and Aquaculture Infrastructure Development Fund
- Marine Products Export Development Authority
- Kisan Credit Card

**Source: PIB**

## **November 21, World Television Day**

### **Why in News**

- World Television Day is celebrated every year on 21 November.
- Television is a symbol of communication and globalization that educates, informs, entertains and influences our decisions and opinions.

### **Key Points**

- On 21 and 22 November 1996 the United Nations held the first World Television Forum, where leading media figures met under the auspices of the United Nations to discuss the growing significance of television in today's changing world.
- That is why the UN General Assembly decided to proclaim 21 November as World Television Day.
- In December 1996 the United Nations proclaimed 21 November as World Television Day commemorating the date on which the first World Television Forum was held in 1996.

**Source: un.org**

## **November 20, World Children's Day**

### **Why in News**

- World Children's Day is celebrated every year on 20 November.

### **Key Points**

- 2021 Theme: **'A Better Future for Every Child'**

### **History:**

- World Children's Day was first established in 1954 as Universal Children's Day and is celebrated on 20 November each year to promote international togetherness, awareness among children worldwide, and improving children's welfare.
- November 20th is an important date as it is the date in 1959 when the UN General Assembly adopted the Declaration of the Rights of the Child.
- It is also the date in 1989 when the UN General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

**Source: un.org**

## **'Onake Obavva Jayanti' on November 11**

### **Why in News**

- From this year, the **Karnataka Government** has decided to celebrate **'Onake Obavva Jayanti'** on **November 11** throughout the State.

### **Key Points**

- The Kannada and culture department has proposed a state-sponsored celebration of the birth anniversary of **Onake Obavva**, a woman warrior who fought the forces of Hyder Ali single-handedly with a pestle ('onake' in Kannada) in Chitradurga in the 18th century.
- Chitradurga Fort, locally known as Elusuttina Kote, (the fort of seven circles), is situated in Chitradurga, 200 km northwest of Bengaluru.

**Source: Indian Express**

### **Guru Nanak's birth anniversary to be declared 'World Pedestrian Day'**

#### **Why in News**

- Recently, **Punjab Police** proposed the birth anniversary (Gurpurab) of Sikhism founder **Guru Nanak Dev** be declared as **'World Pedestrian Day'**.
- A written proposal in this regard has been proposed to send to the Union Ministry of Road Transport and Highways.

#### **Key Points**

- In 2021, Guru Nanak's 552nd Gurpurab will be celebrated on November 19.
- The proposal further says that while beginning can be made by declaring 'National Pedestrian Day' within the country by the Union ministry, the Government of India can later take up the matter with the United Nations to get Gurpurab declared as 'World Pedestrian Day' to spread awareness on road safety.
- To spread the message of oneness and to break barriers across faiths by engaging in spiritual dialogues, Guru Nanak Dev, travelled far and wide during the 15th and 16th centuries.

**Source: Indian Express**

### **November 10, World Science Day for Peace and Development**

#### **Why in News**

- Celebrated every 10 November, World Science Day for Peace and Development highlights the significant role of science in society and the need to engage the wider public in debates on emerging scientific issues.

#### **Key Points**

- The 2021 theme is **"Building Climate-Ready Communities"**.
- Since its proclamation by UNESCO in 2001, World Science Day for Peace and Development has generated many concrete projects, programmes and funding for science around the world.

**Note:** French scientist and author **Jean-Pierre Luminet** has been awarded the **2021 UNESCO Kalinga Prize for the Popularization of Science**.

**Source: un.org**

### **November 5, World Tsunami Awareness Day**

#### **Why in News**

- Every year, World Tsunami Awareness Day is celebrated on November 5.

#### **Key Points**

- In 2021, World Tsunami Awareness Day promotes "Sendai Seven Campaign," target (f), which aims to 'substantially enhance international cooperation to developing countries through adequate and sustainable

support to complement their national actions for implementation of the present Framework by 2030.'

**History:**

- In December 2015, the UN General Assembly designated 5 November as World Tsunami Awareness Day, calling on countries, international bodies and civil society to raise tsunami awareness and share innovative approaches to risk reduction.

**Source: un.org**

**National Ayurveda Day 2021**

**Why in News**

- National Ayurveda Day is observed every year on the day of **Dhanwantri Jayanti**. This year it falls on November 02.
- The 2021 theme is '**Ayurveda for Poshan**'.

**Key Points**

- The aim of the day is to create a sense of awareness in today's generation and promote Ayurvedic principles of healing in society.
- The practice to observe Ayurveda Day, which falls on Dhanwantri Jayanti, was started by the Union Ministry of Ayush (Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Sidda, and Homoeopathy) in 2016.

**Source: India Today**

**October 31, World Cities Day**

**Why in News**

- **World Cities Day** is observed globally on October 31 every year to promote the international community's interest in global urbanization.

**Key Points**

- The World Cities Day 2021's **general theme** is '**Better City, Better life**' and **sub-theme** is '**Adapting Cities for Climate Resilience**'.

**History:** World Cities Day was established in 2013 by the United Nations General Assembly. The first World Cities Day was held in October 2014.

**Source: un.org**

**October 31, National Unity Day**

**Why in News**

- **National Unity Day** or Rashtriya Ekta Diwas is celebrated on October 31 every year.
- This year marks Patel's 146th birth anniversary.

**Key Points**

- The Government of India introduced the day in 2014 to mark the birth anniversary of the Iron Man of India - Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.

**About Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel:**

- Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel played a crucial role in India's freedom movement and in the integration of India.
- He was appointed as the first Deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister of independent India.

**Source: India Today**

## Sports

### Geoff Allardice appointed as permanent ICC CEO

#### Why in News

- **Australia's Geoff Allardice** has been appointed as permanent CEO of the International Cricket Council (ICC) after serving the role on an interim basis for more than eight months.

#### Key Points

- Geoff Allardice thus replaced Manu Sawhney, who had resigned from his position in July.
- Allardice, a former Australian first-class cricketer and administrator, was the ICC General Manager, Cricket for eight years.

Source: TOI

### Tamil Nadu wins Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy title 2021

#### Why in News

- In cricket, Tamil Nadu won the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy title 2021.
- Tamil Nadu defeated Karnataka by four wickets in the finals in Arun Jaitley Stadium Delhi.

#### Key Points

- It was the 3<sup>rd</sup> title of Tamil Nadu.
- The Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy is a domestic T20 cricket championship in India, organized by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), among the teams from the Ranji Trophy.

Source: India Today

### India bags 7 medals at Asian Archery Championships 2021

#### Why in News

- India bagged a total of **7 medals (1 Gold, 4 Silver and 2 Bronze)** at the Asian Archery Championships 2021 held in Dhaka.

#### Key Points

- India finished 2<sup>nd</sup> in the overall medal tally.
- South Korea topped with 15 medals.
- Jyothi Surekha Vennam won the gold medal in the women's individual compound.

**Note: Union Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports Anurag Thakur** conferred the **first ever Sports Authority of India's Institutional Awards** to 246 athletes and coaches in New Delhi.

Source: newsonair

### India and Bangladesh to jointly host 2031 ICC Men's Cricket World Cup

#### Why in News

- The **International Cricket Council (ICC)** has decided that **India and Bangladesh** will jointly host the 2031 ICC Men's Cricket World Cup.

#### Key Points

- The ICC confirmed the 14 host countries for the ICC men's white ball events from 2024-2031.
- It includes 11 full members and three associate members who will host two ICC Men's World Cups, four ICC Men's T20 World Cups and two ICC men's Champions Trophy events.
- The USA and Namibia will host an ICC World Cup event for the first time.
- The USA and West Indies will jointly host the 2024 Men's T20 World cup.

**Note:** Earlier, Bangladesh had organised the 2011 World Cup along with India and Sri Lanka.

**Source: newsonair**

### **J&K team for deaf clinches 1st position in World Deaf Judo Championship 2021**

- The **Jammu & Kashmir team for deaf** clinched 1st position in **1st World Deaf Judo Championship 2021** held at Paris Versailles, France.
- The championship is organised by the International Committee of Sports for the Deaf (ICSD).

**Source: newsonair**

### **Mitrabha Guha becomes India's 72nd chess Grand Master**

#### **Why in News**

- Kolkata-based player **Mitrabha Guha** has become **India's 72nd chess Grandmaster (GM)** by bagging his third and final GM norm during a tournament in Serbia.

#### **Key Points**

- Mitrabha Guha defeated GM Nikola Sedlak of Serbia.
- To become a GM, a player has to secure three GM norms and cross the live rating of 2,500 Elo points.

**Note:** Guha achieved the GM title just two days after Sankalp Gupta did so during an event in Arandjelovac, Serbia to become the country's 71st GM.

**Source: TOI**

### **Indian Boxer Akash Kumar wins a bronze medal at AIBA Men's World Boxing Championships 2021**

- In **AIBA Men's World Boxing Championships 2021**, Debutant **Akash Kumar** had to settle for bronze after going down in the 54 kg category semi-final against Makhmud Sabyrkhan of Kazakhstan at Belgrade in Serbia.
- Akash has become the seventh Indian male boxer to win a medal at the world championships.

**Source: newsonair**

### **India wins 5 Medals in ISSF President's Cup 2021**

- Indian shooters have won 5 Medals in the inaugural **ISSF President's Cup shooting championship 2021 in Wroclaw, Poland.**

- Manu Bhaker won two gold medals in the ISSF President's Cup.

**India's 5 Medals:**

- Manu Bhaker: 2 Gold
- Rahi Sarnobat: 1 Silver
- Saurabh Chaudhary: 1 Silver
- Abhishek Verma: 1 Bronze

**Source: HT**

**Indian Table Tennis pair of Manika Batra, Archana Kamath clinches women's doubles title in WTT Contender tournament 2021**

- In Table Tennis, Indian pair of **Manika Batra and Archana Girish Kamath** clinched the women's doubles title in the **WTT Contender tournament 2021** in Lasko, Slovenia.
- The Indian duo defeated the Puerto Rican team of Melanie Diaz and Adriana Diaz.
- Manika Batra also won a bronze medal in the women's singles.

**Source: India Today**

**Mountaineer Priyanka Mohite to get 'Tenzing Norgay National Adventure Award 2020'**

- **Maharashtra-based 28 year old mountaineer Priyanka Mohite** will be bestowed with the prestigious '**Tenzing Norgay National Adventure Award 2020**' for her outstanding contribution in the field of land adventure.
- In April 2020, Mohite scaled Mt Annapurna, the 10<sup>th</sup> highest mountain peak in the world, and became the first Indian woman climber to achieve the feat.

**Tenzing Norgay National Adventure Award 2020 – List of complete Winners:**

<b>Awardee</b>	<b>Category</b>
Priyanka Mangesh Mohite	Land Adventure
Jay Prakash Kumar	Land Adventure
Col. Amit Bisht	Land Adventure
Lt. Col. Servesh Dhadwal	Air Adventure
Sheetal	Land Adventure
Srikanth Viswanathan	Water Adventure
Jai Kishan	Life Time Achievement

**Note:** Winners will receive the award from President Ram Nath Kovind at a function in the Rashtrapati Bhawan in New Delhi on November 13, 2021.

**Source: TOI**

**National Sports Awards 2021**

- The **Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports** announced the **National Sports Awards 2021**.

- The awardees will receive their awards from the President of India at the Darbar Hall of Rashtrapati Bhavan on 13<sup>th</sup> November, 2021.
- **Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award 2021** will be given to **12 Sports persons**.
- **35 Sports persons** will receive **Arjuna Awards**.
- A large number of nominations were received, which were considered by the Selection Committee headed by Justice (Retd.) Mukundakam Sharma (former Judge of Supreme Court).

#### Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award 2021:

S. No.	Name of the Sportsperson	Discipline
1.	Neeraj Chopra	Athletics
2.	Ravi Kumar	Wrestling
3.	Lovlina Borgohain	Boxing
4.	Sreejesh P.R	Hockey
5.	Avani Lekhara	Para Shooting
6.	Sumit Antil	Para Athletics
7.	Pramod Bhagat	Para Badminton
8.	Krishna Nagar	Para Badminton
9.	Manish Narwal	Para Shooting
10.	Mithali Raj	Cricket
11.	Sunil Chhetri	Football
12.	Manpreet Singh	Hockey

#### Arjuna Awards for outstanding performance in Sports and Games 2021:

S. No.	Name of the Sportsperson	Discipline
1.	Arpinder Singh	Athletics
2.	Simranjit Kaur	Boxing
3.	Shikhar Dhawan	Cricket

4.	Bhavani Devi Chadalavada Anandha Sundhararaman	Fencing
5.	Monika	Hockey
6.	Vandana Katariya	Hockey
7.	Sandeep Narwal	Kabaddi
8.	Himani Uttam Parab	Mallakhamb
9.	Abhishek Verma	Shooting
10.	Ankita Raina	Tennis
11.	Deepak Punia	Wrestling
12.	Dilpreet Singh	Hockey
13.	Harman Preet Singh	Hockey
14.	Rupinder Pal Singh	Hockey
15.	Surender Kumar	Hockey
16.	Amit Rohidas	Hockey
17.	BirendraLakra	Hockey
18.	Sumit	Hockey
19.	Nilakanta Sharma	Hockey
20.	Hardik Singh	Hockey
21.	Vivek Sagar Prasad	Hockey
22.	Gurjant Singh	Hockey
23.	Mandeep Singh	Hockey
24.	Shamsher Singh	Hockey
25.	Lalit Kumar Upadhyay	Hockey
26.	Varun Kumar	Hockey

27.	Simranjeet Singh	Hockey
28.	Yogesh Kathuniya	Para Athletics
29.	Nishad Kumar	Para Athletics
30.	Praveen Kumar	Para Athletics
31.	Suhash Yathiraj	Para Badminton
32.	Singhraj Adhana	Para Shooting
33.	Bhavina Patel	Para Table Tennis
34.	Harvinder Singh	Para Archery
35.	Sharad Kumar	Para Athletics

**Dronacharya Award for outstanding coaches in Sports and Games 2021**  
**Life-Time Category:**

S. No.	Name of the Coach	Discipline
1.	T. P. Ouseph	Athletics
2.	Sarkar Talwar	Cricket
3.	Sarpal Singh	Hockey
4.	Ashan Kumar	Kabaddi
5.	Tapan Kumar Panigrahi	Swimming

**Regular Category:**

S. No.	Name of the Coach	Discipline
1.	Radhakrishnan Nair P	Athletics
2.	Sandhya Gurung	Boxing
3.	Pritam Siwach	Hockey
4.	Jai Prakash Nautiyal	Para Shooting
5.	Subramanian Raman	Table Tennis

### Dhyan Chand Award for Lifetime achievement in Sports and Games 2021:

S.No.	Name	Discipline
1.	Lekha K.C.	Boxing
2.	Abhijeet Kunte	Chess
3.	Davinder Singh Garcha	Hockey
4.	Vikas Kumar	Kabaddi
5.	Sajjan Singh	Wrestling

### Rashtriya Khel Protsahan Puruskar 2021:

S. No.	Category	Entity recommended for Rashtriya Khel Protsahan Puraskar, 2021
1.	Identification and Nurturing of Budding and Young Talent	Manav Rachna Educational Institution
2.	Encouragement to sports through Corporate Social Responsibility	Indian Oil Corporation Limited

**Maulana Abul Kalam Azad (MAKA) Trophy 2021:** Panjab University – Chandigarh  
**Source:** PIB

### Rahul Dravid appointed as head coach of Indian men's cricket team

#### Why in News

- **Former India captain Rahul Dravid** has been appointed as the Head Coach of the senior Indian men's cricket team.

#### Key Points

- Dravid takes over from Ravi Shastri, whose term ends after the ongoing ICC T20 World Cup 2021.
- Dravid will take over the new role and begin his tenure as India's full-time coach from the home T20I series against New Zealand starting November 17, 2021.

**Source:** The Hindu

### Viktor Axelsen and Akane Yamaguchi win 2021 Denmark Open Badminton

- **Danish Olympic champion Viktor Axelsen** won the **Mens' Single 2021 Denmark Open Badminton**. Viktor Axelsen defeated world number one Kento Momota of Japan.
- **Akane Yamaguchi** of Japan won her 2nd title in the **women's category** defeating An Se-young (South Korea).

- The **2021 Denmark Open (Victor Denmark Open 2021)** was a badminton tournament which took place at the Odense Sports Park in Odense, Denmark in October 2021.

**Source: newsonair**

## Monthly Current Affairs October 2021

मासिक सम सामयिकी अक्टूबर 2021

**Important News: State**

### **Kerala wins award for 'city with most sustainable transport system'**

#### **Why in News**

- **Kerala** has won the award for the **'city with the most sustainable transport system'**.

#### **Key Points**

- The award has been given in recognition of the projects implemented — like Kochi Metro, Water Metro and e-mobility — to enhance the transport facilities in the city of Kochi.
- The formation of the Kochi Open Mobility Network, which digitized and integrated various transport facilities, also helped to win the award.
- The award would be presented in Delhi by **Union Minister for Housing and Urban Affairs Hardeep Singh Puri**.
- The **award** is given in recognition of the transport facilities in various states and Union Territories of India.

**Source: Indian Express**

### **Uttar Pradesh to rename Faizabad Railway Junction as Ayodhya Cantt**

#### **Why in News**

- The **Uttar Pradesh government** has decided to rename the **Faizabad Railway Junction** as **Ayodhya Cantt Railway Station**.

#### **Key Points**

- According to the procedure, the state government sends a proposal to the Ministry of Home Affairs, from where it goes to the Railway Board for final implementation.

#### **Note:**

- Earlier in 2018, the Yogi Adityanath government had renamed **Faizabad as Ayodhya**.
- The UP government had also changed the name of **Allahabad to Prayagraj** and the Central government had changed **Mughalsarai Railway Junction as Pt Deen Dayal Upadhyay Junction**.

**Source: Indian Express**

## **India's 1st State government-owned Wildlife DNA testing lab inaugurated in Nagpur**

### **Why in News**

- **Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray** inaugurated India's 1st State government-owned **Wildlife DNA testing laboratory** at Regional Forensic Science Laboratory (RFSL) in **Nagpur, Maharashtra**.

### **Key Points**

- At present, there are 2 central government-owned Wildlife DNA testing laboratories at Dehradun & Hyderabad.

### **Note:**

- CM Uddhav Thackeray also launched **3 Fast Track DNA testing units** in Mumbai and Pune under the Central Government's **Nirbhaya Scheme to test human DNA samples**.
- The Labs will be exclusively dealing with cases registered under **Protection of Children From Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012**.

**Source: TOI**

## **Bhaskarabda to be used in official Assam calendar**

### **Why in News**

- The **Assam Government** has announced that **Bhaskarabda (Luni-Solar Calendar)** will be used in the official calendar by the state.
- Presently, the Assam government officially uses the **Saka calendar** and the **Gregorian calendar**.

### **Key Points**

- Bhaskarabda, an era counted from the date of the ascension of a 7th-century local ruler, will be added to the Saka and Gregorian in the official calendar of the Assam government.
- The Bhaskarabda calendar differs from the Gregorian calendar by 593 years.
- Bhaskarabda began when Kumar Bhaskaravarman was crowned ruler of the Kamrupa kingdom. He was a contemporary and political ally of northern Indian ruler Harshavardhana.

### **Type of Calendars:**

- Solar, Lunar and Luni-Solar

### **Classification of Calendars in India:**

- Vikram Samvat (Hindu lunar calendar)
- Saka Samvat (Hindu Solar calendar)
- Hijri calendar (Islamic lunar calendar)
- Gregorian calendar (Scientific solar calendar)

**Source: The Hindu**

## PM Modi inaugurates Kushinagar International Airport

### Why in News

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** inaugurated **Kushinagar International Airport in Uttar Pradesh**.
- He participated in an event marking **Abhidhamma Day** at the Mahaparinirvana Temple in Kushinagar.
- He laid the foundation stone of Rajkiya Medical College, Kushinagar.

### Key Points

- The Kushinagar International Airport, built at a cost of Rs 260 crore, has the state's longest runway with a length of 3.2 km and a width of 45 metres.
- With this, **Uttar Pradesh** now has **3 international airports**.
- Apart from the Kushinagar International Airport, the two operational international airports are -- **Chaudhary Charan Singh International Airport at Lucknow** and **Lal Bahadur Shastri International Airport at Varanasi**.
- Kushinagar is the centre of the **Buddhist Circuit**.
- This region is witness to the entire journey from the **enlightenment of Lord Buddha to Mahaparinirvana**.

### About Buddhist Circuit:

- In 2014-15, the Ministry of Tourism launched the Swadesh Darshan scheme with a vision to develop theme-based tourist circuits on the principles of high tourist value.
- The Ministry has identified Buddhist Circuit as one of the fifteen thematic circuits for development under the scheme.
- The Buddhist circuit is a route that follows in the footsteps of the Buddha from Lumbini in Nepal to Kushinagar in Uttar Pradesh in India, where he died.

Source: PIB

## Mount Harriet in Andaman to be named Mount Manipur

### Why in News

- The Central government has decided to rename **Mount Harriet**, an island peak in Andaman and Nicobar islands as a tribute to the **freedom fighters of Manipur**.
- It will now be known as **Mount Manipur**.

### Key Points

- Manipur played a significant role in resisting the British in the Northeast during the 1857 revolution and in 1891.
- **Mount Harriet**, the third-highest island peak in Andaman and Nicobar islands, where Manipur's Maharaja Kulchandra Singh and 22 other freedom fighters were imprisoned during the Anglo-Manipuri war (1891).

Source: HT

## New Species of Onion 'Allium Negianum' discovered in India

### Why in News

- A plant discovered in **Uttarakhand** has been newly confirmed as a new species of Allium — the genus that includes many staple foods such as onion and garlic, among 1,100 species worldwide.
- The scientific name Allium Negianum honours the late Dr Kuldeep Singh Negi, an explorer and Allium collector.

#### **Key Points**

- The new species found in Uttarakhand is described in journal the PhytoKeys.
- It grows at 3,000 to 4,800 m above sea level and can be found along open grassy meadows, sandy soils along rivers, and streams forming in snow pasture lands along alpine meadows.
- With a narrow distribution, this newly described species is restricted to the region of western Himalayas.

**Source: Indian Express**

### **Punjab Chief Minister launches 'Mera Ghar Mere Naam' Scheme**

#### **Why in News**

- **Punjab Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi** launched '**Mera Ghar Mere Naam' Scheme** to give ownership rights to people living in houses within the "**Lal Lakir**" of villages and cities.
- "**Lal Lakir**" refers to land that is part of the village habitation and is used for non-agriculture purposes only.

#### **Key Points**

- '**Mera Ghar Mere Naam' Scheme** will give much needed assistance to all the people, especially those from needy and underprivileged strata.
- Earlier this scheme was launched only for the residents of villages but now it is being extended to the eligible residents of the cities within the "Lal Lakir".
- All the eligible residents after proper identification or verification will be given the property cards (sanads) to give ownership rights to them in a time-bound manner.

**Source: ndtv**

### **Delhi CM launches 'Desh Ke Mentors' programme**

#### **Why in News**

- **Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal** launched the '**Desh Ke Mentors' programme**.
- **Actor Sonu Sood** had been appointed as the brand ambassador for the programme.

#### **Key Points**

- Under this programme, the 9 lakh students of classes 9 to 12 in Delhi government schools will be connected with noteworthy citizens who will offer them career and general guidance.
- Interested citizens from across the country can become mentors by registering on the **Desh Ke Mentors app**.
- The app was developed by a team from **Delhi Technological University (DTU)**.

Source: HT

## Jim Corbett National Park may be renamed as Ramganga National Park

### Why in News

- **Jim Corbett National Park**, a world-renowned tiger reserve in Uttarakhand, may be renamed as **Ramganga National Park** in the future.

### Key Points

- Union Minister of State for Forest and Environment Ashwini Kumar Choubey hinted about the change in name of India's first national park.
- However, for some time in between it was also named Ramganga National Park as the Ramganga, a tributary of the Ganges, passes through it.

### About Jim Corbett National Park:

- Jim Corbett National Park is a national park in India located in the Nainital district of Uttarakhand state.
- It is spread over an area of about 521 km.
- The first national park in India, it was established in 1936 and named Haily National Park after a governor of the United Provinces in which it was then located.
- In 1956, it was renamed Corbett National Park after the hunter and naturalist Jim Corbett.
- The park was the first to come under the **Project Tiger initiative**.

**Note:** It is one of the thirteen protected areas covered by the **World Wide Fund For Nature** under their Terai Arc Landscape Program

Source: The Hindu

## Telangana develops India's first smartphone-based eVoting solution

### Why in News

- **Telangana government** has developed the **country's first smartphone-based eVoting solution**.

### Key Points

- The solution has been successfully developed and tested and its dry run in the form of a dummy election is being conducted in Khammam district and the dummy voting on October 20, 2021.
- The initiative has been driven by the Telangana State Election Commission (TSEC) with the implementation support of the Emerging Technologies Wing of the IT Department of the State and the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (CDAC).

Source: Indian Express

## Nationwide River Ranching Programme launched in Uttar Pradesh

### Why in News

- The **Union Minister for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying, Parshottam Rupala** launched the **River Ranching Programme at Brijghat, Garh Mukteshwar, Uttar Pradesh**.
- At the same time, other 4 states namely, **Uttarakhand, Orissa, Tripura and Chhattisgarh** also participated in the nationwide River Ranching Program.

### Key Points

- Total 5 states have participated in the National Level River Ranching program launching and a total of **8.85 lakh fingerlings** were ranched.
- **“River Ranching Programme”** is introduced as a special activity under the **Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY) scheme**.
- The Department of Fisheries, Ministry of Fisheries has designated **National Fisheries Development Board, Hyderabad** as the Nodal Agency under the Central Sector component of PMMSY for implementing River Ranching across the Country.

**Source: PIB**

## **New Tiger Reserve in Chhattisgarh**

### **Why in News**

- The **National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA)** approved the Chhattisgarh government’s proposal to declare the combined areas of the **Guru Ghasidas National Park and Tamor Pingla Wildlife Sanctuary** as a **Tiger Reserve**.
- The new Reserve is located in the northern part of the state, bordering Madhya Pradesh and Jharkhand.
- This will be the **fourth Tiger Reserve in Chhattisgarh**, after the Udanti-Sitanadi, Achanakmar, and Indravati Reserves.
- It will be the **53<sup>rd</sup> of the country’s Tiger Reserve**.

### **Key Points**

- The proposal was considered by the 11th Technical Committee of the NTCA on September 1, and approval was granted a month later under Section 38V (1) of The **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972**.
- The Tamor Pingla Wildlife Sanctuary was identified as part of the Sarguja Jashpur Elephant Reserve in 2011.
- The Guru Ghasidas National Park used to be part of the Sanjay National Park in undivided Madhya Pradesh.
- Guru Ghasidas National Park is in Koriya district; Tamor Pingla is in Surajpur district in the northwestern corner of Chhattisgarh.

**Source: Indian Express**

## **New Pamban Bridge, India’s first vertical lift Railway Sea Bridge**

### **Why in News**

- The **new Pamban Bridge in Rameswaram, Tamil Nadu**, is the country's first vertical lift Railway Sea Bridge, which is expected to be ready for use by March 2022.

### **Key Points**

- The New Pamban Bridge is being developed by Railway Vikas Nigam Limited.
- The new bridge, which would be 2.07 kilometres long, will be a boon for devotees and pilgrims who wish to embark on a spiritual tour to Rameswaram and Dhanushkodi, Tamil Nadu.
- The existing Pamban Bridge was India's first sea bridge and became operational in 1914.

**Source: ndtv**

## Varanasi to become first Indian city to start ropeway service in public transportation

### Why in News

- Varanasi will soon become the first Indian city to use ropeway services in public transportation.

### Key Points

- The **world's third** and **India's first public transport ropeway** is proposed to be constructed from Cantt Railway Station (Varanasi Junction) to Church Square (Godauliya) to ease the traffic congestion.
- The commencement of this ropeway will give easy access to Kashi Vishwanath Temple and Dashashwamedh Ghat.

Source: news18

## Alibaug white onion and Palghar's famed Wada Kolam rice get GI tag

- **The famed white onion of Alibag in Maharashtra's Raigad district** was given the **Geographical Indication (GI) tag**, for its unique sweet taste, no-tears factor, as well as its medicinal properties.
- **Wada Kolam**, also known as Zini or Jhini rice, is a traditional variety grown in **Wada in Palghar district of Maharashtra**, with the grain being off white in colour.

### Note:

- Recently, Kerala's Kuttiaattoor mango and Edayur chilli got GI tag.
- Chinnor rice produced in Balaghat district, Madhya Pradesh got GI tag.

Source: TOI

## World's largest Khadi National Flag unveiled in Leh

### Why in News

- The **world's largest Khadi National Flag** was installed in **Leh, Ladakh** on the occasion of Mahatma Gandhi's 152nd birth anniversary.

### Key Points

- It was inaugurated by **Ladakh Lieutenant Governor RK Mathur**.
- The tricolor, which is 225-feet long and 150-feet wide, weighs around 1,000 kg.
- The flag is made by Khadi Dyers and Printers based in Mumbai which is affiliated to the **Khadi Village and Industries Commission (KVIC)**.

Source: India Today

## Kangana Ranaut named brand ambassador of Uttar Pradesh's 'One District One Product' Scheme

### Why in News

- The Uttar Pradesh government named Indian actress **Kangana Ranaut** as the brand ambassador of its ambitious **'One District-One Product' programme**.

### Key Points

- The Uttar Pradesh government has launched the 'One District-One Product (ODOP)' programme with the aim to create product-specific traditional industrial hubs across 75 districts of the state.

**Source: Indian Express**

### Important News: India

#### 152 SAKSHAM Centres launched

##### Why in News

- As part of Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav, a total of **152 Centre for Financial Literacy & Service Delivery (SAKSHAM Centres)** across 77 districts of 13 states launched under **Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM)** of the Ministry of Rural Development.

##### Key Points

##### About SAKSHAM Centres:

- **Centre for Financial Literacy & Service Delivery (CFL&SD)** would act as a one stop solution/single window system for basic financial needs of **Self-Help Group (SHG)** households in rural areas.
- The main objective of the center is to provide financial literacy & facilitate delivery of financial services (savings, credit, insurance, pensions etc.) to SHG members and rural poor.
- These Centers will be managed by SHG network, largely at the level of the Cluster Level Federations (CLFs), with the help of trained Community Resource Persons (CRPs).

##### SAKSHAM App:

- The app will help the community resource person to know the penetration of various financial services for each SHG & village.

##### About Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihood Mission:

- It is a centrally sponsored programme, launched by the Ministry of Rural Development in June 2011.

##### Sub-Schemes:

- Start-Up Village Entrepreneurship Programme
- Aajeevika Grameen Express Yojana
- Mahila Kisan Shashaktikaran Pariyojana
- Rural Self Employment Institutes
- Deendayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana

**Source: PIB**

#### PM Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission

##### Why in News

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** launched PM Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission from **Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh**.
- He also inaugurated 9 Medical Colleges in Uttar Pradesh. These are in the districts of Siddharthnagar, Etah, Hardoi, Pratapgarh, Fatehpur, Deoria, Ghazipur, Mirzapur and Jaunpur.

### Key Points

#### About PM Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission:

- It is one of the **largest pan-India schemes for strengthening healthcare infrastructure** across the country.
- It is in addition to the National Health Mission.
- The objective of the Mission is to fill critical gaps in public health infrastructure, especially in critical care facilities and primary care in both the urban and rural areas.
- It will provide support for 17,788 rural Health and Wellness Centres in 10 High Focus States. Further, 11,024 urban Health and Wellness Centres will be established in all the States.
- Under the Mission, a National Institution for One Health, 4 New National Institutes for Virology, a Regional Research Platform for WHO South East Asia Region, 9 Biosafety Level III laboratories, 5 New Regional National Centre for Disease Control will be set up.
- The mission targets to build an IT enabled disease surveillance system by developing a network of surveillance laboratories at block, district, regional and national levels, in Metropolitan areas.

#### Other Related Initiatives:

- Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana
- Jan Aushadhi Yojana
- PM Atmanirbhar Swasth Bharat Scheme

Source: PIB

#### Air Quality Early Warning System (AQEWS)

##### Why in News

- **Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Science & Technology Dr Jitendra Singh** has launched **Air Quality Early Warning System (AQEWS)**.
- **Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM)**, an autonomous Institute of Ministry of Earth Sciences has developed a new **Decision Support System (DSS)** and extended the ability of the existing **Air Quality Early Warning System (AQEWS)** to have decision-making capability for air quality management in **Delhi - NCR region**.

##### Key Points

- The need was stated by **Commission for Air Quality Management** in the National Capital Region and Adjoining Areas (**CAQM**, which was recently formed by the Union Minister for MoEFCC with the approval of both the houses of parliament) during the meeting held in January 2021.
- IITM, Pune has also developed a **new website for DSS**.
- The website is designed to deliver quantitative information about the contribution of emissions from Delhi and the surrounding 19 districts to the air quality in Delhi.

Source: PIB

#### Indian Railways to dissolve IRSDC

##### Why in News

- The **Indian Railways** has ordered to dissolve **Indian Railway Stations Development Corporation (IRSDC)**.

#### **Key Points**

- This is in line with recommendation from the cabinet secretariat to integrate, and undertake structural reforms in various bodies under the Railways Ministry.
- These recommendations were part of a report on the Rationalisation of Government Bodies under the Ministry of Railways prepared by Sanjeev Sanyal, Principal Economic Advisor, Ministry of Finance.
- The stations managed by IRSDC shall be handed over to respective Zonal Railways.

#### **About Indian Railway Stations Development Corporation (IRSDC):**

- IRSDC, the nine-year-old special purpose vehicle (SPV), is a joint venture between the Indian Railway Land Development Authority and IRCON.

**Note:** With this step, IRSDC is the second organisation under the Ministry of Railways to be shut down after the closure of the Indian Railways Organisation for Alternative Fuel (IROAF) on September 7, 2021.

**Source: HT**

### **Union Ayush Minister inaugurates 'Ayush Van' in Gandhidham**

#### **Why in News**

- **Union Minister of AYUSH Sarbananda Sonowal** inaugurated **'Ayush Van'**, a dedicated forest for Ayurvedic plants in a program held at the **Deendayal Port Trust (DPT) – Rotary Forest** in Gandhidham area of Gujarat's Kutch.

#### **Key Points**

- The Ayush Van was set up in 30 acres of land allotted by DPT in green-belt area where tree plantation is being done to improve greenery in urban areas and increase density of tree cover in the Kutch region.

**Source: PIB**

### **Vishwakarma Vatika**

- The Central Government has decided to set up a **"Vishwakarma Vatika" at every "Hunar Haats"**.
- It will protect, preserve and promote India's glorious legacy of centuries-old skills of artisans and craftsmen.
- The first "Vishwakarma Vatika" has been set up in **"Hunar Haat" at Rampur, Uttar Pradesh**.

**Source: PIB**

### **UIDAI to host "Aadhaar Hackathon 2021"**

#### **Why in News**

- **Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI)** will host a Hackathon titled **"Aadhaar Hackathon 2021"**.
- The Hackathon is starting on 28 Oct 2021 and will continue till 31 Oct 2021.

#### **Key Points**

##### **Themes:**

- **Aadhaar Hackathon 2021** is themed around **two topics**.

**First theme:** The first theme is around “**Enrolment and Update**”.

**Second theme:** The second theme is around “**Identity and Authentication**”.

**About Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI):**

- It is a statutory authority established under the provisions of Aadhaar Act 2016 by the Government of India under the Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology.
- **Headquarters:** New Delhi
- **Founded:** 28 January 2009
- UIDAI is mandated to issue an easily verifiable 12 digit number as Unique Identity - Aadhaar to all Residents of India.

**Other Hackathons:**

- Drug Discovery Hackathon 2020
- Virtual Agri-Hackathon 2020
- CCTNS Hackathon & Cyber Challenge
- India - Australia Circular Economy Hackathon
- Hackathon Manthan 2021
- 5G Hackathon

**Source: PIB**

## **Geospatial Energy Map of India**

### **Why in News**

- **NITI Aayog** launched a comprehensive **GIS Geospatial Energy Map of India**.

### **Key Points**

- **NITI Aayog** in collaboration with **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** has developed a **comprehensive Geographic Information System (GIS) Energy Map of India** with the support of Energy Ministries of Government of India.
- The GIS map provides a holistic picture of all energy resources of the country which enables visualisation of energy installations such as conventional power plants, oil and gas wells, petroleum refineries, coal fields and coal blocks, district-wise data on renewable energy power plants and renewable energy resource potential, etc through 27 thematic layers.
- It leverages the latest advancements in web-GIS technology and open-source software to make it interactive and user friendly.
- The Geospatial Energy Map of India will be useful in planning and making investment decisions.
- It will also aid in disaster management using available energy assets.

**Source: PIB**

## **Central Government notifies new abortion rules**

### **Why in News**

- The Central Government has notified new rules in which the **gestational limit for termination of pregnancy** has been increased from **20 to 24 weeks** for certain categories of women.
- The new rules have been framed under the **Medical Termination of Pregnancy (Amendment) Act, 2021** passed by Parliament in March 2021.

### Key Points

- Categories of women include survivors of sexual assault or rape, minors and women whose marital status changes during an ongoing pregnancy.
- The new rules also include mentally ill women, cases of foetal malformation in which there is a substantial risk of physical or mental abnormalities and women in disasters or emergency situations as declared by the government.
- The 2021 Act was passed to amend the Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Act, 1971.
- Earlier, an abortion required the opinion of one doctor if carried out within twelve weeks of conception and two doctors if done between twelve and twenty weeks.

**Source: India Today**

### MyParkings app

#### Why in News

- **Union Minister for Information and Broadcasting Anurag Singh Thakur** launched **MyParkings app**.

#### Key Points

- **MyParkings app** is a first-of-its-kind initiative where people can book parking slots online in areas under the jurisdiction of the **South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC)**.
- It is an Internet of things (IOT) technology-enabled end-to-end digital solution.
- It has been developed by **Broadcast Engineering Consultants India Limited (BECIL)** with **South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC)** with the purpose to digitize all authorized parking under SDMC municipal limits.
- It will also be integrated with Vahan App., FASTag, E-Challan and other government initiatives.

**Source: India Today**

### BPCL launches automated fuelling technology “UFill”

#### Why in News

- **Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL)** - a PSU under the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas has announced the launch of “UFill” for customers.
- It is a digital customer experience which delivers on BPCL’s promise of ensuring that their customers have complete control over Time, Technology and Transparency as part of their fuelling experience.

#### Key Points

- The UFill technology has been launched in 65 cities across India and will soon be launched across the country.
- The UFill functionality does not need any App download, is payment App agnostic ( i.e. customer can use any payment app already downloaded on his / her phone like GPay, PayTM, PhonePe etc), offers real time QR and voucher code through SMS and is accepted at all BPCL Fuel Stations where the functionality is enabled.

**Source: Business Today**

## **Climate Resilience Information System and Planning (CRISP-M) tool**

### **Why in News**

- **Union Minister of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj Giriraj Singh** jointly launched **Climate Resilience Information System and Planning (CRISP-M)** tool for integration of climate information in **Geographic Information System (GIS)** based watershed planning under **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS)** along with Lord Tariq Ahmad, Minister of State for South Asia and the Commonwealth in the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office.

### **Key Points**

#### **About CRISP-M tool:**

- The CRISP-M tool will help embed climate information in the GIS based planning and implementation of MGNREGS.
- It was developed with the help of the British Government and all the stakeholders who supported the Rural Development Ministry.
- It will be used in 7 states (Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan and Odisha).

**Note:** The Ministry of Rural Development has already prepared GIS based plans for 1.82 lacs Gram Panchayats out of a total of 2.69 lacs Gram Panchayats of India, which is around 68%, with the help of Remote Sensing Technology, based on Ridge to Valley approach.

#### **About Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS):**

- MGNREGS is one of the largest work guarantee programmes in the world.
- It was launched on February 2, 2006.
- The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) was passed on 23rd August 2005.

**Source: PIB**

## **India re-elected to UNHRC for sixth term**

### **Why in News**

- **India** was re-elected to the **United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC)** for the **sixth term (2022-24)** with an overwhelming majority.
- India got 184 votes in the 193-member assembly, while the required majority was 97.

### **Key Points**

- The **76th UN General Assembly (UNGA)** held elections for **18 new members of the UN Human Rights Council** who will serve for a period of 3 years, starting in January 2022.
- India's current term was set to end on December 31 2021.

#### **About United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC):**

- UNHRC is a United Nations body whose mission is to promote and protect human rights around the world.
- **President:** Nazhat Shameem

- **Headquarters:** Geneva, Switzerland
- **Founded:** 15 March 2006

**Source:** India Today

### 8 High Court Judges elevated as CJs, 5 CJs shifted

- The law Ministry recently notified appointments of **13 chief justices** — **eight judges elevated as CJs (Chief Justices)** and **five transferred** to high courts.
- The list of 13 CJs appointed and transferred is part of the recommendations made by the Supreme Court collegium on September 17, 2021.

Sl. No.	Name of Judge and present High Court	High Court where appointed as Chief Justice
1	Rajesh Bindal, Acting CJ [Calcutta]	Allahabad
2	Ranjit V. More [Meghalaya]	Meghalaya
3	Satish Chandra Sharma, Acting CJ [Karnataka]	Telangana
4	Prakash Shrivastava [Madhya Pradesh]	Calcutta
5	R.V. Malimath, Acting CJ [Himachal Pradesh]	Madhya Pradesh
6	Ritu Rai Awasthi [Allahabad]	Karnataka
7	Aravind Kumar [Karnataka]	Gujarat
8	Prashant Kumar Mishra [Chhattisgarh]	Andhra Pradesh

Sl. No.	Name of Chief Justice	Transfer from High Court	Transfer to High Court
1	A.A. Kureshi	Tripura	Rajasthan
2	Indrajit Mahanty	Rajasthan	Tripura
3	Mohammad Rafiq	Madhya Pradesh	Himachal Pradesh
4	Biswanath Somadder	Meghalaya	Sikkim
5	A.K. Goswami	Andhra Pradesh	Chhattisgarh

**Source:** TOI

### National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) Foundation day

#### Why in News

- Recently, **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** attended **28th National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) Foundation day** programme.

#### Key Points

#### About National Human Rights Commission (NHRC):

- It is a Statutory public body constituted on 12 October 1993.

- It was given a statutory basis by the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993.
- **Jurisdiction:** Government of India
- **Headquarters:** New Delhi
- **Chairperson:** Arun Kumar Mishra

**Source: PIB**

## India's first 'One Health' consortium

### Why in News

- The **Department of Biotechnology (DBT), Ministry of Science and Technology** launched India's first '**One Health' consortium**.

### Key Points

- The consortium envisages carrying out surveillance of important bacterial, viral and parasitic infections of zoonotic as well as transboundary pathogens in India, including the North-eastern part of the country.
- This Consortium consists of 27 organisations led by Department of Biotechnology-National Institute of Animal Biotechnology, Hyderabad.
- The One Health consortium consists of AIIMS, Delhi, AIIMS, Jodhpur, IVRI, Bareilly, GADVASU, Ludhiana, TANUVAS, Chennai, MAFSU, Nagpur, Assam agricultural and veterinary university and many more ICAR, ICMR centres and wildlife agencies.

**Source: TOI**

## PM Gati Shakti

### Why in News

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** launched **PM Gati Shakti - National Master Plan** for multi-modal connectivity.
- It is a **Rs. 100 lakh-crore project** for developing 'holistic infrastructure'.

### Key Points

- The Gati Shakti digital platform, which will bring together 16 Ministries including Rail and Roadways, will help in removing long-standing issues such as disjointed planning, lack of standardisation, problems with clearances, and timely creation and utilisation of infrastructure capacities.

### Government's aim by 2024-25:

- 11 industrial corridors and two new defence corridors in Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh.
- Extending 4G connectivity to all villages
- Adding 17,000 kms to gas pipeline network
- Expanding the length of the national highway network to 2 lakh kms
- Creation of more than 200 new airports, heliports and water aerodromes
- It will incorporate the infrastructure schemes of various Ministries and State Governments like Bharatmala, Sagarmala, inland waterways, dry/land ports, UDAN etc.
- Economic Zones like textile clusters, pharmaceutical clusters, defence corridors, electronic parks, industrial corridors, fishing clusters, agri zones will be covered to improve connectivity & make Indian businesses more competitive.

**Source: PIB**

## MoRTH's Rewarding Scheme for Good Samaritan

### Why in News

- The **Ministry of Road Transport & Highways (MoRTH)** launched a Rewarding Scheme for **Good Samaritan**.
- It is a Rewarding Scheme for Grant of Award to the Good Samaritan who has saved the life of a victim of a fatal accident involving a motor vehicle.

### Key Points

#### About the Scheme:

- Any individual who has saved the life of a victim of a fatal accident involving a motor vehicle by administering immediate assistance and rushing to Hospital within the Golden Hour of the accident to provide medical treatment would be eligible for the award.
- The amount of award for the Good Samaritan(s) would be Rs.5,000/- per incident.
- An individual Good Samaritan can be awarded a maximum 5 times in a year.
- The Scheme would be effective w.e.f 15th of October, 2021.

**Source: PIB**

## Rakesh Jhunjhunwala-backed Akasa Air gets government NOC

- The **Ministry of Civil Aviation** has given a **No Objection Certificate (NOC)** for the operation of **Rakesh Jhunjhunwala-backed new airline 'Akasa Air'** in India.
- SNV Aviation, which will fly under the brand Akasa Air, plans to offer flights from the summer of 2022.
- Akasa Air is expected to be an ultra low-cost airline, funded by stock marketeer Rakesh Jhunjhunwala and former Jet Airways CEO Vinay Dube.

**Source: India Today**

## PM Modi launches Indian Space Association

### Why in News

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched **Indian Space Association (ISpA)**.

### Key Points

#### About Indian Space Association (ISpA):

- **ISpA** is the **Premier Industry Association of Space and Satellite companies**, which aspires to be the collective voice of the Indian Space industry.
- It will undertake policy advocacy and engage with all stakeholders in the Indian Space domain, including the Government and its agencies.
- It is represented by leading home grown and global corporations with advanced capabilities in space and satellite technologies.
- Its **founding members include** Larson & Toubro, Nelco (Tata Group), OneWeb, Bharti Airtel, Mapmyindia, Walchandnagar Industries and Ananth Technology Limited. Other core members include Godrej, Hughes India, Azista-BST Aerospace Private Limited, BEL, Centum Electronics, Maxar India.

- **Lt Gen Anil Bhatt (Retd)** has been appointed the director-general of the **ISpA**.

**Note:** Recently, **Bharti Group-backed OneWeb** has entered an arrangement with the commercial arm of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), **NewSpace India Limited (NSIL)**, to launch its satellite in India from 2022.

**Source: India Today**

### **PM MITRA Parks**

#### **Why in News**

- The Central Government has approved the setting up of **7 Mega Integrated Textile Region and Apparel (PM MITRA) Parks** with a total outlay of Rs. 4,445 crore in a period of 5 years.

#### **Key Points**

##### **About PM MITRA Park:**

- PM MITRA Park will be developed by a **Special Purpose Vehicle** which will be owned by the State Government and Government of India in a **Public Private Partnership (PPP) Mode**.
- PM MITRA Park will be set up at Greenfield / Brownfield sites located in different willing States.
- PM MITRA is inspired by the 5F vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi - Farm to Fibre to Factory to Fashion to Foreign.

##### **Funding:**

- Maximum Development Capital Support (DCS) of ₹ 500 crore to all Greenfield PM MITRA and a maximum of ₹ 200 Crore to Brownfield PM MITRA will be provided for development of Common Infrastructure and ₹ 300 Crore of Competitiveness Incentive Support (CIS) will also be provided to each PM MITRA park for early establishment of textiles manufacturing units in PM MITRA.

**Source: PIB**

### **AirAsia India claims to be first Airbus operator to start Taxibot services with passengers onboard**

#### **Why in News**

- AirAsia India claimed that it has become the first Airbus operator in the world to start Taxibot services with passengers on board.

#### **Key Points**

- Taxibot significantly reduces aircraft fuel usage, emissions and noise levels at airports, and the risk of foreign object and jet blast damage, and operates with a hybrid-electric engine.
- GMR-run Delhi Airport was the first aviation facility in the world to introduce Taxibot operations way back in 2019.
- AirAsia India has partnered with KSU Aviation, the exclusive operator of the Taxibot in India.

**Source: ET**

### **Tata Sons group wins bid for acquiring Air India**

#### **Why in News**

- **Tata Sons group ( Talace Pvt Ltd)** has won the bid for acquiring **Air India** by winning a bid of **18000 crore rupees**.

#### Key Points

- **J.R.D. TATA** founded India's first commercial airline, **Tata Airlines in 1932**, which became Air India in 1946. In 1953, Air India was nationalised.
- J.R.D. TATA was the first licensed pilot in India.

Source: newsonair

### 'Azadi@75 – New Urban India: Transforming Urban Landscape' Conference-cum-Expo in Lucknow

#### Why in News

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** inaugurated 'Azadi@75 – New Urban India: Transforming Urban Landscape' Conference-cum-Expo in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh.

#### Key Points

- The Prime Minister digitally handed over keys of **Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana - Urban (PMAY-U)** houses to 75,000 beneficiaries in 75 districts of Uttar Pradesh.
- He inaugurated/laid the foundation stone of 75 Urban Development Projects of Uttar Pradesh under **Smart Cities Mission and AMRUT**.
- He flagged off 75 buses under **FAME-II** for seven cities including Lucknow, Kanpur, Varanasi, Prayagraj, Gorakhpur, Jhansi and Ghaziabad
- He released a Coffee Table Book encompassing 75 projects implemented under various Flagship Missions of Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.

#### About the Conference-cum-Expo

- The Conference-cum-Expo has been organised by the Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs (MoHUA) from 5th to 7th October 2021 as part of 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav'.
- It is themed on transforming urban landscape with specific focus on the transformative changes brought about in Uttar Pradesh.

Source: PIB

### ICMR's drone-based vaccine delivery model: i-Drone

#### Why in News

- **Mansukh Mandaviya, Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare** launched **ICMR's Drone Response and Outreach in North East (i-Drone)**.
- This is for the first time that a "Make in India" drone has been used in South Asia to transport COVID-19 vaccine.

#### Key Points

##### About i-Drone:

- This i-Drone has been designed to overcome challenges by deploying Unmanned Aerial vehicles (UAV) / drones to remote areas and hard to reach terrains.
- Currently, the drone based delivery project has been granted permission for implementation in Manipur and Nagaland, as well as union territory of Andaman and Nicobar Island.

- **ICMR (Indian Council of Medical Research)** conducted an initial study in collaboration with **Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur** to test the capacity of drones to carry and transfer vaccines safely.

#### **Other Projects Using Drones:**

- The **International Crops Research Institute** was permitted to deploy drones for agricultural research activities.
- Telangana government has launched **'Medicine from the Sky'** initiative.

**Source: PIB**

## **Jal Jeevan Mission App and Rashtriya Jal Jeevan Kosh**

### **Why in News**

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** launched the **Jal Jeevan Mission App** and **Rashtriya Jal Jeevan Kosh** under the Jal Jeevan Mission.

#### **Key Points**

##### **About Jal Jeevan Mission App:**

- The Jal Jeevan Mission App has been launched to improve awareness among stakeholders and for greater transparency and accountability of schemes under the Jal Jeevan Mission.

##### **About Rashtriya Jal Jeevan Kosh:**

- In Rashtriya Jal Jeevan Kosh, any individual, institution, corporation, or philanthropist, be it in India or abroad, can contribute to help provide tap water connection in every rural household, school, Anganwadi centre, ashram shala, and other public institutions.

##### **About Jal Jeevan Mission:**

- Its aim is to provide piped water to all the rural households by 2024.
- It was launched on 15 August 2019 under the Ministry of Jal Shakti, Government of India.

#### **Note:**

- Since the launch of Jal Jeevan Mission in 2019, 5 crore households have been connected with water connections.
- Today, water is reaching every household in about 1.25 lakh villages in about 80 districts of the country.
- In the Aspirational districts the number of tap connections have increased from 31 lakh to 1.16 crore.

**Source: newsonair**

## **Wetlands of India Portal**

### **Why in News**

- The **Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Bhupender Yadav** has launched a web portal – **'Wetlands of India Portal'**.

#### **Key Points**

- The portal is a single point access to all information relating to wetlands in India.
- The portal has been developed under a Technical Cooperation project "Wetlands Management for Biodiversity and Climate Protection" (Wetlands Project) of Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change

- in partnership with Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH.
- The project is commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU) under the International Climate Initiative (IKI).

**Source: PIB**

## **Trans- Himalayan region becoming one of the promising astronomical sites globally**

### **Why in News**

- The **Indian Astronomical Observatory (IAO)** located at **Hanle** near Leh in Ladakh is becoming one of the promising observatory sites globally according to a recent study.

### **Key Points**

- The Hanle site is as dry as Atacama Desert in Chile and much drier than Devasthal and has around 270 clear nights in a year and is also one of the emerging sites for infrared and sub-mm optical astronomy.
- This is because water vapour absorbs electromagnetic signals and reduces their strength.

### **Need:**

- Astronomers are constantly searching for ideal locations around the world to build their next big telescope based on local meteorological data collected over many years.

### **Other Promising Sites:**

- Devasthal in Nainital
- Merak observatories in Ladakh
- Ali Observatory in the Tibet Autonomous Region in China
- South African Large Telescope in South Africa
- National Astronomical Observatory in Mexico
- University of Tokyo Atacama Observatory
- Paranal in Chile

**Source: PIB**

## **PM Modi launches Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban 2.0 and AMRUT 2.0**

### **Why in News**

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** launched **Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban 2.0 (SBM-U 2.0)** and **Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation 2.0 (AMRUT 2.0)**.

### **Key Points**

- SBM-U 2.0 and AMRUT 2.0 have been designed to realize the aspiration to make all cities 'Garbage Free' and 'Water Secure'.
- These flagship Missions will help contribute towards achievement of the **Sustainable Development Goals 2030**.

### **About Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban 2.0 (SBM-U 2.0):**

- It envisions to make all cities 'Garbage Free' and ensure grey and black water management in all cities other than those covered under AMRUT, make all urban local bodies as ODF+ and those with a population of less

than 1 lakh as ODF++, thereby achieving the vision of safe sanitation in urban areas.

- The **outlay of SBM-U 2.0** is around **₹1.41 lakh crore**.

#### **About Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation 2.0 (AMRUT 2.0):**

- It aims to provide 100% coverage of water supply to all households in around 4,700 urban local bodies by providing about 2.68 crore tap connections and 100% coverage of sewerage and septage in 500 AMRUT cities by providing around 2.64 crore sewers/ septage connections, which will benefit more than 10.5 crore people in urban areas.
- AMRUT 2.0 will adopt the principles of circular economy and promote conservation and rejuvenation of surface and groundwater bodies.
- **'Pey Jal Survekshan'** will be conducted to promote progressive competition among cities.
- The **outlay of AMRUT 2.0** is around **₹2.87 lakh crore**.

**Note:** Recently, **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** laid the foundation stones of **Central Institute of Petrochemicals Engineering & Technology (CIPET) Jaipur** in Rajasthan.

**Source: PIB**

#### **People's Plan Campaign 2021 and Vibrant Gram Sabha Dashboard**

##### **Why in News**

- **Union Minister for Panchayati Raj and Rural Development Giriraj Singh** launched **People's Plan Campaign 2021- Sabki Yojana Sabka Vikas** and **Vibrant Gram Sabha Dashboard**.
- He also released a booklet on People Plan Campaign-2021 for preparation of plans for FY 2022-23 and the 10th issue of Gramoday Sankalp Magazine.

##### **Key Points**

- People's Plan Campaign is being rolled-out in all the States from 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2021.
- There are 31.65 lakh elected Panchayat representatives across the country in which 14.53 lakh are women.
- 2.56 lakh Panchayats uploaded their **Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDPs)** on GPDP portal in 2020.
- A **Vibrant Gram Sabha Dashboard** will help in increasing maximum participation through the meeting of Gram Sabha/Gram Panchayat.
- The Panchayat Development Plan aims to strengthen the role of elected representatives of Panchayats and SHG Women under DAY-NRLM in effective Gram Sabha.

**Source: PIB**

#### **COVID-19 Relief**

##### **Why in News**

The **National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA)** has recommended the payment of **₹50,000 each as ex gratia assistance** to the next kin of those who died of COVID-19.

##### **Key Points**



- It includes those who succumbed to the virus while involved in relief operations and preparedness activities.
- The Centre has approved release of the 2nd installment of its share of the **State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF)** amounting to Rs 7,274.40 crore, in advance, to 23 states.
- 5 states have already been released in advance of the 2nd installment amounting to Rs 1,599.20 crore.
- The money would be provided by the States from the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF).

**Source: The Hindu**

### **India Export Initiative and IndiaXports 2021 Portal**

#### **Why in News**

- **Union Minister for MSMEs (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises) Narayan Rane** inaugurated the **India Export Initiative and IndiaXports 2021 Portal of India SME (Small and Medium Enterprises) Forum**.

#### **Key Points**

- This initiative features an Info Portal which serves as a knowledge base for exports by Indian MSMEs with the required information related to export potential for all the 456 tariff lines along with the potential markets as well as trends in exports, export procedures and lots more.

**Note:** With more than 63 million MSMEs spread across the geographical expanse of India, MSMEs have been contributing nearly 40% of overall India's exports, contributing to approx. 6.11% of the country's manufacturing GDP & 24.63% of the GDP from services sector.

**Source: PIB**

### **India's first aerial seeding campaign 'Hara Bhara'**

#### **Why in News**

- **Hara Bhara, India's first aerial seeding campaign** in **Telangana** using the **Seedcopter drone** was launched.

#### **Key points**

- The 'Seedcopter' developed by **Marut Drones** is an aerial seeding solution for rapid and scalable reforestation.
- The project uses drones to disperse seed balls over thin, barren, and empty forest lands to turn them into lush green abodes of trees.

#### **Related Indian Initiatives:**

- National Afforestation Programme
- National Mission for Green India
- National Action Programme to Combat Desertification
- CAMPA Funds

**Source: The Hindu**

### **Chacha Chaudhary declared Mascot for Namami Gange Programme**

#### **Why in News**

- At the 37<sup>th</sup> Executive Committee meeting of the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG), Chacha Chaudhary was declared as the mascot of the Namami Gange Programme.

#### **Key Points**

- NMCG has tied-up with Diamond Toons to develop and distribute comics, e-comics and animated videos.
- The total estimated budget for the project is Rs. 2.26 Cr.

#### **About Chacha Chaudhary:**

- Chacha Chaudhary is an Indian comic book character, created by cartoonist Pran Kumar Sharma in 1971.

#### **About Namami Gange Programme:**

- It is an Integrated Conservation Mission, approved as 'Flagship Programme' by the Union Government in June 2014 to accomplish the twin objectives of effective abatement of pollution, conservation and rejuvenation of National River Ganga.

**Source: India Today**

### **DigiSaksham - a digital skills programme**

#### **Why in News**

- **Minister for Labour and Employment, Bhupender Yadav** launched **DigiSaksham - a digital skills programme** to enhance the employability of youth by imparting digital skills.
- DigiSaksham programme is the joint initiative of the **Ministry of Labour and Employment** and **Microsoft India**.
- This joint initiative is an extension of the Government's ongoing programs **to support the youth from rural and semi-urban areas.**

#### **Key Points**

#### **About DigiSaksham programme:**

- Free of cost training in digital skills including basic skills as well as advanced computing, will be provided to more than **3 lakh youths in the first year.**
- The Jobseekers can access the training through **National Career Service (NCS) Portal.**
- The initiative gives priority to the job-seekers of semi urban areas belonging to disadvantaged communities, including those who have lost their jobs due to COVID-19 pandemic.
- There will be basically **three types of training** viz. Digital Skills – Self paced learning, VILT mode training (Virtual Instructor led) and ILT mode training (Instructor led).
- It will be implemented in the field by **Aga Khan Rural Support Programme India (AKRSP-I).**

#### **Other Initiatives for Youth Employment:**

- Pradhan Mantri Rojgar Protsahan Yojana
- MGNREGA
- Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana 3.0
- National Career Service
- Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme

- Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana

**Source: PIB**

### Senior Able Citizens for Re Employment in Dignity (SACRED) Portal

#### Why in News

- The portal '**Senior Able Citizens for Re Employment in Dignity (SACRED)**' has been developed by the **Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment**.

#### Key Points

- The aim is to devise ways to ensure Senior Citizens live healthy, happy, empowered, dignified and self-reliant life.
- An IT portal to be developed to bring the employment seeker senior citizens and employment providers on one platform.
- Rs. 10 Cr would be provided for funding for the platform development along with maintenance grant of Rs. 2 Cr per year for 5 years.

#### Need:

- There has been a steady rise in the population of senior citizens in India.
- The number of elderly persons increased from 1.98 crore in 1951 to 7.6 crore in 2001 and 10.38 crore in 2011.
- As per the **Report of the Technical Group on Population Projections for India and States (2011-2036)** submitted to National Commission on Population, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare the population of senior citizens in India is projected as details given below: -

2011		2021		2026		2031		2036	
Population	%								
10.38	8.66	13.76	10.1	16.28	11.4	19.34	13.1	22.74	14.9

**Note:** More than 50% senior citizens are found active as per the **Longitudinal Ageing Study of India (LASI), report 2020**.

#### Other Recent Initiatives:

- Elder Line (the first Pan-India toll-free helpline number (14567) for Senior Citizens)
- Seniorcare Ageing Growth Engine (SAGE) Portal (one-stop access of elderly care products and services by credible start-ups)

**Source: PIB**

### Important News: World

#### 4<sup>th</sup> International Solar Alliance General Assembly

#### Why in News

- The **4<sup>th</sup> general assembly of the International Solar Alliance (ISA)** was held between October 18th and October 21st, 2021.
- It was presided over by **Union Minister R.K. Singh, Minister for Power, New and Renewable Energy**, Government of India and the President of the ISA Assembly.

### **Key Points**

#### **Key initiatives of the 4th Assembly of the ISA:**

- Operationalisation of the OSOWOG (One Sun One World One Grid) initiative
- \$1 trillion Solar Investment Roadmap for 2030
- Approval of a Blended Financial Risk Mitigation Facility
- Management of Solar PV panels & battery usage waste & Solar Hydrogen programme

#### **About International Solar Alliance General Assembly:**

- The Assembly is the apex decision-making body of ISA, in which each member country is represented.
- This body makes decisions concerning the implementation of the ISA's Framework Agreement and coordinated actions to be taken to achieve its objective.

#### **About International Solar Alliance (ISA):**

- It is an association of 124 countries initiated by India.
- **Headquarters:** Gurugram, Haryana, India
- **Founded:** 30 November 2015
- **Director General:** Ajay Mathur

**Source:** PIB

## **2021 Global Threat Assessment Report**

### **Why in News**

- The **Global Threat Assessment Report 2021** has revealed that COVID-19 had contributed to a significant spike in child sexual exploitation and abuse online.
- The report was launched by the **WeProtect Global Alliance**.

### **Key Points**

- **WeProtect Global Alliance** is a global movement of more than 200 members, comprising 98 governments, over 50 private companies that are mostly tech firms, and more than 60 civil society organisations and charities.

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

- The report details the scale and scope of the threat of child sexual exploitation online and aims to encourage action on the issue to reduce the risk to children and prevent abuse before it happens.
- The COVID-19 pandemic is undeniably one contributory factor behind the spike in reported incidents.

- The rise in child 'self-generated' sexual material is another trend that challenges the existing response with the Internet Watch Foundation observing a 77% increase in child 'self-generated' sexual material from 2019 to 2020.

**Note:** Another report published in 2020 stated that India has seen a 95% increase in internet searches for child sexual abuse materials during the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### **Indian Initiatives for Preventing Child Sexual Abuse:**

- Juvenile Justice Act/Care and Protection Act, 2000
- Child Abuse Prevention and Investigation Unit
- Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao
- Child Marriage Prohibition Act (2006)
- Operation Smile
- Child Labour Prohibition and Regulation Act, 2016

**Source: The Hindu**

#### **South Korea launches first homegrown space rocket 'Nuri'**

##### **Why in News**

- **South Korea** has launched its first homegrown space rocket '**Nuri**' from **Naro Space Center in Goheung.**

##### **Key Points**

- South Korea's first domestically produced space rocket reached its desired altitude but failed to deliver a dummy payload into orbit in its first test launch.

##### **About space rocket 'Nuri'**

- Nuri is the country's first space launch vehicle built entirely with domestic technology.
- It is designed to deliver a 1.5-ton payload into orbit 600 to 800 kilometers above Earth.

**Note:** South Korea had previously launched a space launch vehicle from the Naro spaceport in 2013, which was a two-stage rocket built mainly with Russian technology.

**Source: Indian Express**

#### **G7 Digital Trade Principles**

##### **Why in News**

- The **Group of Seven (G7)** nations agreed on **Digital Trade Principles** to govern cross-border data use and digital trade.
- **G7 Digital Trade Principles** were adopted by the Trade Ministers of G7 members at a meeting in London, Britain.

##### **Key Points**

- The deal agreed is a first step in reducing those barriers, and could lead to a common rulebook of digital trade.

- Digital trade is broadly defined as trade in goods and services that is either enabled or delivered digitally, encompassing activities from the distribution of films and TV to professional services.
- The deal sets out a middle ground between highly regulated data protection regimes used in European countries and the more open approach of the United States.

**Facts about G7:**

- **Founded:** 1975
- **Members:** 7 (United Kingdom, United States, Japan, France, Germany, Canada, Italy)

**Source:** newsonair

## China passes new land border law

### Why in News

- **China's legislature** has adopted a **new land border law** that calls on the state and military to safeguard territory and “combat any acts” that undermine China's territorial claims.
- The new land border law was adopted amid the continued standoff between Indian and Chinese militaries in eastern Ladakh.

### Key Points

#### About the Law:

- The law, which becomes operational from January 1, 2022, stipulates that the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the People's Republic of China are sacred and inviolable.
- The law also stipulates that the state shall take measures to strengthen border defence, support economic and social development.

#### China's Border Disputes:

- China has a 22,000-km land border with 14 countries.
- India and Bhutan are the two countries with which China is yet to finalise the border agreements, while Beijing resolved the boundary disputes with 12 other neighbours.
- India-China border disputes cover 3,488-km along the Line of Actual Control, the China-Bhutan dispute covers about 400 km.
- On October 14, China and Bhutan signed an MOU firming up a three-step roadmap for expediting the boundary negotiations.

**Source:** Indian Express

## India, Israel, US & UAE to establish international forum for economic cooperation

### Why in News

- **Union External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar** and **Israel Foreign Minister Yair** during a **quadrilateral (Quad) meeting** with **UAE Foreign Minister**

**Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan** and **US secretary of State Anthony Blinken** on October 19, 2021 agreed to establish a **joint economic cooperation forum**.

#### **Key Points**

- The Ministers also discussed how to support global public health in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic and expand people to people ties in technology and science.
- The four ministers also held a discussion on possibilities for joint infrastructure projects in the fields of technology, transportation, maritime security, trade and economics and additional joint projects.
- During the talks, Secretary Blinken reiterated the Biden Administration's support for the Abraham Accords and normalization agreements and discussed future opportunities for collaboration in the region and globally.

#### **About Abraham Accords:**

- The Abraham Accords was signed by **Israel, UAE and the US** in August 2020 to normalise ties between Israel and the UAE.

**Source: ET**

### **International Conference and Exhibition on Digital technologies - "Future Tech 2021"**

#### **Why in News**

- **Rajeev Chandrasekhar, Minister of State in the Ministry of Electronics & IT** virtually attended the inaugural session of the **International Conference and Exhibition on Digital technologies - "Future Tech 2021"** organized by the **Confederation of Indian Industry (CII)**.
- The event is scheduled from 19 – 27 October 2021.

#### **Key Points**

- The **theme** of the conference is **"Driving technologies for building the future, we all can trust"**.
- The event is based on **5 theme pillars**: Strategy, Growth, Resilience, Inclusiveness, Trust

#### **About Confederation of Indian Industry (CII):**

- It is a non-governmental trade association and advocacy group headquartered in New Delhi, India, founded in 1895.
- CII engages business, political, academic, and other leaders of society to shape global, regional, and industry agendas.
- It is a membership-based organisation.

**Source: PIB**

### **NASA launches Lucy spacecraft, first space mission to study Jupiter's Trojans Asteroids**

#### **Why in News**

- **NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration)** launched **Lucy spacecraft, the first space mission (Lucy Mission)** to study **Jupiter's Trojans Asteroids**.

#### **Key Points**

- Lucy's mission is a 12-year expedition to study a record number of asteroids.
- It will be the first to explore the Trojans, thousands of rocky objects orbiting the sun in two swarms – one ahead of the path of giant gas planet **Jupiter** and one behind it.

**Source: Indian Express**

## **6th Ministerial meeting of 'Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia' (CICA) 2021**

### **Why in News**

- **External Affairs Minister, S Jaishankar** addressed the 6th Ministerial meeting of the 'Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA)' 2021 in **Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan**.

### **Key Points**

- S. Jaishankar said that India's internationalism (Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam) drives the Vaccine Maitri initiative of India.
- India underscored the importance of the Taliban regime meeting the expectations of the international community as elaborated in the UN Security Council Resolution 2593.
- India has protested to China over the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) as it is being laid through PoK.

### **About CICA:**

- CICA is an inter-governmental forum for enhancing cooperation towards promoting security, peace and stability in Asia.
- **Membership:** 27 member states; 9 observer states; 5 observer organizations
- **Secretariat:** Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan
- **Establishment:** 14 September 1999

**Source: Indian Express**

## **Germany unveils world's first automated, driverless train**

### **Why in News**

- **German rail operator Deutsche Bahn** and **industrial group Siemens** unveiled the world's first automated, driverless train in the city of Hamburg.

### **Key Points**

- Four such trains will join the northern city's S-Bahn rapid urban rail network and start carrying passengers from December 2021, using the existing rail infrastructure.
- The project, which Siemens and Deutsche Bahn called a "world first", is part of a 60 million euro modernisation of Hamburg's rapid urban rail system.

**Source: ndtv**

## **PM Modi participates in 'G20 Extraordinary Summit' on Afghanistan**

### **Why in News**

- Recently, Prime Minister Narendra Modi participated in the '**G20 Extraordinary Summit' on Afghanistan.**
- The Meeting was convened by **Italy**, which currently holds the G20 Presidency, and **chaired by Italian Prime Minister Mario Draghi.**
- Issues under consideration at the meeting related to the humanitarian situation; concerns relating to terrorism; and human rights in Afghanistan.

#### **Key Points**

- The Prime Minister mentioned that over the last two decades, India has contributed to promoting socio-economic development and capacity building of youth and women in Afghanistan.
- Over 500 development projects have been implemented by India in Afghanistan.
- He also underlined the need to ensure that Afghan territory does not become a source of radicalization and terrorism, regionally or globally.
- He conveyed support for the important role of the United Nations in Afghanistan and called for renewed support of the G20 for the message contained in UN Security Council Resolution 2593 on Afghanistan.

**Source: PIB**

### **India Joins High Ambition Coalition (HAC) for Nature and People**

#### **Why in News**

- Recently, India officially joined the High Ambition Coalition (HAC) for Nature and People.
- **India** is the first of the **BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa)** to join the HAC.

#### **Key Points**

- The **High Ambition Coalition (HAC) for Nature and People** was launched in 2019 by Costa Rica, France and Britain.
- HAC is an intergovernmental group co-chaired by France and Costa Rica and by the UK as Ocean co-chair.
- It has a group of more than 70 countries encouraging the adoption of the global goal to protect **30x30 (30 percent of the world's land and ocean by 2030).**

**Source: PIB**

### **WHO recommends first Anti-Malaria Vaccine**

#### **Why in News**

- The **World Health Organization (WHO)** has endorsed the first anti-malaria vaccine '**RTS, S/AS01 (Mosquirix)**'.

#### **Key Points**

- **RTS, S/AS01 (Mosquirix)** is the first and, to date only, vaccine shown to have the capability of significantly reducing malaria, and life-threatening severe malaria, in tests on young African children.
- The vaccine is developed by British drugmaker GlaxoSmithKline (GSK).

#### **About Malaria:**

- Malaria is a life-threatening disease caused by parasites that are transmitted to people through the bites of infected female Anopheles mosquitoes. It is preventable and curable.

**Note:**

- In 2019, there were an estimated 229 million cases of malaria worldwide, and the estimated number of malaria deaths that year stood at 409,000.
- In 2019, India had an estimated 5.6 million cases of malaria compared to about 20 million cases in 2000, according to WHO.

**Source: Indian Express**

### **Seychelles' Tax Inspectors Without Borders (TIWB) programme launched in partnership with India**

**Why in News**

- **Tax Inspectors Without Borders (TIWB)** launched its programme in Seychelles on 4th October, 2021.
- TIWB is a joint initiative of the **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)** and the **Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)**.
- **India** was chosen as the **Partner Administration** and has provided Tax Expert for this programme.

**Key Points**

- The focus of the programme will be on Transfer Pricing cases of tourism and financial services sectors.

**Note:** It is the 6th TIWB programme which India has supported by providing Tax Expert.

**About Tax Inspectors Without Borders (TIWB):**

- TIWB was launched in July 2015 to strengthen developing countries' auditing capacity and multinationals' compliance worldwide.
- TIWB deploys qualified experts in developing countries across Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean to help build tax capacity in the areas of audit and criminal tax investigations.

**Source: PIB**

### **Pandora Papers Leak**

**Why in News**

- The **International Consortium of International Journalists (ICIJ)** has come out with what is claimed to be a 2.94 terabyte data trove that exposes the offshore secrets of wealthy elites from more than 200 countries and territories.
- **Pandora Papers** are **11.9 million leaked files** from 14 global corporate services firms.
- There are at least **380 persons of Indian nationality** in the Pandora Papers including 60 prominent individuals and companies.

**Key Points**

- The investigation is based on a leak of confidential records of 14 offshore service providers that give professional services to wealthy individuals and

corporations seeking to incorporate shell companies, trusts, foundations and other entities in low or no-tax jurisdictions.

- Further, the **Government of India** has directed that, investigations in cases of Pandora Papers leaks appearing in the media under the name 'PANDORA PAPERS' will be monitored through the Multi Agency Group, **headed by the Chairman, CBDT**.
- Earlier similar such leaks- **Panama Papers** and **Paradise Papers**.

#### **Government's Initiatives:**

##### **Legislative Action:**

- Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002
- The Black Money (Undisclosed Foreign Income and Assets) and Imposition of Tax Act, 2015
- The Benami Transactions (Prohibition) Amendment Act, 2016
- The Central Goods and Services Tax Act, 2017
- The Fugitive Economic Offenders Act, 2018

**Source: Indian Express**

### **Landsat 9**

#### **Why in News**

- **NASA** has launched an Earth observation satellite '**Landsat 9**' from Space Launch Complex-3E at Vandenberg Space Force Base on an Atlas V 401 launch vehicle.
- Landsat-9 is part of a joint mission by **NASA** and the **US Geological Survey**.

#### **Key Points**

- Landsat-9 is an advanced satellite, ninth in the series, which will monitor key natural and economic resources from orbit.
- Currently, NASA is operating the Landsat-7 and Landsat-8.

**Note:** NASA first launched Landsat in 1972 under the name of Earth Resources Technology Satellite (ERTS) which captured eight million images of the planet.

**Source: India Today**

### **Supreme Court introduces FASTER system**

- In a big fillip to the fundamental rights of life, dignity and personal liberty, the Supreme Court of India has introduced "**Fast and Secured Transmission of Electronic Records**" (**FASTER**) system.
- It is proposed that the **e-authenticated copies** of the record of proceedings/orders, digitally signed by the authorised officer may be transmitted through this system.

**Source: The Hindu**

## **Important News: Environment**

### **Heli-Borne Survey for Ground Water Management in Arid Regions**

#### **Why in News**

- The **Union Minister for Jal Shakti, Gajendra Singh Shekhawat** and **Minister of State (Independent Charge) Science & Technology, Dr. Jitendra Singh** jointly inaugurated the **Heli-Borne Survey for Ground Water Management in Arid Regions**.

#### **Key Points**

- The **Central Ground Water Board, Ministry of Jal Shakti** and **CSIR-NGRI (National Geophysical Research Institute), Hyderabad** have signed agreement for use of advanced Heli-Borne geophysical survey and other scientific studies in parts of the States of **Rajasthan, Gujarat, Haryana, Punjab and Himachal Pradesh** covering an area of 3.88 lac sq. km under the **Aquifer Mapping Programme**.
- The Heli-Borne Survey aims to conduct High resolution aquifer mapping using heliborne geophysical studies.

**Outcome:** The expected outcome includes selecting suitable sites for groundwater withdrawal and water conservation through artificial or managed aquifer recharge.

**Phases:**

- This survey will be carried out in **two phases**.
- Work for **Phase 1** has been sanctioned for 1.01 Lakh Sq.km in **Rajasthan, Haryana and Gujarat**.
- An area of 2.87 Lakh Sq.km will be covered under **Phase 2**.

**Source: PIB**

**International Conference to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the signing of the Protocol on Environmental Protection (Madrid protocol) of the Antarctic Treaty**

**Why in News**

- **Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Science & Technology Dr Jitendra Singh** addressed the **International Conference to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the signing of the Protocol on Environmental Protection (Madrid protocol) of the Antarctic Treaty**.
- The Conference was hosted by Spain.

**Key Points**

**About Protocol on Environmental Protection (Madrid protocol):**

- India signed the Antarctic Treaty on 19th August 1983 and soon thereafter received consultative status on 12th September 1983.
- The Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty was signed in Madrid on October 4, 1991.
- The Madrid Protocol was signed by India which came into force on 14th January, 1998.

**Note:** India has two active research stations; **Maitri** (commissioned in 1989) at Schirmacher Hills, and **Bharati** (commissioned in 2012) at Larsemann Hills in Antarctica.

- With **Himadri station** in Ny-Alesund, Svalbard, Arctic, India now belongs to the elite group of nations that have multiple research stations within the Polar Regions.

**Source: PIB**

**Important News: Economy**

**GAIL to build India's largest green hydrogen plant**

### Why in News

- **State-owned GAIL (India) Ltd** will build **India's largest green hydrogen-making plant (10MW capacity)** as it looks to supplement its natural gas business with carbon-free fuel.

### Key Points

- It will take 12-14 months to put the plant.
- The company has finalised 2-3 sites for the unit including one at Vijaipur in Madhya Pradesh.

### Note:

- **State electricity producer NTPC** has announced a **5MW green hydrogen plant.**

Source: ET

## Krishi UDAN 2.0

### Why in News

- **Union Minister of Civil Aviation, Jyotiraditya M. Scindia** launched **Krishi UDAN 2.0.**
- Krishi UDAN 2.0 lays out the vision of improving value realization through better integration and optimization of Agri-harvesting and air transportation and contributing to Agri-value chain sustainability and resilience under different and dynamic conditions.
- The scheme proposes to facilitate and incentivize movement of Agri-produce by air transportation.

### Key Points

#### About Krishi UDAN 2.0:

- The enhanced version of the Krishi UDAN scheme was formulated with support from AAICLAS - a 100% subsidiary of the Airports Authority of India and Invest India, India's national Investment Promotion & Facilitation Agency, under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
- It offers full waiver of Landing, Parking, TNLC and RNFC charges for Indian freighters and P2C at selected Airports of Airport Authority of India primarily, focusing on NER, Hilly and Tribal region.
- It will be implemented at 53 airports across the country mainly focusing on Northeast and tribal regions.
- **Technological convergence:** Development of **E-KUSHAL (Krishi UDAN for Sustainable Holistic Agri-Logistics)**. Platform to be developed facilitates in information dissemination to all the stakeholders. Furthermore, integration of E-KUSHAL with the **National Agriculture Market (e-NAM)** is proposed.

**Note:** **Krishi UDAN** was launched in August 2020, on international and national routes to assist farmers in transporting agricultural products.

Source: PIB

## **“SAMBHAV” e-National Level Awareness Programme, 2021**

### **Why in News**

- The **Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSME)**, Government of India has **launched “SAMBHAV” e-National Level Awareness Programme, 2021.**

### **Key Points**

#### **About “SAMBHAV” Programme:**

- The objective of the programme is engagement of the youth in promoting entrepreneurship leading to the economic development of the country.
- It will be a one-month long initiative under the Ministry of MSME in which students from different colleges/ITIs from all parts of the country will be encouraged by 130 field offices of the Ministry to take up entrepreneurship.
- It will be conducted in more than 1,300 colleges across the country in which 1,50,000 students are expected to participate.

#### **Related Initiatives:**

- Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana
- Women Entrepreneurship Platform
- Venture Capital Scheme for Agri-Business Development
- Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGA)
- Prime Minister’s Employment Generation Programme
- Pradhan Mantri Rojgar Protsahan Yojana

**Source: PIB**

## **NMDC wins two Prestigious Environment Awards**

### **Why in News**

- **National Mineral Development Corporation Ltd. (NMDC)**, Country’s largest iron ore producer, a CPSE under Ministry of Steel has bagged **Gold Award in Environmental Sustainability category** and **NMDC’s Kumaraswamy Iron Ore Mine** bagged **Platinum Award in Environment Management category.**

### **Key Points**

- NMDC is selected for the awards based on its contribution towards implementation of Sustainable Development Goals and Environment Management initiatives at its production projects.
- The award function was organised by Sustainable Development Foundation (a unit of EK KAAM DESH KE NAAM) at the 10th conference held at Dehradun, Uttarakhand.

**Source: PIB**

## **Ship-to-Ship operation of LPG undertaken at Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port by BPCL**

### **Why in News**

- For the first time in the history of major ports, **Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL)** carried out the **Ship-to-Ship (STS) operation** of LPG undertaken at **Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port**.

#### Key Points

- BPCL engaged service provider M/s Fendercare Marine to render the services at the offshore STS location.
- The restricted draft in the river channel necessitates offloading of part cargo at neighbouring ports before calling at Haldia Dock Complex (HDC) or Kolkata Dock System (KDS) of **Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port Kolkata (erstwhile Kolkata Port Trust)**. Consequent to two port discharge, vessels incur dead freight and additional steaming time.

Source: PIB

### 7 new Defence Public Sector Undertakings (DPSUs)

#### Why in News

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi dedicated **7 new Defence Public Sector Undertakings (DPSUs)**, carved out of **Ordnance Factory Board (OFB)**, to the nation.

#### Key Points

- Government had decided to convert OFB from a Government Department into seven 100 percent Government-owned corporate entities as a measure to improve self-reliance in the defence preparedness of the country.
- **7 new Defence companies are:** Munitions India Limited (MIL); Armoured Vehicles Nigam Limited (AVANI); Advanced Weapons and Equipment India Limited (AWE India); Troop Comforts Limited (TCL) (Troop Comfort Items); Yantra India Limited (YIL); India Optel Limited (IOL) and Gliders India Limited (GIL).
- These companies have commenced business from October 01, 2021.

#### Note:

- **E.R. Sheikh** assumed charge as first **Director General of the Ordnance Directorate**.
- The **Ministry of Defence** has set a target of achieving a turnover of Rs 1.75 lakh crore in aerospace and defence goods and services by 2024, including exports of Rs 35,000 crore.

**Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Prerana Sthal:** Recently, 'Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Prerana Sthal' was inaugurated at Naval Science & Technological Laboratory (NSTL), Visakhapatnam on the occasion of 90th birth anniversary of Bharat Ratna Dr APJ Abdul Kalam.

Source: PIB

### Government accords "Maharatna" status to PFC

#### Why in News

- Government of India accorded 'Maharatna' status to the state-owned **Power Finance Corporation Ltd (PFC)**, thus giving PFC greater operational and financial autonomy.

- An order to this effect was issued by the Department of Public Enterprises, under the Ministry of Finance.

#### Key Points

- PFC can now invest up to ₹5,000 crore, or 15% of its net worth, in a single project after its Maharatna status.

#### About Power Finance Corporation Ltd (PFC):

- It is an Indian financial institution under the ownership of the Ministry of Power. Established in 1986, it is the financial backbone of the Indian Power Sector.
- PFC is the 11<sup>th</sup> Maharatna CPSE.

#### Other Maharatna Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs):

1. Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited
2. Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited
3. Coal India Limited
4. GAIL (India) Limited
5. Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited
6. Indian Oil Corporation Limited
7. NTPC Limited
8. Oil & Natural Gas Corporation Limited
9. Power Grid Corporation of India Limited
10. Steel Authority of India Limited

- There are 14 Navratna and 73 Miniratna CPSEs.
- Navratna and Miniratna CPSEs can invest up to ₹1,000 crore and ₹500 crore, respectively.

Source: PIB

### Two long haul freight trains 'Trishul' and 'Garuda'

#### Why in News

- **Indian Railways** has successfully operated two long haul freight trains "Trishul" and "Garuda" for the first time over **South Central Railway (SCR)**.

#### Key Points

- Long haul trains, which are twice or multiple times longer than the normal composition of freight trains, provide a very effective solution to the problem of capacity constraints in critical sections.
- **Trishul** is SCR's first long haul comprising three freight trains, i.e., 177 wagons. This train was started from Kondapalli station of Vijayawada division to Khurda division of East Coast Railway.
- SCR followed it up with the running of yet another similar one named **Garuda** from Raichur of Guntakal division to Manuguru of Secunderabad division.

Source: PIB

### Amazon's Astro Robot

#### Why in News

- Recently, Amazon launched a **home robot named 'Astro'**.

- However, civil society has highlighted the concerns of privacy issues of 24x7 surveillance.

### Key Points

#### About Astro:

- The robot has cartoony-eyes on a tablet-like touchscreen and comes equipped with a periscope camera and microphone.
- Astro is basically a combination of the Echo Show and sophisticated Ring security camera integrated into one single device.
- The home robot is designed to take up tasks such as home monitoring, setting up routines and reminders, and can play music and TV shows while rolling around the house.

#### Issues Related to Privacy:

- Civil society is worried that the amount of data Amazon gets to fetch with the Astro, giving the company easy access to the household.
- There are concerns of stealing or hacking of the device.
- Due to this, the perpetrator can get access to the digital map that the robot creates of someone's home.

Source: Indian Express

### SBI, Indian Navy launch NAV-eCash Card

#### Why in News

- **State Bank of India (SBI)** and **Indian Navy** launched SBI's **NAV-eCash Card** onboard the country's largest naval aircraft carrier **INS Vikramaditya**.

#### Key Points

- The Card will obviate the difficulties faced by personnel onboard in handling physical cash during deployment of the ship at high seas.
- The infrastructure at naval ships inhibits traditional payment solutions particularly when the ship is in high sea where there is no connectivity.
- NAV-eCash Card, with its dual-chip technology, will facilitate both online as well as offline transactions

Source: ET

### NTPC REL signs first Green Term Loan agreement

#### Why in News

- **NTPC Renewable Energy Ltd (REL)** a 100 percent subsidiary of NTPC Ltd, has signed its **first Green Term Loan agreement** of Rs. 500 crores at a very competitive rate with a period of 15 years with **Bank of India**.

#### Key Points

- The Loan will be used for its 470 MW Solar Projects in Rajasthan & 200 MW Solar Project in Gujarat.
- A green loan is a type of loan instrument that enables borrowers to finance projects that have an environmental impact.

Source: ET

Science

## Micro snail species 'Georissa mawsmiensis' discovered in Meghalaya's Mawsmai cave

### Why in news

- A micro snail species named 'Georissa mawsmiensis' has recently been discovered from Mawsmai, a limestone cave in **Meghalaya**, 170 years after the last such discovery was made.

### Key Points

- Five species of cave-dwelling snails have been reported from the caves of Meghalaya.
- The discovery this time has been reported in the Journal of Conchology.
- The researchers involved in the discovery are Nipu Kumar Das and NA Aravind of the Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE), Bengaluru.

**Note:** It was in 1851 that Georissa saritta, a member of the same genus as the latest find, was collected and described from the Musmai (Mawsmai today) valley near Cherrapunjee by WH Benson.

**Source: DTE**

## For the first time in the Major Ports in India, Radio over Internet Protocol system inaugurated at Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port, Kolkata

### Why in News

- The **Radio over Internet Protocol (ROIP) System** at **Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port, Kolkata (SMP, Kolkata)**, was inaugurated.
- **ROIP system** is being introduced as a marine communication mode, for the **first time** in any Major Indian Port.

### Key Points

- It shall cover the entire Hugli River Estuary from Kolkata to Sandheads, having base stations at 4 Locations.
- With this facility, vessels at Sandheads can be directly communicated via Radio, from Kolkata, specially during storms and inclement weather.

**Source: PIB**

## China launches its first solar exploration satellite

### Why in News

- China launched its first solar exploration satellite into space from the Taiyuan Satellite Launch Center in northern Shanxi Province.
- The satellite was launched aboard a Long March-2D rocket and entered its planned orbit successfully.

## Key Points

### About China's first solar observation satellite:

- The **Xihe satellite is China's first solar observation satellite.**
- The 550-kg **Xihe satellite will monitor the Sun for three years.**
- It is equipped with an imaging spectrometer known as the **Chinese H-alpha Solar Explorer (CHASE).**
- It has been **developed by the China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation.**

Source: ET

## Important News: Defense

### Maiden India – UK Joint Tri-Service exercise 'Konkan Shakti -2021'

#### Why in News

- The **Maiden India – UK Joint Tri-Service exercise 'Konkan Shakti -2021'** began on October 21, 2021.
- It is scheduled in India from 21 October to 27 Oct 2021.

#### Key Points

##### About 'Konkan Shakti -21':

- The **maritime component of the exercise**, to be conducted off the **west coast of India**, is scheduled to be held in two phases.
- The harbour phase is planned at Mumbai from 21 - 23 Oct 21, while at sea, the exercises will be conducted from 24 - 27 Oct 21.
- The land phase of the exercise is being conducted between Indian Army and UK Army at Chaubatia from 21 -27 October 2021 under the aegis of Golden Key Division of Surya Command.
- It aims to derive mutual benefits from each other's experiences and also showcase the continuing cooperation between the two countries.
- Maritime cooperation is a distinguishable symbol of the commitment of both nations in ensuring a positive climate at sea for enhancing strategic stability and promoting global economic prosperity.

Source: PIB

### ABHYAS' - the High-speed Expendable Aerial Target (HEAT)

#### Why in News

- **'ABHYAS' - the High-speed Expendable Aerial Target (HEAT)** was successfully flight-tested by **DRDO** from the Integrated Test Range (ITR), Chandipur off the coast of Bay of Bengal in Odisha.

#### Key Points

- **'ABHYAS'** is designed & developed by DRDO's Aeronautical Development Establishment (ADE), Bengaluru.
- The vehicle can be used as an aerial target for evaluation of various missile systems.

- The performance of the target aircraft was monitored through telemetry and various tracking sensors including Radars and Electro Optical Tracking System (EOTS).
- This indigenous target aircraft, once developed, will meet the requirements of High-speed Expendable Aerial Targets (HEAT) for Indian Armed Forces.

**Source: PIB**

### **Indian Army team wins gold medal in Exercise Cambrian Patrol 2021**

#### **Why in News**

- **A team from 4/5 Gorkha Rifles (Frontier Force)** which represented the **Indian Army** at the prestigious Cambrian Patrol Exercise at **Brecon, Wales, UK** from 13th to 15th October 2021 has been awarded Gold medal.

#### **Key Points**

- Ex Cambrian Patrol organised by the UK Army is considered the ultimate test of human endurance, team spirit and is sometimes referred as the **Olympics of Military Patrolling** among militaries in the world.
- The Indian Army team participated in the event and competed against a total of 96 teams which included 17 international teams representing Special Forces and prestigious Regiments from around the world.
- This year, out of 96 participating teams, only three international patrols have been awarded a gold medal.

**Source: PIB**

### **BSF's area of jurisdiction expanded in 3 states**

#### **Why in News**

- The **Ministry of Home Affairs** has extended the jurisdiction of the **BSF (Border Security Force)** up to **50 km** inside the international borders in **Punjab, West Bengal and Assam**.
- The BSF's powers — which include **arrest, search and seizure** — were limited to up to 15 km in these states.
- The Ministry has reduced BSF's area of operation in **Gujarat** from 80 km from the border, to 50 km.

#### **Key Points**

- It amends the schedule of an earlier notification of July 3, 2014 in terms of the BSF's jurisdiction, which it outlines as: "the whole of the area comprised in the States of Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, Nagaland and Meghalaya and Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh and so much of the area comprised within a belt of 50 kilometres in the States of Gujarat, Rajasthan, Punjab, West Bengal and Assam, running along the borders of India".
- Its jurisdiction has been extended only in respect of the powers it enjoys under Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC), Passport (Entry into India) Act, 1920 and the Passport Act, 1967.

**Source: Indian Express**

### **Indo-US Joint Military Exercise "Yudh Abhyas 2021"**

### Why in News

- The **17th Edition of Indo-US Joint Military Exercise “Yudh Abhyas 2021”** began at Joint Base Elmendorf Richardson, **Alaska (USA)**.
- The exercise is being conducted from 15 to 29 October 2021.

#### Key Points

- Yudh Abhyas 2021 is the largest running joint military training and defence cooperation endeavor between India and USA.
- The exercise aims at enhancing understanding, cooperation and inter-operability between two Armies.

**Note:** The previous version of this exercise was held at Mahajan Field Firing in Bikaner, Rajasthan in February 2021.

**Source: PIB**

### Second Phase of Multilateral Maritime Exercise Malabar 2021

#### Why in News

- The Indian Navy (IN) participated in the Second Phase of Multilateral Maritime Exercise Malabar 2021 along with the Japan Maritime Self Defence Force (JMSDF), Royal Australian Navy (RAN) and the United States Navy (USN).
- The exercise is being conducted in the Bay of Bengal from 12 – 15 Oct 2021.
- **First Phase** of the Malabar exercise was conducted in the Philippines Sea from 26 – 29 Aug 2021.

#### Key Points

- The Indian Navy's participation includes INS Ranvijay, INS Satpura, P8I Long Range Maritime Patrol Aircraft and a Submarine.
- The Second Phase of the exercise would build upon the synergy, coordination and inter-operability developed during the First Phase of the exercise and would focus on advanced surface and anti-submarine warfare exercises, seamanship evolutions and weapon firings.

#### About Malabar Exercise:

- The Malabar series of exercises began as an annual bilateral naval exercise between India and the US in 1992.
- In 2015, Japan Maritime Self Defence Force joined Malabar as a permanent member.
- The 2020 edition witnessed the participation of the Royal Australian Navy.

**Source: India Today**

### Naval Exercise ‘Milan’

#### Why in News

- **India** is set to host its largest **Naval Exercise ‘Milan’** in February 2022 for which 46 countries have been invited.

#### Key Points

- The exercise will see the participation of all **Quad countries (United States, India, Japan and Australia)** with the U.S. being invited for the first time.

**About Milan:**

- Milan, which began in 1995, is held biennially and brings together Navies of all the countries in the region.
- It has so far been held at Port Blair but is now being shifted to Visakhapatnam which offers more space and infrastructure.
- The invitees include all Indian Ocean littoral states and countries from South East Asia among others.
- For the 11th edition in 2020, 40 countries were invited but the exercise was cancelled due to the COVID pandemic.

**Source: The Hindu**

## **India - UK Joint Company Level Military Training Exercise "Ajeya Warrior" 2021**

### **Why in News**

- The **6th Edition of India - UK Joint Company Level Military Training Exercise "Ajeya Warrior" 2021** has commenced at **Chaubatia, Uttarakhand**.
- It is being conducted from 07 to 20 October 2021.

### **Key Points**

- The exercise is part of an initiative to develop inter-operability and sharing expertise with friendly foreign nations.
- During this exercise, an Infantry Company from the Indian Army and an equivalent strength from UK Army would be sharing their experiences gained during the conduct of various military operations in their respective countries and during overseas engagements.

### **Other Joint Exercises between India and United Kingdom (UK):**

- **Air Force:** Indradhanush
- **Navy:** Konkan

**Source: The Hindu**

## **Guidelines for the Cyber Security in Power Sector**

### **Why in News**

- The **Ministry of Power** has prepared the guidelines for the Cyber Security in Power Sector.
- This is the first time that a comprehensive guideline has been formulated on cyber security in the power sector.

### **Key Points**

- **CEA (Central Electricity Authority)** under the provision of Section 3(10) on Cyber Security in the **"Central Electricity Authority (Technical Standards for Connectivity to the Grid) (Amendment) Regulations, 2019"** has framed Guideline on Cyber Security in Power Sector to be adhered by all Power Sector utilities to create cyber secure eco system.
- The Guideline mandates ICT based procurement from identified "Trusted Sources" and identified "Trusted Products" or else the product has to be tested for Malware/Hardware Trojan before deployment for use in the power supply system network when system for trusted product and service is in place.

**Note:** Recently, the **Ministry of Power** released Framework for Implementation of **Market Based Economic Despatch (MBED) Phase1** for lowering the cost of power purchase to consumers.

**Source: ET**

### **Union Minister of Home Affairs Amit Shah flags-off an All India Car Rally of NSG, 'Sudarshan Bharat Parikrama'**

#### **Why in News**

- **Union Minister of Home Affairs and Minister of Cooperation Amit Shah** flagged-off an **All India Car Rally of National Security Guard (NSG) 'Sudarshan Bharat Parikrama'**, from the historic Red Fort in Delhi on the occasion of 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' organized as part of celebrations of 75th anniversary of the country's Independence.
- He also flagged-in the All India **Cycle Rallies** of the **Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs)**.

#### **Key Points**

- During its **7,500 kms long journey**, the NSG's car rally, which was flagged-off, will pass through important and historical places associated with the Freedom Movement and Freedom Fighters of the country and end on 30th October, 2021 at the Police Memorial in New Delhi.
- NSG's car rally will pass through **18 cities in 12 states** of the nation.

**Source: ET**

### **5<sup>th</sup> edition of Japan- India Maritime Bilateral Exercise 'JIMEX 2021'**

#### **Why in News**

- The **5<sup>th</sup> edition of Japan- India Maritime Bilateral Exercise 'JIMEX 2021'**, between the **Indian Navy** and the **Japan Maritime Self-Defence Force**, commenced in the **Arabian Sea**.
- **The exercise is being conducted from 06 to 08 October 2021.**

#### **Key Points**

- JIMEX-2021 aims to develop common understanding of operational procedures and **enhance inter-operability through conduct of a multitude of advanced exercises**, across the entire spectrum of maritime operations.

#### **Note:**

- The JIMEX exercises commenced in January 2012 with special focus on maritime security cooperation.
- **The last edition of JIMEX was conducted in September 2020.**

**Source: TOI**

### **Russia successfully test-fires Zirkon hypersonic cruise missile from nuclear submarine for first time**

#### **Why in News**

- According to the **Russian Defence Ministry**, **Russia** successfully test fired a Zirkon hypersonic cruise missile from a **nuclear submarine 'Severodvinsk'** for the first time.

### Key Points

- The **Severodvinsk nuclear submarine** performed two launches of the Zircon cruise missile at mock targets in the Barents Sea.
- It first test-fired Zircon from the surface and then launched another missile from a submerged position in the White Sea.
- The Zircon missile would be capable of flying at nine times the speed of sound and have a range of 1,000 kilometres.

**Source:** newsonair

### Exercise 'Mitra Shakti 2021'

#### Why in News

- The **8th edition of India-Sri Lanka bilateral Joint Military Exercise 'Mitra Shakti 2021'** commenced at the **Combat Training School Ampara in Sri Lanka**.
- The two week long exercise is being conducted from 4 to 15 October 2021.

#### Key Points

- The Indian Army contingent of 120 personnel of Infantry Battalion Group and a similar strength from a Battalion of the Sri Lankan Army are participating in the bilateral exercise.
- The aim of the exercise is to promote close relations between Armies of both countries and enhance inter-operability and sharing best practices in counter insurgency and counter terrorism operations.

**Note:** The 7<sup>th</sup> Edition of Exercise Mitra Shakti was conducted at Foreign Training Node, Pune, Maharashtra in 2019.

**Source:** The Hindu

## Awards and Honours

### Martin Scorsese and Istevan Szabo to be honoured with 'Satyajit Ray Lifetime Achievement Award' at IFFI 2021

#### Why in News

- Union Minister for Information and Broadcasting Anurag Thakur has announced that **Istevan Szabo** and **Martin Scorsese** will be conferred the **'Satyajit Ray Lifetime Achievement Award'** at **52nd International Film Festival of India (IFFI)**.
- The 52nd edition of International Film Festival of India (IFFI) will be held from 20th to 28th November, 2021 in Goa.

#### Key Points

- **Istvan Szabo** is one of the most critically acclaimed Hungarian film directors of the past few decades known for masterpieces like Mephisto (1981) Father (1966).
- **Martin Scorsese** is one of the major figures of the New Hollywood era, widely regarded as one of the greatest and most influential directors in film history.

**Source:** ET

## India's official entry to the Oscars 2022: Tamil film 'Koozhangal' Why in News

- **Tamil film Koozhangal (Pebbles)**, directed by filmmaker PS Vinothraj, has been selected as India's official entry for the **94th Academy Awards (Oscars 2022)**.

### Key Points

- Koozhangal is a realistic family drama produced by Nayanthara and Vignesh Shivan.
- If selected, the film will compete for the Academy Award for 'Best International Feature Film'.
- The 94th Academy Awards are scheduled to take place on March 27, 2022, in Los Angeles.

Source: HT

## Kung Fu Nuns of Drukpa wins 1st UNESCO-ICM 2021 Martial Arts Education Prize Why in News

- The **Kung Fu Nuns of Drukpa** from India has won the inaugural **UNESCO-ICM 2021 Martial Arts Education Prize** for their brave acts of service.

### Key Points

- Through martial arts, the Drukpa nuns empower young girls to defend themselves, build confidence, and take on leadership roles in their communities.
- The **Kung Fu Nuns** are an order of Buddhist nuns who belong to the Drukpa Kagyu lineage.

### About the Award:

- It has been launched by **UNESCO-ICM (International Centre of Martial Arts for Youth Development and Engagement)**, to collect and promote good practices of martial arts education.

Source: [unescoicm.org](https://unescoicm.org)

## Earthshot Prize 2021

### Why in News

- **Vidyut Mohan (Co-founder of Takachar)**, a Delhi entrepreneur's agricultural waste recycling concept, won the **inaugural edition** of the **Earthshot Prize**.
- Indian company Takachar won the prize in the **"Clean our Air" category** for the creation of a portable machine which turns agricultural waste into fertiliser so that farmers do not burn the waste and cause air pollution.
- Five winners were announced, each receiving a million pounds (\$1.4 million).

### Key Points

### About Earthshot Prize:

- It is a prize awarded annually from 2021 to 2030.

- It is given by the **Royal Foundation**, headquartered in London, England.
- It was launched in 2020 by **Prince William, Duke of Cambridge and David Attenborough**.
- Each year **five finalists** will be selected for their contributions towards the **five UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** — restoration and protection of nature, air cleanliness, ocean revival, waste-free living and climate action.

**Source: ndtv**

### **Microsoft's Satya Nadella receives CK Prahalad Award 2021 for Global Business Sustainability Leadership**

#### **Why in News**

- **Indian American Satya Nadella, the Microsoft CEO**, is among the corporate leaders to receive the **C K Prahalad Award 2021** for Global Business Sustainability Leadership.

#### **Key Points**

- Four of Microsoft's top leaders -- Nadella along with its president and vice chair Brad Smith, chief financial officer Amy Hood and chief environment officer Lucas Joppa -- received the honour for their collaborative leadership aimed at transforming Microsoft into a carbon negative company by 2030 and to remove all its historical emissions by 2050.

#### **About CK Prahalad Award:**

- The award was created in 2010 by the **Corporate Eco Forum** to honour **Indian American Prahalad**, its founding advisory board member.

**Source: Business Today**

### **AIIMS Director Dr. Randeep Guleria awarded Lal Bahadur Shastri National Award 2021**

#### **Why in News**

- **Vice President M Venkaiah** presented **22nd Lal Bahadur Shastri National Award 2021** for Excellence to **Director of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Dr. Randeep Guleria**.

#### **Key Points**

- **Randeep Guleria** is an Indian pulmonologist and the current director of the **AIIMS, New Delhi**, credited with the establishment of India's first centre for pulmonary medicines and sleep disorders at AIIMS.
- He is a part of India's COVID-19 response effort.
- He was honoured by the Government of India in 2015 with Padma Shri.

**Source: PIB**

### **Astronautical Society of India (ASI) confers Aryabhata Award 2021 to G Satheesh Reddy**

#### **Why in News**

- **Secretary DDR&D and Chairman DRDO Dr G Satheesh Reddy** has been conferred the prestigious **Aryabhata Award 2021** by **Astronautical Society of India (ASI)** for his outstanding life-time contribution to the promotion of astronautics in India.

### Key Points

- **G Satheesh Reddy** is a pioneer in the area of R&D of advanced avionics, navigation and missile technologies.

### About Astronautical Society of India (ASI):

- It was set up in 1990 to foster the development of astronautics in the country.
- It is engaged in the dissemination of technical and other information related to astronautics by conducting technical meetings, bringing out technical publications and organising exhibitions.

Source: PIB

### Telugu filmmaker B Gopal chosen for Satyajit Ray Award 2021

- Well-known Telugu filmmaker B Gopal, alias Bejawada Gopal, has been chosen for the Satyajit Ray Award 2021 for his overall contribution to Indian cinema.
- Telugu filmmaker B Gopal has directed 2 Hindi movies and 30 Telugu movies in his long career.

### About Satyajit Ray Award:

- Satyajit Ray Award is an award instituted by the Satyajit Ray Film Society Kerala which is a state-based organization.
- The Award includes Rs 10,000 cash prize, plaque, and a memento.
- The Award has been named after legendary filmmaker Satyajit Ray.

Source: The Hindu

### 12th Social Entrepreneur of the Year (SEOY) Award - India 2021

#### Why in News

- **Pranshu Singhal, Karo Sambhav founder**, won the 12th Social Entrepreneur of the Year (SEOY) Award - India 2021, presented by Prof. K. VijayRaghavan, Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India.

#### Key Points

- **Karo Sambhav** is an organisation that works on improving recycling and waste management by helping a mostly informal workforce engaged in it have access to more formal mechanisms.
- It is awarded by the **Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship**, the sister organisation of the World Economic Forum and the Jubilant Bhartia Foundation, a nonprofit of the Jubilant Bhartia Group.

Source: HT

### Three US-based economists win 2021 Economic Nobel Prize

#### Why in News

- The **2021 Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences (2021 Economic Nobel Prize)** in Memory of Alfred Nobel has been awarded with one half to **David Card** and the other half jointly to **Joshua D. Angrist and Guido W. Imbens**.

#### Key Points

- **David Card (University of California at Berkeley)** has been awarded the 2021 prize in economic sciences "for his empirical contributions to labour economics."

- **Joshua D. Angrist (Massachusetts Institute of Technology)** and **Guido W. Imbens (Stanford University)** have been awarded the 2021 prize in economic sciences “for their methodological contributions to the analysis of causal relationships.

**Source: Indian Express**

### **Journalists Maria Ressa, Dmitry Muratov win 2021 Nobel Peace Prize**

- The 2021 Nobel Peace Prize awarded to journalists **Maria Ressa of Philippines** and **Dmitry Muratov of Russia** ‘for their fight for freedom of expression in their countries’.
- Ressa is the co-founder and CEO of *Rappler*, an independent news website based in the Philippines.
- Muratov is the editor-in-chief of the Russian newspaper Novaya Gazeta.

**Source: newsonair**

### **Novelist Abdulrazak Gurnah wins 2021 Nobel Prize for Literature**

- **Tanzanian Novelist Abdulrazak Gurnah** has won the 2021 Nobel Prize in Literature for his uncompromising and compassionate penetration of the effects of colonialism and the fate of the refugees in the gulf between cultures and continents.
- Abdulrazak Gurnah was born in 1948 and grew up on the island of Zanzibar in Tanzania in the Indian Ocean but reached England as a refugee at the end of the 1960’s.
- Gurnah has published ten novels, including *Paradise and Desertion* and a number of short stories.

**Source: newsonair**

### **DRDO Dare to Dream 2.0 & Young Scientists awards**

#### **Why in News**

- **Defence Minister Rajnath Singh** felicitated the winners of ‘**Dare to Dream 2.0’ Contest of Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO)**.
- He launched ‘**Dare to Dream 3.0**’ to promote innovators & startups and provide a platform for the young ignited minds in the country.
- He gave away **DRDO Young Scientists awards** for the year 2019.

#### **Key Points**

- **Dare to Dream** is DRDO's pan-India contest to promote Indian academicians, individuals and startups to develop emerging defence and aerospace technologies/systems.
- Three products/systems indigenously developed by DRDO were also handed over to the Armed Forces. These are:
  - **ARINC818 Video Processing and Switching Module**
  - **Sonar Performance Modelling System**
  - **Bund Blasting Device Mk-II**

**Source: PIB**

**Benjamin List, David MacMillan win Chemistry Nobel Prize 2021 for mirror-image molecules**

- **German-born Benjamin List** and **Scotland-born David MacMillan** have been awarded jointly the 2021 Nobel Prize in Chemistry "**for the development of asymmetric organocatalysis.**"
- Their **chemical toolkit** has been used for discovering new drugs and making molecules that can capture light in solar cells.

**Source: newsonair**

### **Yemeni humanitarian organization wins 2021 UNHCR Nansen Refugee Award**

#### **Why in News**

- The organisation named **Jeel Albena Association for Humanitarian Development**, founded in 2017 by Ameen Jubran, won the **2021 UNHCR Nansen Refugee Award** for its unwavering support for displaced Yemenis.

#### **Key Points**

##### **About UNHCR Nansen Refugee Award:**

- The UNHCR Nansen Refugee Award honours individuals, groups or organizations to protect refugees, other displaced and stateless people.
- There have been over 60 global winners from different countries since the award was first established in 1954.

##### **About United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR):**

- UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, leads international action to protect people forced to flee their homes because of conflict and persecution

**Source: unhcr.org**

### **2021 Nobel Prize for physics awarded to scientists from Japan, Germany, Italy**

#### **Why in News**

- 2021 Nobel Prize for Physics is awarded with one half jointly to **Syukuro Manabe** and **Klaus Hasselmann** "For the physical modelling of Earth's climate, quantifying variability and reliably predicting global warming".
- And the other half to **Giorgio Parisi** "For the discovery of the interplay of disorder and fluctuations in physical systems from atomic to planetary scales"
- This is the first time **climate scientists** have been awarded the Physics Nobel.

#### **Key Points**

- **Syukuro Manabe** (Princeton University, USA) demonstrated how increased levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere lead to increased temperatures at the surface of the Earth.
- **Klaus Hasselmann** (Max Planck Institute for Meteorology, Germany) created a model that links together weather and climate, thus answering the question of why climate models can be reliable despite weather being changeable and chaotic.
- **Giorgio Parisi** (Sapienza University, Italy) discovered hidden patterns in disordered complex materials.

**Source: newsonair**

### **2021 Right Livelihood Award**

#### **Why in News**

- **Delhi-based** environmental organisation '**Legal Initiative for Forest and Environment (LIFE)**' has received the **2021 Right Livelihood Award** for its "grassroots approach of empowering vulnerable communities to protect their livelihoods and claim their right to a clean environment."
- The award is known as Sweden's alternative Nobel Prize.

#### **Key Points**

- **Other awardees** include Cameroonian women rights activist **Marthe Wandou**, Russian environmental activist **Vladimir Sliviyak**, and Canadian Indigenous rights defender **Freda Huson**.
- **Legal Initiative for Forest and Environment (LIFE)** was founded by lawyers Ritwick Dutta and Rahul Choudhary in 2005.

#### **About Right Livelihood Award:**

- It was established in 1980 by German-Swedish philanthropist Jakob von Uexkull, and is presented annually in early December

**Source: HT**

### **David Julius, Ardem Patapoutian win 2021 Nobel Prize in Medicine**

#### **Why in News**

- **American scientists David Julius** and **Ardem Patapoutian** jointly won the **2021 Nobel Prize in physiology or medicine** for their discoveries of **receptors for temperature and touch**.

#### **Key Points**

- Their findings "have allowed us to understand how heat, cold and mechanical force can initiate the nerve impulses that allow us to perceive and adapt to the world around us."
- "This knowledge is being used to develop treatments for a wide range of disease conditions, including chronic pain."

#### **About Nobel Prize:**

- Nobel Prizes were created and funded in the will of **Swedish** dynamite inventor and businessman **Alfred Nobel**.
- Nobel Prizes are awarded in the fields of **Physics, Chemistry, Physiology or Medicine, Literature, and Peace**.
- In 1968, Sveriges Riksbank established the Prize in **Economic Sciences** in Memory of Sir Alfred Nobel, founder of the Nobel Prize.

**Source: Indian Express**

### **VAYO NAMAN Programme and Vayoshreshtha Samman-2021**

#### **Why in News**

- The **Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment** organised VAYO NAMAN Programme on the occasion of **International Day of Older Persons** at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi.
- In this programme, the **Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu** presented **Vayoshreshtha Samman-2021 to senior citizens**.

#### **Key Points**

#### **International Day of Older Persons:**

- The International Day of Older Persons is observed on **October 1 each year**.

**Background:**

- On 14 December 1990, the **United Nations General Assembly** designated October 1 as the International Day of Older Persons.
- The **2021 theme “Digital Equity for All Ages”** affirms the need for access and meaningful participation in the digital world by older persons.

**Source: PIB**

**Ranks and Indices**

**Global Food Security Index 2021**

**Why in News**

- **India** is ranked at **71st position** in the **Global Food Security (GFS) Index 2021** of **113 countries**.
- The GFS Index was designed and constructed by **London-based Economist Impact** and is sponsored by Corteva Agriscience.

**Key Points**

**Top Rankers:**

- Ireland, Australia, the UK, Finland, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Canada, Japan, France and the US shared the top rank with the overall GFS score in the range of 77.8 and 80 points on the index.

**India's Rank:**

- India held 71st position with an overall score of 57.2 points on the GFS Index 2021 of 113 countries, far better than Pakistan (75th position), Sri Lanka (77th Position), Nepal (79th position) and Bangladesh (84th position).
- Pakistan (with 52.6 points) scored better than India (50.2 points) in the category of food affordability. Sri Lanka was even better with 62.9 points in this category on the GFS Index 2021.
- However, over the past 10 years, India's incremental gains in overall food security score were lagging behind that of Pakistan, Nepal and Bangladesh.
- India's score improved only by 2.7 points to 57.2 in 2021 from 54.5 in 2012.
- Global food security has decreased for the second year in a row after seven years of progress towards the **Sustainable Development Goal of achieving Zero Hunger by 2030**.

**About Global Food Security (GFS) Index:**

- The GFS Index measures the **underlying drivers of food security in 113 countries**, based on the factors of affordability, availability, quality and safety, and natural resources and resilience.
- It considers 58 unique food security indicators including income and economic inequality.

**Source: Indian Express**

**Reliance Industries tops India firms in World's Best Employer rankings 2021**

**Why in News**

- **Reliance Industries Limited (RIL)** is among the top four Indian companies according to **World's Best Employers rankings 2021** published by **Forbes**.
- **Mukesh Ambani-owned RIL** was placed at the **52nd position** in the overall ranking of 750 global corporations.

#### Key Points

- The **top place** in the Forbes rankings was occupied by **South Korean giant Samsung Electronics**, followed by US giants IBM, Microsoft, Amazon, Apple, Alphabet and Dell Technologies.
- Other Indian companies that made it to the top 100 rankings include ICICI Bank (65), HDFC Bank (77) and HCL Technologies (90).
- The rankings were decided after a large-scale survey was carried out among employees, who were asked to rate their employers on numerous parameters.
- The rankings were compiled after surveying 150,000 full-time and part-time workers from 58 countries working for multinational companies and institutions.
- **Forbes** partnered with **market research company 'Statista'** for the same.

Source: HT

### Renewable Energy Country Attractiveness Index 2021

#### Why in News

- **India** has maintained the **3rd rank** in the **Renewable Energy Country Attractiveness Index (RECAI) 2021** released by **consultancy firm Ernst & Young Global Limited (EY)**.

#### Key Points

- The **US** and **China** are in **first** and **second place**, respectively.
- It is the **58th edition of RECAI**, which ranks the world's top 40 markets (nations) on the attractiveness of renewable energy investment and deployment opportunities.
- With the Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) measures reaching the top of the agenda for companies and investors, RECAI also highlights that Corporate **Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs)** are emerging as a key driver of clean energy growth.
- **India** ranks 6th among the top **30 PPA** markets.
- **Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs) Index**: A new PPA Index – introduced in this edition of RECAI – focuses on the attractiveness of renewable energy purchases and ranks the growth potential of the country's corporate PPA market.

Source: newsonair

### Global Multidimensional Poverty Index 2021

#### Why in News

- The **2021 Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) Report** was jointly released by the **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)** and the **Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI)**.

- The Global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) 2021 compares acute multidimensional poverty for **109 countries** in developing regions.

### Key Points

#### Key Findings of the Reports (*Global Multidimensional Poverty Index 2021: Unmasking disparities by ethnicity, caste and gender*):

- 109 countries are home to 5.9 billion people, three-quarters of the world's population.
- Of these people, 1.3 billion (21.7%) are identified by the 2021 global MPI as multidimensionally poor.
- About 644 million are children under age 18.
- Nearly 85 percent live in Sub-Saharan Africa (556 million) or South Asia (532 million).
- Roughly, 84 percent (1.1 billion) live in rural areas, and 16 percent (about 209 million) live in urban areas.
- More than 67 percent live in middle-income countries.
- In **India**, 5 out of 6 multidimensionally poor people were from lower tribes or castes.

Source: UNDP

## Global Hunger Index 2021

### Why in News

- **India ranked 101** out of 116 countries in the Global Hunger Index (GHI) 2021.
- With a score of 27.5, India has a level of hunger that is serious.
- India is behind Pakistan (92), Bangladesh (76) and Nepal (76).
- In 2020, India was ranked 94th out of 107 countries.

### Key Points

- A total of 18 countries, including China, Kuwait and Brazil, shared the top rank with GHI score of less than five.
- The GHI report mentioned the level of hunger in India as “alarming” with its GHI score decelerating from 38.8 in 2000 to the range of 28.8 – 27.5 between 2012 and 2021.

### About Global Hunger Index (GHI):

- The GHI report is prepared jointly by **Irish aid agency Concern Worldwide** and **German organisation Welthungerhilfe**.
- The **GHI score** is calculated on **four indicators** — undernourishment, child wasting, child stunting and child mortality.

### India's Related Initiatives:

- POSHAN Abhiyan
- Eat Right India Movement
- Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana
- Food Fortification
- National Food Security Act, 2013
- Integrated Child Development Services Scheme
- Mission Indradhanush

Source: Indian Express

## Forbes India Rich List 2021

- **Reliance Industries chairman Mukesh Ambani** retained the top spot in the Forbes list of richest Indians in 2021, by adding \$4 billion to his net worth amounting to \$92.7 billion this year.
- With this, Mukesh Ambani has been named the wealthiest in the country for the 14th year in a row since 2008.
- The list ranks India's 100 richest Indians.

**Top 3 richest Indians:**

1. Mukesh Ambani (\$92.7 billion)
2. Gautam Adani (\$74.8 billion)
3. Shiv Nadar (\$31 billion)

**Source: Indian Express**

**India ranks 90<sup>th</sup> in Henley Passport Index 2021**

- **Henley Passport Index 2021** has revealed the list of the world's most powerful passports and **India has been ranked 90th on it.**
- **India's passport got a visa-free score of 58**, which means Indian passport holders can visit 58 countries without a prior visa.
- India shares the rank with Tajikistan and Burkina Faso.

**1st rank-** Japan, Singapore (visa-free score 192)

**2nd rank-** Germany, South Korea (190)

**3rd rank-** Finland, Italy, Luxembourg, Spain (189)

- **Iraq and Afghanistan** are the countries with the worst passports with visa-free score 28 and 26 respectively.

**Note:** India was ranked 85th in the January 2021's index', 84th in 2020 and 82nd in 2019.

**Source: Indian Express**

**IIFL Wealth Hurun India Rich List 2021**

- **Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) Chairman Mukesh Ambani** continues to be **India's richest man** for the 10th straight year with a net worth of Rs 7,18,000 crore, according to the IIFL Wealth Hurun India Rich List 2021.
- **RIL** became the first company to cross \$200 billion market capitalisation.
- **RIL** has become the 57th most valuable firm in the world according to the **Hurun Global 500 Most Valuable Companies 2021.**

**Top 3 Hurun India Rich List 2021:**

1. Mukesh Ambani (Reliance Industries): ₹7,18,000 crore net worth
2. Gautam Adani (Adani Group): ₹5,05,900 crore net worth
3. Shiv Nadar (HCL): ₹2,36,600 crore net worth

- The Hurun Rich List indicated that India has a total of 237 billionaires, compared to 58 last year.
- The report also suggested that the chemicals and software sectors added the largest number of new billionaires on the list while pharma remains at the top spot with 130 entrants on the rich list.

**Source: India Today**

**Books and Authors**

**Indra Nooyi's memoir "My Life in Full: Work, Family and Our Future"**

- **Indra Nooyi, the former Chairperson and CEO of PepsiCo**, has penned her memoir titled 'My Life in Full: Work, Family, and our Future'.
- In her memoir, Indra Nooyi describes events that shaped her life from childhood to her becoming PepsiCo CEO, a position from which she retired in 2018.
- Indra Nooyi was honoured with Padam Bhushan in 2007.

**Source: HT**

## Reports

### UNEP Production Gap Report 2021

#### Why in News

- The **United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)** has released the **Production Gap Report 2021**.
- The report is produced by the Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI), International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), Overseas Development Institute (ODI), E3G, and UNEP.

#### Key Points

- The report, first launched in 2019, measures the gap between governments' planned production of coal, oil, and gas and the global production levels consistent with meeting the Paris Agreement temperature limits.
- Two years later, the report released found the production gap largely unchanged.
- Despite increased climate ambition and net-zero commitments, governments still plan to produce more than double the amount of energy from fossil fuels in 2030, than the amount that would limit global warming to the Paris Agreement level of 1.5°C.
- Over the next two decades, governments are projecting an increase in global oil and gas production, and only a modest decrease in coal production.
- Taken together, these plans mean that fossil fuel production will increase overall, to at least 2040.
- The production gap to achieve the climate goal is the widest for coal: Production plans and projections by governments would lead to around 240 percent more coal, 57 percent more oil, and 71 percent more gas in 2030 than global levels.

#### Measures Taken by India to Reduce Fossil Fuel Emissions:

- India Greenhouse Gas Program
- National Action Plan on Climate Change
- Bharat Stage-VI Norms

**Source: DTE**

### Climate report: Africa's rare glaciers soon to disappear

#### Why in News

- **Africa's rare glaciers** will disappear in the next two decades because of climate change according to the report of the **World Meteorological Organisation (WMO)**.
- **WMO** is a specialized agency of the **United Nations** responsible for promoting international cooperation on atmospheric science, climatology, hydrology and geophysics.

#### Key Points

- The report, released ahead of the UN climate conference in Scotland that starts October 31, 2021, is a grim reminder that Africa's 1.3 billion people remain "extremely vulnerable" as the continent warms more, and at a faster rate, than the global average.
- And yet Africa's 54 countries are responsible for less than 4 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions.
- The new report shows on the shrinking glaciers of Mount Kilimanjaro, Mount Kenya and the Rwenzori Mountains in Uganda as symbols of the rapid and widespread changes to come.
- Estimates of the economic effects of climate change vary across the African continent, but "in sub-Saharan Africa, climate change could further lower gross domestic product by up to 3 percent by 2050".
- Already, the UN has warned that the Indian Ocean island nation of Madagascar is one where "famine-like conditions have been driven by climate change".

**Source: Indian Express**

### World Energy Outlook (WEO) Report 2021

#### Why in News

- The **International Energy Agency (IEA)** released its annual **World Energy Outlook (WEO) Report 2021**.
- Investment in renewable energy will need to triple by the end of this decade if the world's climate pledges are to be met.

#### Key Points

##### Key Findings of the Report:

- Renewable energy sources, such as solar, wind, hydropower and bioenergy, need to form a far bigger share in the rebound in energy investment after the coronavirus pandemic.
- The IEA noted that demand for renewables continues to grow.
- However, this clean energy progress is still far too slow to put global emissions into sustained decline towards net zero by 2050, which the IEA believes will help limit the increase in global temperatures to 1.5 degrees Celsius.
- More than 40% of the required emissions reductions would come from measures that pay for themselves, such as improving efficiency, limiting gas leakage, or installing wind or solar in places where they are now the most competitive electricity generation technologies.

**Note:** International Energy Agency (IEA) has invited India, the world's third-largest energy consumer, to become its full-time member.

#### Other Major Reports:

- World Energy Investment Report
- World Energy Statistics
- World Energy Balances
- India Energy Outlook Report
- Energy Technology Perspectives

**Source: Indian Express**

## **Global Girlhood Report 2021: Girls' Rights in Crisis**

### **Why in News**

- Recently, **Save the Children** released the **“Global Girlhood Report 2021: Girls' Rights in Crisis”** on 'International Day of the Girl Child' (11<sup>th</sup> October).
- **Save the Children** is India's leading independent **child rights' NGO**, which works in 18 states of the country.

### **Key Points**

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

- **Child marriage** kills more than 60 girls a day globally and six girls a day in South Asia.
- South Asia sees 2,000 child marriage-related deaths every year (or six every day), followed by East Asia and the Pacific with 650 deaths (or two every day), and Latin American and the Caribbean, with 560 annual deaths (or nearly two a day).
- More than an estimated 22,000 girls a year are dying from pregnancy and childbirth resulting from child marriage.
- However, West and Central Africa has the highest rate of child marriage in the world and accounts for nearly half (9,600) of all estimated child marriage-related deaths globally, or 26 deaths a day.
- Although nearly 80 million child marriages globally have been prevented in the last 25 years, progress had stalled even before the COVID-19 pandemic, which has only worsened inequalities that drive child marriage.
- A further 10 million girls are now expected to marry by 2030, leaving more girls at risk of dying.

#### **Related India's Initiatives:**

- Child Marriage Restraint Act of 1929
- Special Marriage Act, 1954
- Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006
- Prevention of Child Marriage is a part of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 5

**Source: Indian Express**

## **41 Industrial Parks identified as "Leaders" in the Industrial Park Ratings System Report (IPRS 2.0)**

### **Why in News**

- **41 Industrial Parks** have been assessed as **"Leaders"** in the Industrial Park Ratings System Report (IPRS 2.0) released by the **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)**.

- The **2nd edition of the Industrial Park Rating System (IPRS) Report (IPRS 2.0 Report)** was launched by the Minister of State for Commerce & Industry, Som Prakash.

#### Key Points

- **90 Industrial Parks** have been rated as under **“Challenger”** category while **185** have been rated as under **"Aspirers"**.
- These ratings are assigned on the basis of key existing parameters and infrastructure facilities etc.
- The **IPRS 2.0 Report** is an extension of the **India Industrial Land Bank (IILB)** which features more than 4,400 industrial parks in a GIS-enabled database to help investors identify their preferred location for investment.
- The **IPRS pilot exercise** was launched in 2018, with an objective of enhancing industrial infrastructure competitiveness and supporting policy development for enabling industrialization across the country.
- Based on the learnings from the pilot stage, the Government started the IPRS 2.0 in 2020.

**Source: PIB**

### Over 5 billion people could face water shortage by 2050: United Nations

#### Why in News

- More than 5 billion people globally are expected to face a shortage of water by 2050, a **United Nations (UN) agency (World Meteorological Organization-WMO)** report **‘2021 State of Climate Services’** has warned.

#### Key Points

- According to figures cited in the report, 3.6 billion people had inadequate access to water at least one month per year in 2018. By 2050, this is expected to rise to more than 5 billion.
- In the past 20 years, terrestrial water storage - the summation of all water on the land surface and in the subsurface, including soil moisture, snow and ice - has dropped at a rate of one centimetre per year.
- The situation is worsening by the fact that only 0.5 percent of water on Earth is useable and available freshwater.
- Since 2000, flood-related disasters have risen by 134 percent compared with the two previous decades.
- Most of the flood-related deaths and economic losses were recorded in Asia.

#### Related Indian Government Initiatives:

- National Water Mission
- Jal Kranti Abhiyan
- National Rural Drinking Water Programme
- Jal Shakti Abhiyan
- Atal Bhujal Yojana
- NITI Aayog Composite Water Management Index
- Jal Jeevan Mission

**Source: newsonair**

## UNESCO launches 2021 State of the Education Report for India: 'No Teacher, No Class'

### Why in News

- The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (**UNESCO**) launched its **2021 State of the Education Report (SOER) for India: 'No Teacher, No Class'**.

### Key Points

- The report aims to serve as a reference for enhancing the implementation of the NEP and towards the realization of the SDG.4 target 4c on teachers.

### Findings of the Report:

- Around 1.1 lakh schools in India are single-teacher entities.
- A total of 19%, or 11.16 lakh teaching positions in schools, lie vacant in the country.
- Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh recorded the highest teacher vacancies.
- Moreover, over 60 percent of vacancies in India are in rural areas, with Uttar Pradesh topping the list at 80 percent.
- Madhya Pradesh has 21,000 single-teacher schools, the highest in the country.
- Tripura has the least number of women teachers, followed by Assam and Jharkhand. Chandigarh leads the chart followed by Goa and Delhi.
- Access to the internet in schools is 19% all over India - only 14% in rural areas compared to 42% in urban areas.

**Source: Business Today**

## NITI Aayog launches 'The State Nutrition Profiles' Report

### Why in News

- **NITI Aayog**, in a joint effort with International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), Indian Institute of Population Sciences (IIPS), UNICEF and Institute of Economic Growth (IEG) launched '**The State Nutrition Profiles' report for 19 States and Union Territories.**

### Key Points

### Findings of the Report:

- **The 'State Nutrition Profiles' (SNPs)** give insights on nutrition outcomes, immediate and underlying determinants and interventions based on **National Family Health Survey (NFHS)-rounds 3, 4 and 5.**
- The reports highlight the best and worst performing districts, highest burden districts and top coverage districts of the country.
- The SNPs are based on the headcount-based analyses and use of data from NFHS-5 to provide evidence that helps identify priority districts and number of districts in the state with public health concern as per WHO guidelines.

### About National Family Health Survey (NFHS):

- NFHS is a large-scale, multi-round survey conducted in a representative sample of households throughout India.
- First NFHS (1992-93)
- Second NFHS (1998-99)

- Third NFHS (2005-06)
- Fourth NFHS (2015-16)
- Fifth NFHS (2018-19)

**Source: PIB**

## **'The State of the World's Children 2021' report of UNICEF**

### **Why in News**

- **Mansukh Mandaviya, Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare** released **UNICEF's** global flagship publication – **"The State of the World's Children 2021; On My Mind: promoting, protecting and caring for children's mental health"**.
- The report details the significant impact of COVID-19 pandemic on children's mental health.

### **Key Points**

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

- The report has found that around **14 percent of 15 to 24-year-olds in India, or 1 in 7**, reported often feeling depressed.
- An estimated 13 percent of adolescents aged 10–19 is estimated to live with a diagnosed mental disorder.
- Even before the pandemic, psychosocial distress and poor mental health afflicted far too many children.
- Suicide is the fourth leading cause of death among 15- to 19-year-olds. Every year, almost 46,000 children between the ages of 10 and 19 end their own lives.

**Source: PIB**

## **NITI Aayog launches Report on 'Best Practices in the Performance of District Hospitals'**

### **Why in News**

- **NITI Aayog** released a performance assessment report of district hospitals in India, titled **'Best Practices in the Performance of District Hospitals'**.

### **Key Points**

- The report is an outcome of collaboration with the **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare** and **WHO India**.
- This report is the **first-ever performance assessment** of district hospitals undertaken across the country.

### **Key Performance Indicators:**

- The assessment framework covers 10 Key Performance Indicators across the domains of Structure and Output.
- A total of 707 district hospitals across all States and Union Territories participated in the performance assessment.
- The Health Management Information System (HMIS) data for the year 2017–18 has been used as the baseline for this exercise.

**Categories:** The framework classifies hospitals in three categories: Small Hospitals (less than or equal to 200 beds), Mid-sized Hospitals (between 201–300 beds) and Large Hospitals (more than 300 beds).

- Overall, 75 district hospitals across 24 States and Union Territories emerged as top performers.

**Key Findings:**

- A district hospital in India has on an **average 24 beds per 1 lakh population**, with **Bihar having the lowest average of 6 beds** and **Puducherry the highest of 222**.

**Note: Indian Public Health Standards 2012 guidelines** recommend district hospitals to maintain at least 22 beds per 1 lakh population.

- Only 27% of the total 707 districts assessed met the doctor-to-bed ratio of 29 doctors per 100 beds in a hospital.

**Source: PIB**

## New Appointments

### Barbados elects Dame Sandra Mason as first President

- **Barbados** has elected its first President, a key step in preparations to become a republic and remove Britain's Queen Elizabeth II as head of state of the Caribbean island.
- **Dame Sandra Mason**, the current governor-general, is set to be sworn in as president on November 30, 2021, the country's 55th anniversary of independence from Britain.
- **Barbados** was claimed by the British in 1625.
- It has sometimes been called "Little England" for its loyalty to British customs.

**Facts about Barbados:**

- **Capital:** Bridgetown
- **Currency:** Barbados Dollar
- **Prime Minister:** Mia Mottley
- **Independence:** 30 November 1966 (From the United Kingdom)

**Source: ndtv**

### 67th National Film Awards

- The **Vice President of India, M Venkaiah Naidu** conferred **National Film Awards for the year 2019** in various categories at its **67th edition** along with the prestigious Dada Saheb Phalke Award.
- **Rajinikanth** has been awarded the **51<sup>st</sup> Dada Saheb Phalke Award**.

**Note:** The 67th National Film Awards were announced on March 22, 2021.

### Uzbekistan President Shavkat Mirziyoyev secures second term in landslide election victory

**Why in News**

- The **President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev** has been re-elected for a second five-year term by winning 80.1% of the vote.

#### Key Points

- **Shavkat Mirziyoyev** is an Uzbek politician who has been serving as the President of Uzbekistan and Supreme Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Uzbekistan since 2016.
- Previously he was the Prime Minister of Uzbekistan from 2003 to 2016.

#### Facts about Uzbekistan:

- **Capital:** Tashkent
- **Currency:** Uzbekistani Som

Source: The Hindu

### Indian-origin Canadian Anita Anand appointed as the new Defence Minister of Canada

#### Why in News

- **Indian-origin Canadian politician Anita Anand** was appointed as the new **Defence Minister of Canada** in the latest cabinet reshuffle by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.

#### Key Points

- Anand (54 year old) will replace long-time Defence Minister Indian-origin Harjit Sajjan, whose handling of the military sexual misconduct crisis has been under criticism.
- She also led the procurement effort of the vaccine during the COVID-19 pandemic and was the Procurement Minister of the country.

Source: The Hindu

### Sajjan Jindal elected Chairman of World Steel Association

#### Why in News

- The **World Steel Association** has elected **Sajjan Jindal (JSW Steel Chairman and Managing Director)** as its Chairman for the 2021-22 period.
- Jindal is the first representative from India to serve as Chairman of the World Steel Association.

#### Key Points

##### About World Steel Association (WSA):

- WSA acts as the focal point for the steel industry, providing global leadership on all major strategic issues impacting the industry.
- Its members represent approximately 85 percent of the world's steel production.
- It was established in 1967 and is headquartered in Brussels, Belgium.

Source: Business Standard

### Commodore Amit Rastogi (Retd) appointed as Chairman & Managing Director of NRDC

#### Why in News



- **Commodore Amit Rastogi (Retd)** has been appointed as the Chairman & Managing Director of **National Research Development Corporation (NRDC)**.

#### Key Points

- **Amit Rastogi** has served 34 years in the Indian Navy (IN).

#### About National Research Development Corporation (NRDC):

- It is an enterprise of Department of Scientific & Industrial Research (DSIR), Ministry of Science & Technology, Government of India.
- It was established in 1953.

Source: ET

### IAS Ritesh Chauhan appointed as CEO of PM Fasal Bima Yojana

#### Why in News

- **IAS Ritesh Chauhan** has been appointed as the **CEO (Chief Executive Officer)** of the **Pradhan Mantri (PM) Fasal Bima Yojana** and Joint Secretary, Agriculture under the Department of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare for a combined tenure of seven years up to September 22, 2023.

#### Key Points

- **Ritesh Chauhan** will succeed **Ashish Kumar Bhutani**, who was appointed in 2018.

#### About Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY):

- **PMFBY** launched on 18 February 2016 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi is an insurance service for farmers for their yields.
- It was formulated in line with the One Nation–One Scheme theme by replacing earlier two schemes National Agricultural Insurance Scheme (NAIS) and Modified National Agricultural Insurance Scheme (MNAIS).
- The aim is to reduce the premium burden on farmers and ensure early settlement of crop assurance claims for the full insured sum.

Source: ET

### K V Subramanian steps down as India's Chief Economic Adviser

#### Why in News

- K V Subramanian stepped down as **India's Chief Economic Adviser (CEA)** after 3-year tenure.

#### Key Points

- The government had appointed Subramanian, an ISB Hyderabad professor, as the CEA in December 2018.
- He has decided to return back to academia.

Source: Business Standard

### Former IAS officer Amit Khare appointed as PM Modi's advisor

#### Why in News

- The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved the appointment of **Amit Khare** as adviser to **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** for two years on contract basis.

#### Key Points

- **Amit Khare**, a 1985 batch (retired) IAS officer of Jharkhand cadre, had retired on September 30, 2021.
- He took charge as the Higher Education Secretary in December 2019.
- Earlier he served as Information and Broadcasting Ministry secretary.

**Source: HT**

### **Aveek Sarkar re-elected Chairman of PTI**

#### **Why in News**

- **Aveek Sarkar** was re-elected Chairman of **Press Trust of India (PTI)**.

#### **Key Points**

- Aveek Sarkar is Emeritus Editor and Vice Chairman of the Ananda Bazar Group of Publications.

#### **About Press Trust of India (PTI):**

- PTI is the largest news agency in India.
- It is headquartered in New Delhi and is a nonprofit cooperative among more than 500 Indian newspapers

**Source: outlookindia**

### **E. R. Sheikh assumes charge as first Director General of the Ordnance Directorate**

#### **Why in News**

- **E.R. Sheikh** assumed charge as first **Director General of the Ordnance Directorate (Co-ordination and Services)**.
- It is the successor organization of **Ordnance Factory Board (OFB)**.

#### **Key Points**

- E.R. Sheik was General Manager of the Ordnance Factory, Itarsi earlier.
- He is also the recipient of the **Ayudh Ratna Award, 2020**.

#### **About Ordnance Factory Board (OFB):**

- Ordnance Factory Board, consisting of the Indian Ordnance Factories, was an organisation, under the control of the department of defence production, Ministry of Defence, Government of India.
- Now this has been changed to **7 Defence Public Sector Units (DPSUs)** that are fully controlled and owned by the Ministry of Defence, Government of India

**Source: PIB**

### **Japan's Parliament elects Fumio Kishida as new prime minister**

#### **Why in News**

- Japan's parliament elected former foreign minister Fumio Kishida as the new prime minister.

#### **Key Points**

- Fumio Kishida replaces Yoshihide Suga, who resigned with his Cabinet earlier.
- He has also presided over the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) since 29 September 2021.

**Source: The Hindu**

## GC Murmu becomes external auditor of IAEA

### Why in News

- **India's Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) GC Murmu** has been selected as the next external auditor of the **International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)** for a six-year term.

### Key Points

- GC Murmu assumed office as the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India on August 8, 2020.
- He also served as the **first Lt Governor** of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

### About International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA):

- It is an international organization that seeks to promote the peaceful use of nuclear energy.
- It was established as an autonomous organisation on 29 July 1957.
- Its headquarters is in Vienna, Austria.

**Source: India Today**

## Obituaries

### Yogendra Mohan Gupta, Chairman of Dainik Jagran Group, passed away

- Born on December 14, 1937, Yogendra Mohan Gupta also edited 'Kanchan Prabha' magazine.
- He is also credited with setting up Lakshmidevi Lalit Kala Akademi in Kanpur.

**Source: TOI**

### Abdul Qadeer Khan, father of Pakistan's nuclear bomb passes away

- Abdul Qadeer Khan, 85, known as the father of Pakistan's nuclear bomb passed away.
- AQ Khan had been living a secluded life since 2004 after he admitted to a role of massive global nuclear proliferation scam by Pakistan.
- In a televised address, he had accepted responsibility for illegal proliferation of N-technology to Iran, North Korea and Libya.

**Source: newsonair**

### Veteran Malayalam Film Actor Nedumudi Venu passes away

- Nedumudi Venu was one of the finest actors in the Malayalam film industry who has acted in over 500 films.
- He has won two National Awards and a special jury mention during his career in addition to six Kerala State film awards.

**Source: newsonair**

### Actors Arvind Trivedi, Ghanashyam Nayak passes away

- Veteran actor **Arvind Trivedi**, who played the role of Ravan in Ramanand Sagar's 1987 iconic TV series Ramayan, passed away at the age of 82.

- **Ghanashyam Nayak** was famously known for playing the role of Natwarlal Prabhashankar Undhaiwala AKA Nattu Kaka in Taarak Mehta Ka Ooltah Chashmah.

**Source: Indian Express**

## Important Days

### October 21, Police Commemoration Day 2021

#### Why in News

- **National Police Commemoration Day** is observed on October 21 every year.
- It is observed to salute the spirits of police forces and their families and brave police martyrs who lost their lives fighting for the country.

#### Key Points

##### History:

- On October 21, 1959, when twenty Indian soldiers were attacked by Chinese troops in Ladakh due to arguments between the troops, ten Indian policemen lost their lives and seven were imprisoned.
- After a month, on November 28, 1959, Chinese troops handed over the dead bodies of the martyred policemen and, since that day, October 21 has been observed as Police Commemoration Day in honour of the martyrs every year.

**Note:** In 2018, Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated **India's first national police museum in Delhi** on the occasion of Police Commemoration Day.

**Source: India Today**

### October 16, World Food Day

#### Why in News

- **World Food Day (WFD)** is celebrated every year on October 16 to commemorate the date of the founding of the **United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO)** in 1945.

#### Key Points

- The **theme** for World Food Day this year is **“Our actions are our future- Better production, better nutrition, a better environment and a better life,”** as per the official website of FAO.
- **World Food Day** was established by FAO's Member Countries at the Organization's 20th General Conference in November 1979.
- The day is also observed by organisations like World Food Programme and International Fund for Agricultural Development.

#### Note:

- This time, the UN Secretary-General also convened the very first Food Systems Summit in September 2021 to discuss ways to transform the production and consumption of food.

- According to **The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World, 2020 report by FAO**, 189.2 million Indians or 14 percent of the total population in India are undernourished.

**Source: India Express**

### **October 17, International Day for the Eradication of Poverty**

#### **Why in News**

- **International Day for the Eradication of Poverty** is observed annually on October 17 worldwide and highlights worldwide poverty, violence and hunger.

#### **Key Points**

- The **theme** for International Day for the Eradication of Poverty 2021 is **“Building forward together: Ending Persistent Poverty, Respecting all People and our Planet.”**
- In 1992, the United Nations (UN) officially designated October 17 as the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty.

**Source: India Today**

### **October 15, International Day of Rural Women**

#### **Why in News**

- The International Day of Rural Women is celebrated on 15 October each year.

#### **Key Points**

- The **theme** for the International Day of Rural Women 2021 is **“Rural Women Cultivating Good Food for All”**.

#### **History:**

- The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) established the day on 18 December 2007.
- The first International Day of Rural Women was observed on 15 October 2008.

**Note:** With less than 10 years to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, including Zero Hunger (Goal 2) and Gender Equality (Goal 5), UN Women is working to support rural women and girls around the world, to build their resilience, skills and leadership.

**Source: un.org**

### **October 14, World Standards Day**

#### **Why in News**

- World Standards Day, also known as International Standards Day, is observed globally every year on October 14.

#### **Key Points**

- The **theme** for the World Standards Day 2021 is **“Shared Vision for a Better World”**.
- This day aims to create awareness about the importance of standardization to the global economy among the consumers, regulators and industry.

#### **History:**

- The International Organization for Standardization (ISO) was created in 1947 but this day was first celebrated in 1970.

**Source: India Today**

### **October 13, International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction**

#### **Why in News**

- **International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction** is observed on October 13, every year.

#### **Key Points**

##### **Background:**

- It was started in 1989, after a call by the United Nations General Assembly to promote a global culture of risk-awareness and disaster reduction.
- The 2021 edition focuses on **“International cooperation for developing countries to reduce their disaster risk and disaster losses.”** This is the **sixth of the Sendai Seven** targets.

##### **About Sendai Seven Campaign:**

- The Sendai Seven Campaign is in its 6th year following its launch by the UN Secretary-General in 2016.
- Each year, the focus has been on one of the seven targets of the Sendai Framework agreed by UN Member States at a World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai, Japan.

**Source: un.org**

### **October 11, International Day of the Girl Child**

#### **Why in News**

- International Day of the Girl Child is celebrated on October 11 and is dedicated to the growth of girls around the world.

#### **Key Points**

- The **theme** of International Day of the Girl Child 2021 is **"Digital generation. Our generation."**
- On December 19, 2011, the United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution to declare October 11 as the International Day of the Girl Child, to recognize girls' rights and the unique challenges girls face around the world.

**Note:** The **National Girl Child Day** is celebrated in India every year on **January 24.**

**Source: newsonair**

### **October 10, World Mental Health Day**

#### **Why in News**

- World Mental Health Day is an international day for global mental health education, awareness and advocacy against social stigma.

#### **Key Points**

- The **theme** of World Mental Health Day 2021 is **'Mental Health in an Unequal World.'**

- It was first celebrated in 1992 at the initiative of the World Federation for Mental Health, a global mental health organization.

**Note:**

- The World Health Organisation states globally, around 280 million people suffer from depression, whereas around 1 in 5 of the world's children and adolescents have a mental disorder.
- As far as India is concerned, according to the 'The Global Burden of Disease Study 1990 – 2017' study, 197.3 million people were suffering from various mental disorders in India that is one in seven Indians.

**Source: who.int**

### **October 9, World Post Day**

#### **Why in News**

- **World Post Day** is celebrated each year on the 9th of October to mark the anniversary of the establishment of the **Universal Postal Union (UPU)**.

#### **Key Points**

- The **theme** of World Post Day 2021 is **'Innovate to recover'**.
- **Universal Postal Union** was established in the year 1874 in Switzerland.
- India has been a member of the Universal Postal Union since 1876.
- It was declared World Post Day by the UPU Congress held in Tokyo, Japan in 1969.

**Source: un.org**

### **October 10, National Post Day**

#### **Why in News**

- National Post Day is celebrated on October 10 every year and it is an extension of World Post Day, which is celebrated on October 9.

#### **Key Points**

- National Post Day is celebrated to mark the role played by the Indian postal department in over 150 years.

#### **Indian postal service:**

- Postal service was introduced in India by the British.
- It was founded in 1854 by Lord Dalhousie.

**Note: National Postal Week 2021: 09<sup>th</sup> -16<sup>th</sup> October, 2021**

**Source: Business Standard**

### **October 8, Indian Air Force Day**

#### **Why in News**

- Indian Air Force Day is celebrated on October 8, every year in the country.

#### **Key Points**

#### **History:**

- Indian Air Force (IAF) was established in the country on October 8, 1932, by the British Empire.
- The first operational squadron came into being in April 1933.
- The Air Force in India was officially raised in 1932 as the supporting force of the Royal Air Force of the United Kingdom.

**Note:**

- IAF is ranked the fourth largest operational air force in the world. Only the US, China and Russia are ahead of India.

#### **Facts about Indian Air Force:**

- **Headquarters:** New Delhi
- **Founded:** 8 October 1932
- **Motto:** Nabhaḥ Spr̥ṣam Dīptam (Touch the Sky with Glory)
- **Commander-in-Chief:** President Ram Nath Kovind
- **Chief of Defence Staff (CDS):** General Bipin Rawat
- **Chief of the Air Staff:** Air Chief Marshal Vivek Ram Chaudhari

**Source:** India Today

### **World Space Week 2021**

#### **Why in News**

- **World Space Week** is held annually from **4 to 10 October** to celebrate the scientific and technological advancements.

#### **Key Points**

- The **theme** for World Space week 2021 is '**Women in Space**'.

#### **History:**

- The **United Nations General Assembly** declared in 1999 that World Space Week will be held each year from October 4-10.

#### **These dates commemorate two events:**

- **October 4, 1957:** Launch of the first human-made Earth satellite, Sputnik 1
- **October 10, 1967:** The signing of the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies.

**Source:** [worldspaceweek.org](http://worldspaceweek.org)

### **October 02, International Day of Non-Violence**

#### **Why in News**

- International Day of Non-Violence is observed on October 2nd, the birthday of Mahatma Gandhi.

#### **Key Points**

- International Day of Non-Violence was established on 15 June 2007 according to the United Nations General Assembly resolution.
- The year 2021 marks the 152nd birth anniversary of Gandhi, who was born on October 2, 1869, in Porbandar, Gujarat.

#### **In India:**

- The country observes his birth anniversary as Gandhi Jayanti, which is one of three national holidays, Republic Day (January 26) and Independence Day (August 15) being the other two.

**Source:** [un.org](http://un.org)

## **Sports**

### India beat Nepal to clinch SAFF championship for 8th time

- **India** clinched the **South Asian Football Federation (SAFF) Championship** for the 8<sup>th</sup> time defeating Nepal 3-0 in Male, Maldives.
- Indian captain **Sunil Chhetri** equalled the iconic footballer Lionel Messi with his 80th international strike and became the second highest goal-scorer in international football among active players.

Source: newsonair

### Chennai Super Kings wins IPL title 2021

#### Why in News

- **Chennai Super Kings** beat Kolkata Knight Riders by 27 runs to win its **4<sup>th</sup> IPL (Indian Premier League) title** in Dubai.
- The **2021 Indian Premier League (IPL 14)** was the **fourteenth season** of IPL.

#### Key Points

- **Player of the series:** Harshal Patel (Royal Challengers Bangalore)
- **Orange Cap:** Ruturaj Gaikwad (Chennai Super Kings) Most runs 635
- **Purple Cap:** Harshal Patel (Royal Challengers Bangalore) Most wickets 32
- MS Dhoni led Chennai lift the IPL trophy for the fourth time, having previously won the tournament in 2010, 2011, and 2018.

Source: newsonair

### 2021 ISSF Junior World Championships

- With **43 medals** (17 Gold, 16 Silver and 10 Bronze), **India** has topped the table of **International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) Junior World Championship 2021** in Lima, Peru.
- The **second place** in the medals tally went to the **USA with 21 medals** (7 Gold, 8 Silver and 6 Bronze).

Source: ndtv

### FIH Hockey Stars Awards 2021

- **Indian hockey players** swept the 2020-21 edition of the **FIH (International Hockey Federation) Hockey Stars Awards**.
- It's the first time that a country (India) has won in all eight categories.

#### Winners list:

- **Player of the Year:** Gurjit Kaur (women) and Harmanpreet Singh (men)
- **Goalkeeper of the Year:** Savita Punia (women) and PR Sreejesh (men)
- **Coach of the Year:** Sjoerd Marijne (women) and Graham Reid (men)
- **Rising Star of the Year:** Sharmila Devi (women) and Vivek Sagar Prasad (men)

Source: Indian Express

### Anshu Malik becomes first Indian woman to win silver medal in 2021 World Wrestling Championship

- **Wrestler Anshu Malik** became the first Indian woman to win a silver medal in the 2021 World Wrestling Championships in Oslo, Norway.
- She went down fighting against Helen Maroulis in the women's 57kg final.

**Source: ndtv**

### **Hockey India withdraws from 2022 Birmingham Commonwealth Games**

- Hockey India has pulled out of the 2022 Birmingham Commonwealth Games citing COVID-19 concerns and UK's discriminatory quarantine rules for travellers from India.
- The move comes after England withdrew from the Men's Junior Hockey World Cup in Bhubaneswar over similar reasons.

**Source: TOI**

### **FC Goa clinch maiden Durand Cup football trophy**

- **FC Goa (Football Club Goa)** claimed their maiden Durand Cup football title after a 1-0 win over Mohammedan Sporting Club in the final in Kolkata.
- The Durand Cup crown also marks FC Goa coach Juan Ferrando Fenoll's first-ever trophy on Indian soil.
- FC Goa got 40 lakh rupees for winning the title, while Mohammedan Sporting received 20 lakh rupees.

**Source: newsonair**

### **Nagaland to host 56th National Cross Country Championship in January 2022**

#### **Why in News**

- **Nagaland Athletics Association** will host the 56th National Cross Country Championship on 15th of January 2022.

#### **Key Points**

- It will be hosted under the sponsorship of the Athletics Federation of India.

**Note:** Chandigarh Athletics Association hosted the 55<sup>th</sup> National Cross Country Championship in February 2021.

**Source: newsonair**

### **Sania Mirza-Shuai Zhang wins Ostrava Open women's doubles title 2021**

- **India's Tennis veteran, Sania Mirza** won the Women's Doubles Title at the Ostrava Open 2021 with her Chinese partner Shuai Zhang in Ostrava, Czech Republic.
- This is the first title of this season for Sania Mirza and the 43rd title of her career.
- Ostrava Open is a tournament organized for women tennis players.

**Source: newsonair**

## Monthly Current Affairs September 2021

मासिक समसामयिकी सितम्बर 2021

### Important News: State

#### First edition of 'The Himalayan Film Festival, 2021'

##### Why in News

- The first edition of '**The Himalayan Film Festival-2021**' (THFF) will begin from 24 to 28 September at Leh.
- **Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag Thakur** will inaugurate it.

##### Key Points

- The film festival is being organised by the Administration of Union Territory of Ladakh in collaboration with the Directorate of Film Festivals, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India.
- The festival also aims to create an interactive and exposure platform to promote aspiring local filmmakers and to showcase Ladakh as an attractive film destination.

**Source: ET**

#### Integrated Aroma Dairy Entrepreneurship for Jammu & Kashmir

##### Why in News

- Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Science & Technology Dr Jitendra Singh has proposed **Integrated Aroma Dairy Entrepreneurship** for Jammu & Kashmir to augment the income of farmers.
- The same can be effectively integrated with **Aroma Mission** which has already been launched in J&K by CSIR under the aegis of Union Ministry of Science & Technology.
- Recently, **CSIR Floriculture Mission** has been launched in 21 States and Union Territories of India.

##### Key Points

### **About Aroma Mission:**

- The Aroma Mission, also popularly referred as "**Lavender or Purple Revolution**", has started from J&K and transformed the lives of farmers.

**Nodal Agencies:** The nodal laboratory is CSIR-Central Institute of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants, Lucknow.

- The participating laboratories are CSIR-Institute of Himalayan Bioresource Technology, Palampur; CSIR-Indian Institute of Integrative Medicine, Jammu etc.
- CSIR-IIIM-Jammu announced Aroma Mission phase-II in February, 2021 after the success of the first phase.

### **About Floriculture Mission:**

- The CSIR Floriculture Mission is expected to create opportunities for entrepreneurship development in floriculture.
- The mission will focus on commercial floral crops, seasonal/annual crops, wild ornaments and cultivation of flower crops for honey bee rearing. Some of the popular crops include Gladiolus, Canna, Carnation, Chrysanthemum, Gerbera, Liliun, Marigold, Rose, Tuberosa etc.

**Note:** The Indian floriculture market was worth Rs 15700 crore in 2018. The market is projected to reach Rs 47200 crore by 2024 during 2019-24.

### **Source: PIB**

*Guru Ghasidas National Park to become India's 53rd Tiger Reserve*

### **Why in News**

- Guru Ghasidas National Park will become the country's 53<sup>rd</sup> Tiger Reserve, as soon as it gets approval from the **National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA)**.
- It will be the **4<sup>th</sup> of Chhattisgarh** and 53<sup>rd</sup> of the country's Tiger Reserve.

### **Key Points**

- In the year 2019 a resolution was passed by Chhattisgarh Forest to make, Guru Ghasidas National Park and Tamor Pingla Sanctuary as Tiger Reserve.
- Before the formation of Chhattisgarh, this was part of Sanjay National Park in United Madhya Pradesh.

- The Tiger Reserve has been formed by combining Guru Ghasidas National Park of Korea and Tamor Pingla Sanctuary of Surguja.
- At present there are **3 tiger reserves, Achanakmar, Udanti Sitanadi and Indravati** in the state.

#### **About National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA):**

- **NTCA** is a statutory body under the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change constituted under enabling provisions of the **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972**, as amended in 2006.

#### **About Project Tiger:**

- Project Tiger is a tiger conservation programme launched in April 1973 by the Government of India.
- It is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme that provides the required support for the conservation of the tiger in the country.

**Source: zeenews**

### **India's largest open-air fernery in Uttarakhand**

#### **Why in News**

- India's largest open-air fernery was inaugurated in **Uttarakhand's Ranikhet.**

#### **Key Points**

##### **About the Ranikhet fernery:**

- The fernery has the largest collection of fern species, second to only **Jawaharlal Nehru Tropical Botanical Garden and Research Institute (TBGRI), Thiruvananthapuram.**
- However, it is the country's first open-air fernery in natural surroundings which is not under any poly-house/ shade house.
- The fernery spreads over 4 acres of land at an altitude of 1,800 metres.
- It has been developed by the Research Wing of Uttarakhand Forest Department over a period of three years, under **Central Government's CAMPA scheme.**
- **About CAMPA (Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority):** The CAMPA by the Ministry of Environment and Forests was introduced in 2004 to accelerate activities for the preservation of natural forests, management of wildlife, infrastructure development in forests, and other allied works.
- The Ranikhet fernery has 120 different types of fern.

- The fernery has a mix of species from the western Himalayan region, the eastern Himalayan region, and the Western Ghats.
- It houses several rare species, including Tree Fern, a threatened species by the State Biodiversity Board of Uttarakhand.

**About Ferns:**

- Ferns are non-flowering pteridophytes.
- They have medicinal and edible purposes. Ferns clean the ecosystem and are good nitrogen fixing agents.

**Note:** Recently, **India's first cryptogamic garden** was inaugurated in July 2021 in **Uttarakhand's Dehradun district**.

**Source: newsonair**

**Prime Minister inaugurates Sardardham Bhavan at Ahmedabad**

**Why in News**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated **Sardardham Bhavan at Ahmedabad in Gujarat**.
- He has also laid the foundation stone of **Sardardham Phase-II Kanya Chhatralay (Girls' Hostel)**.

**Key Points**

- Sardardham Bhavan has been developed by Patidar Samaj.
- Sardardham has been working towards educational & social transformation, upliftment of weaker sections of society and providing employment opportunities to the youth.

**Source: TOI**

**Tamil Nadu to observe Periyar's birth anniversary as Day of Social Justice**

**Why in News**

- **Tamil Nadu government** has decided to celebrate the birth anniversary of social reformer **E.V. Ramasamy Periyar as 'Day of Social Justice' on September 17 every year**.

**Key Points**

**About E.V. Ramasamy Periyar:**

- Erode Venkatappa Ramasamy commonly known as Periyar, was an Indian social activist and politician who started the Self-Respect Movement and Dravidar Kazhagam.
- He is known as the 'Father of the Dravidian movement'.
- He promoted the principles of rationalism, self-respect, women's rights and eradication of caste.

**Source: The Hindu**

## Uttarakhand Governor Baby Rani Maurya resigns

### Why in News

- Uttarakhand Governor Baby Rani Maurya resigned, two years before completing her tenure.

### Key Points

- Baby Rani Maurya tendered her resignation to President Ram Nath Kovind.
- She was sworn in as the 7<sup>th</sup> governor of Uttarakhand on August 26, 2018.
- She has the distinction of being the first woman mayor of Agra from 1995 to 2000.
- She had also been a member of the National Commission for Women from 2002 to 2005.

**Source: TOI**

## Chandigarh gets its first pollen calendar

### Why in News

- Chandigarh now has its first pollen calendar, which can identify potential allergy triggers and provide a clear understanding for clinicians as well as allergy sufferers about their causes to help limit their exposure during high pollen loads.
- **PGIMER, Chandigarh** developed the first Pollen Calendar for Chandigarh city.

### Key Points

#### About Pollen calendars:

- Pollen calendars represent the time dynamics of airborne pollen present in a particular geographical area.
- They yield readily accessible visual details about various airborne pollen taxa present throughout the year, with their seasonality in a single picture.
- Pollen calendars are location-specific, with concentrations closely related to locally distributed flora.

**Note:** Europe, UK and the US are using regional pollen calendars in a big way to prevent and diagnose allergic rhinitis/hay fever and predict the timing and severity of the pollen season.

#### About Pollen:

- Pollen grains are male biological structures with the primary role of fertilisation, but when inhaled by humans, they may strain the respiratory system and cause allergies.

- About 20-30% of the population suffers from allergic rhinitis/hay fever in India, and approximately 15% develop asthma.
- Pollen is considered major outdoor airborne allergens responsible for allergic rhinitis, asthma, and atopic dermatitis in humans.

**Source: PIB**

## **Tamil Nadu to set up India's first Dugong Conservation Reserve**

### **Why in News**

- The **Tamil Nadu government** announced to set up **India's first Dugong Conservation Reserve** in the **Palk Bay** in **Tamil Nadu**.

### **Key Points**

#### **About Dugong:**

- Dugong, also called the sea cow, is a marine mammal.
- They can grow upto three meters long, weigh about 300 kilograms, and live for about 65 to 70 years.
- Dugong is listed as Vulnerable on the **IUCN Red List of Threatened Species**.
- They are found in over 30 countries and in India are seen in the Gulf of Mannar, Gulf of Kutch, Palk Bay, and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

**Note:** Marine Conservation Reserve will be established over an area of 500km in Palk Bay.

**Source: The Hindu**

## **Assam cabinet drops Rajiv Gandhi's name from Orang National Park**

### **Why in News**

- The Assam Cabinet has decided to drop former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's name from the Orang National Park.
- Now the Rajiv Gandhi Orang National Park will be known as the Orang National Park.
- The decision to restore the original name of Orang National Park was taken following requests from the Adivasi groups in the State.

### **Key Points**

#### **About Orang National Park:**

- Situated about 120 km north-east of Guwahati, the 79.28 sq. km Orang is one of Assam's seven national parks and among the top three rhino habitats.

- It also has one of the highest density of tigers in the country.
- Orang was declared a wildlife sanctuary in 1985 and was upgraded to a national park in 1999.
- It became the Rajiv Gandhi Orang National Park during the Congress government headed by Tarun Gogoi.
- The national park was declared a Tiger Reserve by the National Tiger Conservation Authority in March 2016.

**Note:** Assam currently has seven national parks: Kaziranga, Manas, Orang, Nameri, Dibru-Saikhowa and more recently, Raimona and Dehing Patkai.

**Source: The Hindu**

## **Manipur CM launches e-ILP platform to regulate entry, exit and tracking of visitors**

### **Why in News**

- **Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh** launched the **e-ILP platform** for effective regulation of the **Inner Line Permit (ILP)** system in the state.
- The ILP system came into effect in Manipur on January 1, 2020.
- Manipur issues 4 different categories of permissions: temporary, regular, special, and labour permits.

### **Key Points**

#### **About Inner Line Permit (ILP):**

- **ILP** is a document that Indian citizens from other states are required to possess in order to enter states like Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Nagaland and Manipur.
- **e-ILP platform** will play a vital role in **regulating the entry, exit and tracking of visitors**.
- e-ILP platform has a comprehensive dashboard system that actively shows varied information such as number of people entering the state on a particular day and time and a graphical break-up-based presentation of people visiting through different entry gates.
- An Inner Line Permit Monitoring Cell with DIG (Intelligence) as its chairman had been set up to ensure proper reading of entry and exit and to track over stay.

**Source: Indian Express**

## **Ladakh declares Black-Necked Crane as its State Bird, Snow Leopard as State Animal**

### Why in News

- The **Union Territory (UT) of Ladakh** declared the Black-Necked Crane (*Grus nigricollis*) and Snow Leopard (*Panther unica*) as its state bird and animal, respectively.

### Key Points

- Black-necked crane was previously the State bird of the former state of J&K, along with Hangul as the state animal.

### About Black-necked crane:

- Black-necked crane was chosen as the state bird since it is only found in the eastern region of Ladakh.
- Crane is listed in Schedule I of the **Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972** and as **Near Threatened** on the **International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List**.

### About Snow leopard:

- Snow leopards are mainly found in the western and eastern regions of the Himalayas, including Ladakh, J&K, Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand.
- Leopard is listed in Schedule I of the **Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972** and as **Vulnerable** on the **IUCN Red List**.

**Note:** The Centre on August 5, 2019 abrogated Article 370 of Constitution to end J&K's special status and pave the way for notification of UTs of Ladakh and J&K in October that year.

**Source:** TOI

## Chandigarh Railway Station awarded 5-star 'Eat Right Station' certification

### Why in News

- Chandigarh Railway Station has been awarded a **5- star 'Eat Right Station' certification** by **FSSAI** for providing high-quality, nutritious food to passengers.

### Key Points

- **Chandigarh Railway** Station becomes the **fifth station in India** to get this recognition.
- The other railway stations with this certification include Anand Vihar Terminal Railway Station; (Delhi), Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus; (Mumbai), Mumbai Central Railway Station; (Mumbai) and Vadodara Railway Station.

### About 'Eat Right Station' certification:

- This certification is granted by **FSSAI (Food Safety and Standards Authority of India)** to railway stations adhering to standard food storage and hygiene practices.
- The certification is part of the '**Eat Right India**' movement of **FSSAI** to transform the country's food system to ensure safe, healthy food for all Indians.

**Source: PIB**

## Important News: India

### **National Single Window System for Investors and Businesses** **Why in News**

- The **Ministry of Commerce & Industry** has launched the **National Single Window System (NSWS)** for Investors and Businesses.
- The National Single Window System will usher in a change from the legacy of running to government offices and will promote the ease of doing business.

#### **Key Points**

#### **About National Single Window System (NSWS):**

- **DPIIT (Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade)** along with **Invest India** initiated the process of developing the portal as a National Single Window System.
- It will become a one-stop-shop for investors for approvals & clearances.
- It will provide strength to other schemes e.g. Make in India, Startup India, PLI scheme etc.

#### **Other Initiatives to improve Ease of Doing Business:**

- Production Linked Incentive Scheme (PLI)
- India Industrial Land Bank System
- Investment Clearance Cell (ICC)
- Amendments to Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) and Decriminalisation under Companies Act, 2013
- Reduction of corporate tax from 30% to 25% for mid-sized companies

**Note:** India ranked 63rd out of 190 countries in Ease Doing Business 2020: World Bank Report

**Source: The Hindu**

## Ministry of Education forms a National Steering Committee for the development of National Curriculum Frameworks

### Why in News

- The Ministry of Education has formed the **12 member National Steering Committee for the development of National Curriculum Frameworks** in line with the **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020**.

### Key Points

- The committee will be chaired by former **ISRO Chairman Dr K Kasturirangan**. He was also Chairman of the Drafting Committee of NEP, 2020.

### Terms of Reference of the Committee:

- As per the perspectives of the NEP 2020, the Committee will develop four National Curriculum Frameworks- i.e., the National Curriculum Framework for School Education, National Curriculum for Early Childhood Care and Education, National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education and National Curriculum Framework for Adult Education.
- Tenure of the National Steering Committee will be three years from the date of its notification.

Source: PIB

## High Level Expert Committee for a comprehensive review of NCC

### Why in News

- The **Ministry of Defence** has constituted a **15-member High Level Expert Committee** for a comprehensive review of the **National Cadet Corps (NCC)**.

### Key Points

- The committee will be chaired by former **Member of Parliament (MP) Baijayant Panda** and will include former **Indian cricket team captain MS Dhoni**, industrialist **Anand Mahindra** and former sports minister **Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore**.

### Objective:

- **Committee to suggest measures to empower NCC cadets to contribute more effectively towards nation building**
- **To propose ways for gainful engagement of NCC Alumni for betterment of the organisation**
- **To recommend best practices of similar international youth organisations for inclusion in NCC curriculum**

### **About National Cadet Corps (NCC):**

- The NCC is the largest uniformed organisation which aims at developing character, discipline, a secular outlook and ideals of selfless service amongst young citizens.
- The NCC is the youth wing of the Indian Armed Forces.
- **Headquarters:** New Delhi
- **Founded:** 16 April 1948

**Source: PIB**

### **KVIC launches SPIN (Strengthening the Potential of India) Scheme**

#### **Why in News**

- **Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC)** launched a unique Scheme called **SPIN (Strengthening the Potential of India)**.
- SPIN is a specially designed program to make potters self-sustainable.

#### **Key Points**

##### **Salient Features of SPIN Scheme:**

- It is a no-subsidy program.
- KVIC facilitates potters to get bank loans under Pradhan Mantri Shishu Mudra Yojana.

##### **Other Related Schemes:**

- Terracotta Grinder
- Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme
- Kumhar Sashaktikaran Yojana

**Source: TOI**

### **Rail Kaushal Vikas Yojana (RKVY)**

#### **Why in News**

- The **Ministry of Railways** launched **Rail Kaushal Vikas Yojana** under the aegis of **Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY)**.

#### **Key Points**

##### **About Rail Kaushal Vikas Yojana (RKVY):**

- The aim is to impart training skills to the youth in various trades to bring qualitative improvement.
- The training will be provided to 50000 candidates over a period of three years.
- The training will be provided in 4 trades viz. Electrician, Machinist, Welder and Fitter.

- The scheme is being launched for 1000 participants initially and will be over and above the training provided to apprentices under the **Apprentice Act 1961**.

**About Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY):**

- It is the flagship scheme of the Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (MSDE) implemented by National Skill Development Corporation.
- The **1st version** of **PMKVY** was launched in **2015**.
- **PMKVY 2.0** was launched for **2016-20**.
- **PMKVY 3.0** was launched in **2021**.

**Other Related Initiatives:**

- ASEEM (Atma Nirbhar Skilled Employee Employer Mapping)
- SANKALP (Skills Acquisition and Knowledge Awareness for Livelihood)
- STRIVE (Skills Strengthening for Industrial Value Enhancement)
- SHREYAS (Scheme for Higher Education Youth in Apprenticeship and Skills)
- YuWaah Youth Skilling Initiative
- National Career Service Project

**Source: PIB**

**'Reforms in Urban Planning Capacity in India' Report: NITI Aayog**

**Why in News**

- **NITI Aayog** launched the report, titled **'Reforms in Urban Planning Capacity in India'**.

**Key Points**

**About the Report:**

- The report has been developed by NITI Aayog, in consultation with concerned ministries and eminent experts in the domain of urban and regional planning.

**Reforms in Urban Planning Capacity:**

- India is the second largest urban system in the world with almost 11% of the total global urban population living in Indian cities.
- Urban growth is expected to contribute to 73% of the total population increase by 2036.
- Over 75% of the urban population is in 10 States: Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Rajasthan, and Kerala.

- Urban planning is the foundation for an integrated development of cities, citizens, and the environment. Unfortunately, it has received due attention so far.
- **Report's main recommendation: Programmatic Intervention for Planning of Healthy Cities:** Every city must aspire to become a 'Healthy City for All' by 2030. The report recommends a Central Sector Scheme '500 Healthy Cities Programme', for a period of 5 years, wherein priority cities and towns would be selected jointly by the states and local bodies.

#### **Schemes/Programmes Related to Urban Development:**

- AMRUT Mission
- Smart Cities
- Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban
- Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Urban
- The National Heritage City Development and Augmentation Yojana (HRIDAY)

**Source: PIB**

### **Crime in India Report 2020: NCRB**

#### **Why in News**

- The **National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB)** has released the **68<sup>th</sup> edition of Crime in India Report 2020.**

#### **Key Points**

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

##### **Communal riots:**

- Communal riots registered an increase of 96% in 2020 over the previous year (2019).
- **Delhi Police** alone registered the highest 520 cases of communal riots in 2020.
- **Uttar Pradesh** did not record a single case of communal violence in 2020.

##### **Caste riots:**

- Caste riots saw an increase of close to 50%, agrarian riots 38% and riots during 'andolan/morcha' increased by 33%.
- Cases of caste conflict increased from 492 in 2019 to 736 in 2020. Bihar recorded the highest number in this category at 208.

##### **Traditional Crimes:**

- While 2020 — a year marked by months of a national lockdown due to the pandemic — saw fewer “traditional crimes” such as

- those committed against women and children, among others, it witnessed a big spike in civil conflicts.
- The number of cases registered for crimes against women, children and senior citizens, theft, burglary, robbery and dacoity, among others, dropped by about 2 lakh.
  - Murder registered a marginal increase of 1% even as offences falling under the “violent crimes” category decreased by 0.5%.

#### **Offences against the State:**

- The year also saw a significant drop in cases related to ‘Offences against the State’, with a drop of 27% over 2019.
- Uttar Pradesh, however, was the only major state to record an increase in this category, mostly due to the large number of ‘Damage to Public Property’ cases registered by the state, many of them during the anti- CAA protests.
- It includes cases related to sedition and waging war against the nation, those falling under provisions of the Official Secrets Act, Unlawful Activities Prevention Act and Damage to Public Property Act.

**Source: Indian Express**

#### **Connect Karo 2021 Why in News**

- **Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs Hardeep Singh Puri** addressed the inaugural session of ‘**Connect Karo 2021 - Towards Equitable, Sustainable Indian Cities**’ program.
- It was organized by the **World Resources Institute (WRI) India**.

#### **Key Points**

##### **Minister’s Address:**

- **By 2030, almost 70% of the national GDP** will come from our cities as rapid urbanisation facilitates efficiencies of agglomerations.
- The best-performing cities globally contribute **five times more to national GDP** than comparable Indian cities.
- By 2030, the urban population in India will almost double to 630 million.
- Improved urban ecosystems will have quantifiable positive impacts on not just the targets of **SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities)** but also on other national priorities such as poverty, health, education, sanitation, energy, and climate action, the Minister added.

### **Related Government Initiatives:**

- Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana
- Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT Mission)
- Climate Smart Cities Assessment Framework
- Urban Transport scheme
- Jal Jeevan Mission (Urban)
- Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban)

**Source: PIB**

## **Prime Minister lays the foundation stone of Raja Mahendra Pratap Singh State University in Aligarh**

### **Why in News**

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** laid the foundation stone of **Raja Mahendra Pratap Singh State University in Aligarh.**
- **Prime Minister** also visited the exhibition models of the **Aligarh node of Uttar Pradesh Defence Industrial Corridor** and Raja Mahendra Pratap Singh State University.

### **Key Points**

#### **About Raja Mahendra Pratap Singh State University:**

- The University is being established by the Uttar Pradesh State Government in the memory and honour of Raja Mahendra Pratap Singh.
- The University is being set up in a total area of over 92 acres at village Lodha and village Musepur Kareem Jarouli of Aligarh's Koil tehsil.

#### **About Raja Mahendra Pratap Singh:**

- Raja Mahendra Pratap Singh was born in the Hathras District of Uttar Pradesh on 1 December 1886.
- He was an Indian freedom fighter, journalist, writer, revolutionary.
- He was a member of the second Lok Sabha in 1957–1962.
- He was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in 1932.

#### **About UP's Defense Industrial Corridor:**

- The establishment of a Defense Industrial Corridor in Uttar Pradesh was announced by the Prime Minister while inaugurating the UP Investors Summit in Lucknow on February 21, 2018.

- A total of 6 nodes – Aligarh, Agra, Kanpur, Chitrakoot, Jhansi and Lucknow – have been planned in the Defense Industrial Corridor.

**Source: PIB**

## **Swachh Survekshan Grameen (SSG) 2021**

### **Why in News**

- The Minister of State, Jal Shakti Ministry, Prahlad Singh Patel launched **Swachh Survekshan Grameen (SSG) 2021** under **Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen) Phase –II**.
- He also released the SSG 2021 Protocol document; SSG 2021 Dashboard and the mobile App for Citizens feedback.

### **Key Points**

- The **Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation (DDWS)** will undertake Swachh Survekshan Grameen 2021.
- DDWS had commissioned Swachh Survekshan Grameen on two occasions earlier in 2018 and 2019.
- One of the country's largest such survey with around 17,475 villages, it not only gives huge publicity to the programme and ODF Plus goals, but at the same time engages districts and states in enhancing their reputation in sanitation, overall cleanliness and waste management.

### **About Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen) Phase –II:**

- SBM (G) Phase-II will focus on Open Defecation Free Plus (ODF Plus), which includes ODF sustainability and Solid and Liquid Waste Management (SLWM).
- It will be implemented from 2020-21 to 2024-25 with a total outlay of Rs. 1,40,881 crores.

### **Other Schemes as part of Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM):**

- GOBAR-DHAN (Galvanizing Organic Bio-Agro Resources) Scheme
- Individual Household Latrines
- Swachh Vidyalaya Abhiyan

**Source: PIB**

## **National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) 2021**

### **Why in News**

- **Dharmendra Pradhan, Union Education Minister** released the **India Rankings 2021** instituted by the **National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF)**.

## Key Points

### About National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF):

- NIRF, launched in November 2015 by the Ministry of Education, was used for this edition as well as for the past 5 editions of India Rankings released for the years 2016 to 2021.
- This is the sixth consecutive edition of India Rankings of HEIs in India.
- During its maiden year in 2016, rankings were announced for the University category as well as for three domain-specific rankings, namely Engineering, Management and Pharmacy institutions.
- Over the period of six years, three new categories and five new subject domains were added to bring the total tally to 4 four categories, namely Overall, University, College and Research Institutions and 7 subjects, namely Engineering, Management, Architecture, Medical, Pharmacy, Law and Dental in 2021.
- Research institutions have been ranked for the first time in India Rankings 2021.
- **Parameter: These are** Teaching, Learning & Resources, Research and Professional Practice, Graduation Outcomes, Outreach and Inclusivity, Perception.

**Number of Participants:** In all, 6272 applications for ranking were made by these 4030 unique applicant institutions under various categories / domains.

### Key Highlights of India Rankings 2021:

- **Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras** retains 1<sup>st</sup> Position in **Overall Category** as well as in **Engineering** for the third consecutive year.
- **Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru** tops the **University** as well as **Research Institution category** introduced for the first time in India Rankings 2021.
- **IIM Ahmedabad** tops in **Management subject** and **All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi** occupies the top slot in **Medical** for the fourth consecutive year.
- **Jamia Hamdard** tops the list in **Pharmacy subject** for the third consecutive year.
- **Miranda College** retains 1<sup>st</sup> position amongst **colleges** for the fifth consecutive year.
- **IIT Roorkee** takes the top slot for the first time in **Architecture subject** displacing IIT Kharagpur.

- **National Law School of India University, Bangalore** retains its first position in **Law** for the fourth consecutive year.
- **Manipal College of Dental Sciences, Manipal**, secures 1<sup>st</sup> position in “**Dental**” category.

**Source: PIB**

## **ATL Space Challenge 2021**

### **Why in News**

- **Atal Innovation Mission (AIM)**, **NITI Aayog** in collaboration with the **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** and **Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE)** launched the **ATL Space Challenge 2021**.

### **Key Points**

#### **About ATL Space Challenge 2021:**

- It has been designed for all the school students, mentors and teachers across the country who not only are associated with schools having ATL labs but for all the non ATL schools as well.
- This is to ensure that students of classes 6 to 12 are given an open platform where they can innovate and enable themselves to solve digital age space technology problems.
- It aligns with the **World Space Week 2021** which is being observed from 4 to 10 October each year at the global level in order to celebrate the contributions of space science and technology.

#### **About Atal Innovation Mission (AIM):**

- AIM is the Government of India's flagship initiative to create and promote a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship across India.
- AIM's objective is to develop new programs and policies for fostering innovation in different sectors of the economy, provide platforms and collaboration opportunities for different stakeholders, and create an umbrella structure to oversee the innovation & entrepreneurship ecosystem of the country.

#### **Major Initiatives:**

- Atal Incubation Centers
- Atal Tinkering Labs
- Atal Research and Innovation for Small Enterprises
- Atal New India Challenges
- Atal Community Innovation Center

**Source: PIB**

## India's first Indigenously Designed High Ash Coal Gasification Based Methanol Production Plant

### Why in News

- **BHEL, Hyderabad** demonstrated India's first Indigenously Designed High Ash Coal Gasification Based Methanol Production Plant.

### Key Points

#### Methanol:

- It is utilized as a motor fuel, to power ship engines, and to generate clean power all over the world.
- Methanol is also used to generate di-methyl ether (DME), a liquid fuel that is very similar to diesel — existing diesel engines simply need to be minimally changed to use DME instead of diesel.

#### Reason:

- The majority of worldwide methanol production is derived from natural gas.
- Since India doesn't have much of the natural gas reserves, producing methanol from imported natural gas leads to outflow of foreign exchange and sometimes uneconomical due to excessive prices of natural gas.
- The next best option is to utilise India's abundant coal.
- To address this issue, BHEL R&D centre at Hyderabad began working on Indian high ash coal gasification in 2016 with support from the NITI Aayog to produce 0.25 ton per day methanol.
- With 4 years of hard work BHEL demonstrated a facility to create 0.25 TPD Methanol from high ash Indian coal using a 1.2 TPD Fluidized bed gasifier.
- The methanol purity of the crude methanol produced is between 98 and 99.5 percent.

**Note:** This is part of NITI Aayog's 'Methanol Economy' programme.

**Source: PIB**

## “PRANA” Portal

### Why in News

- Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Bhupender Yadav launched the **“PRANA” – Portal for Regulation of Air-pollution in Non-Attainment cities** under

- the **National Clean Air Programme (NCAP)** on the occasion of the International Day of Clean Air for Blue Skies (September 7).
- He also inaugurated the **first functional smog tower in India at Anand Vihar, Delhi**. The tower has been built by **Tata Projects Limited with NBCC (India) Ltd. as the project management consultant**.
  - Earlier, India's Tallest Air Purifier was inaugurated in Chandigarh and a Smog Tower was also installed in Delhi's Connaught Place.

### **Key Points**

#### **About PRANA:**

- **“PRANA” (Portal for Regulation of Air-pollution in Non-Attainment cities)** is a portal for monitoring the implementation of the **National Clean Air Programme (NCAP)**.
- The portal will support tracking of physical as well as financial status of city air action plan implementation and disseminate information on air quality to the public.
- City-specific action plans for improving air quality for 132 Non-attainment cities/Million Plus Cities targeting city specific air polluting sources (Soil & Road Dust, Vehicles, Domestic Fuel, MSW Burning, Construction Material and Industries) have been prepared and are already being implemented.

**Note:** 86 cities showed better air quality in 2019 in comparison to 2018, which increased to 104 cities in 2020.

#### **About National Clean Air Programme (NCAP):**

- The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change and Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) are implementing the National Clean Air Programme in the country since 2019 with targets to achieve 20 to 30 % reduction in Particulate Matter (PM10 and PM2.5) concentrations by 2024 across the country.

#### **Related Initiatives:**

- Air Quality Index
- New Commission for Air Quality Management
- Reducing Vehicular Pollution

**Source: PIB**

**Prime Minister releases a special commemorative coin on the occasion of 125th Birth Anniversary of Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada**

## Why in News

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** released a special commemorative coin on the occasion of the **125<sup>th</sup> Birth Anniversary of ISKCON founder Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada**.

### Key Points

- Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada founded the **ISKCON (International Society for Krishna Consciousness)** commonly known as the **“Hare Krishna movement”**.
- He also established over a hundred temples and wrote several books, teaching the path of Bhakti Yoga to the world.
- ISKCON has translated Shrimad Bhagvad Geeta and other Vedic literature in 89 languages, playing a stellar role in the dissemination of Vedic literature across the world.

**Source: PIB**

## Shikshak Parv 2021

### Why in News

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** addressed the inaugural conclave of Shikshak Parv 2021.
- He also launched **multiple key initiatives in the Education Sector** on the occasion.
- The **Ministry of Education** is celebrating **Shikshak Parv, 2021** from **September 5-17** in recognition of the valuable contributions of teachers and to take National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 a step forward.
- The **theme** of ‘Shikshak Parv-2021’ is “Quality and Sustainable Schools: Learnings from Schools in India”.

### Key Points

#### Five Initiatives launched by Prime Minister:

- i. **Indian Sign Language dictionary** of 10,000 words (audio and text embedded sign language video for the hearing impaired, in conformity with Universal Design of Learning)
- ii. **Talking Books** (audio books for visually impaired)
- iii. **School Quality Assurance and Assessment Framework (S.Q.A.A.F.)** of CBSE
- iv. **NISHTHA teachers' training programme for NIPUN Bharat**  
**NISHTHA** (National Initiative for School Heads' and Teachers' Holistic Advancement) is a capacity building programme for

"Improving Quality of School Education through Integrated Teacher Training".

**NIPUN** (National Initiative for Proficiency in Reading with Understanding and Numeracy) Bharat was launched to ensure that every child in the country necessarily attains foundational literacy and numeracy by the end of Grade 3, by 2026-27.

v. **Vidyanjali 2.0 portal** (For facilitating education volunteers/ donors/ CSR contributors for school development)

#### Related Recent Initiatives:

- Samagra Shiksha Scheme 2.0
- Academic Bank of Credit
- Vidya Pravesh
- Structured Assessment For Analyzing Learning Levels (SAFAL)
- National Digital Education Architecture (NDEAR)
- National Education Technology Forum (NETF)

#### Note:

- **National Teachers' Day:** 05<sup>th</sup> September
- President Ram Nath Kovind on National Teachers' Day (05th September 2021) conferred the **National Teachers' Awards on 44 teachers.**
- **World Teachers' day:** 05<sup>th</sup> October

Source: PIB

### “AYUSH AAPKE DWAR” Campaign

**Why in News**

- **Ayush Ministry** launched the campaign “AYUSH AAPKE DWAR” from more than 45 locations across the country.

#### Key Points

- The **National Medicinal Plants Board (NMPB)** and **Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Science (CCRA), Ministry of Ayush** distributed medicinal saplings and Ayurvedic medicines to the public.
- **Aim:** The campaign aims to distribute medicinal plant saplings to **75 lakh households across the country in one year.**
- The medicinal plants include Tejpatta, Stevia, Ashoka, Jatamansi, Giloy/Guduchi, Ashwagandha, Kumari, Shatavari, Lemongrass, Guggulu, Tulsi, Sarpagandha, Kalmegh, Brahmi and Amla.

#### About Ministry of AYUSH:

- The Ministry of Ayurveda, Yoga & Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, Sowa-Rigpa and Homoeopathy (abbreviated as AYUSH) is purposed with developing education, research and propagation of indigenous alternative medicine systems in India.
- It was established on November 9, 2014.
- The Ministry of Ayush includes the seven traditional systems of healthcare.

**Source: PIB**

## 'Y-Break' Yoga protocol App

### Why in News

- **Union Minister of Ayush Sarbanand Sonowal** launched the '**Y-Break**' mobile application (Yoga protocol App).

### Key Points

#### About 'Y-Break' Yoga protocol App:

- It has been developed by **Morarji Desai National Institute of Yoga, New Delhi**.
- The **five-minute Yoga protocol**, especially designed for working professionals to de-stress, refresh and re-focus at their workplace to increase their productivity, consists of Asanas, Pranayam and Dhyana.
- The Y- Break application will bring awareness about different Yoga practices and help the masses to practice Yoga anytime with ease.

**Note:** This module was launched in January, 2020 as a pilot project basis in six major Metro cities in coordination with different stake-holders.

**Source: PIB**

## Mission Poshan 2.0

### Why in News

- The **Ministry of Women and Child Development** has decided to celebrate the **POSHAN Maah** across the nation throughout the month of September starting from September 1, 2021.

### Key Points

#### About POSHAN Abhiyaan:

- **POSHAN (Prime Minister's Overarching Scheme for Holistic Nutrition) Abhiyaan** is Government of India's flagship

- programme to improve nutritional outcomes for children, adolescent Girls, pregnant women and lactating mothers.
- It was launched by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the occasion of International Women's Day on 8 March, 2018 from Jhunjhunu in Rajasthan.
  - Focusing on the aims of POSHAN Abhiyaan, Mission Poshan 2.0 (Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0) has been announced in the Budget 2021-2022 as an integrated nutrition support programme.
  - Every year, the month of September is celebrated as POSHAN Maah across the country.

#### **About Mission Poshan 2.0:**

- The Ministry of Women and Child Development has planned a series of activities throughout the month (September) in tandem with the States and Union Territories.
- The weekly themes are Plantation Activity as PoshanVatika, Yoga and AYUSH for Nutrition, Distribution of 'Regional Nutrition Kit' to Anganwadi beneficiaries of High Burdened Districts and Identification of severe acute malnourished children and distribution of nutritious food.

**Source: PIB**

## **Important News: World**

### **New Global Air Quality Guidelines: WHO**

#### **Why in News**

- The **World Health Organisation (WHO)** revised its air quality guidelines for the first time since 2005.

#### **Key Points**

- WHO has revised air quality levels for **six pollutants** that include particulate matter (PM 2.5 and PM10), ozone (O<sub>3</sub>), nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) sulfur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>) and carbon monoxide (CO).
- Air pollution kills at least seven million people prematurely each year.
- Air pollution affects all parts of the body, from the brain to a growing baby in a mother's womb.

- In 2019, a total of 90 percent of the global population was breathing air considered unhealthy by the 2005 guidelines, according to WHO data.
- Some countries, including India, still have national standards that are lower than those 2005 recommendations. The new guidelines indicate that almost the entirety of India would be considered a polluted zone.

**Source: TOI**

## **India – United Arab Emirates Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)**

### **Why in News**

- Piyush Goyal, India's Minister of Commerce and Industry and Dr. Thani bin Ahmed Al Zeyoudi, United Arab Emirates Minister of State for Foreign Trade, have formally launched negotiations on the **India-United Arab Emirates Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)**.

### **Key Points**

#### **About Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA):**

- Looking to build on the progress made by both countries under the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership signed in 2017; both Ministers expressed a desire to reach a mutually beneficial economic deal.

### **Significance:**

- Both Ministers emphasized that CEPA will create new jobs, raise living standards, and provide wider social and economic opportunities in both nations.
- A new strategic economic agreement is expected to increase bilateral trade in goods to USD 100 billion within five years of the signed agreement and increase trade in services to USD 15 billion.

### **India-UAE Economic Relations:**

- The **UAE is currently India's third-largest trading partner** with bilateral trade in 2019-2020 valued at USD 59 billion.
- The **UAE is also India's second-largest export destination** after the US, with exports valued at approximately USD 29 billion in 2019-2020.
- The **UAE is the eighth-largest investor in India**, having invested USD 11 billion between April 2000 and March 2021,

while investment by Indian companies in the UAE is estimated to be over USD 85 billion.

### **Other Types of Trade Agreements:**

- Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA)
- Free Trade Agreement (FTA)
- Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA)
- Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA)
- Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT)

**Source: PIB**

## **21st Meeting of the Council of Heads of State of the SCO**

### **Why in News**

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** participated virtually in the **21st Meeting of the Council of Heads of State of the SCO (Shanghai Cooperation Organisation)** and through video-message in the **Joint SCO-CSTO Outreach Session on Afghanistan**.
- It was held on 17 September 2021 in **Dushanbe, Tajikistan**.
- It was chaired by **Emomali Rahmon, the President of Tajikistan**.

**Note: Iran** became a full member of SCO during the summit. So far Iran was an observer member of the SCO.

### **Key Points**

#### **Prime Minister Narendra Modi's address:**

- The Prime Minister highlighted the problems caused by growing radicalisation and extremism in the broader SCO region, which runs counter to the history of the region as a bastion of moderate and progressive cultures and values.
- He noted that recent developments in Afghanistan could further exacerbate this trend towards extremism.
- He suggested that SCO could work on an agenda to promote moderation and scientific and rational thought, which would be especially relevant for the youth of the region.

#### **Joint SCO-CSTO Outreach Session on Afghanistan:**

- The SCO Summit was followed by an Outreach session on Afghanistan between **SCO** and the **Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO)**.
- Prime Minister suggested that SCO could develop a code of conduct on 'zero tolerance' towards terrorism in the region,

and highlighted the risks of drugs, arms and human trafficking from Afghanistan.

**Facts about SCO:**

**Formed:** 15 June 2001

**Members:** China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, India, Pakistan and **Iran (Newest Member).**

**Headquarter:** Beijing, China

**Source:** Indian Express

## 15th East Asia Summit Energy Ministers Meeting

### Why in News

- Recently, Krishan Pal Gurjar, Union Minister of State for Power attended the **15th East Asia Summit Energy Ministers Meeting (15th EAS EMM) 2021.**
- It was hosted by **Brunei Darussalam.**

### Key Points

- The **theme** of the meeting **“We Care, We Prepare, We Prosper”**, aimed at coordinating efforts of ASEAN countries in pursuing the goal of energy security and energy transition.
- India confirmed that ASEAN is a region of great importance for us. Engagement with ASEAN has been, and will remain, a critical element of India’s ‘Act East’ policy and strategy; Acting East is now a central element in India's Indo-Pacific vision.
- The Minister provided a brief status of the Indian energy transition plans, policies, challenges and efforts towards decarbonisation.

### About East Asia Summit (EAS):

- The EAS process was initiated in 2005 with the convening of the 1st East Asia Summit in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
- At its inception, the EAS comprised 16 participating countries, namely ASEAN Member States, Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand, and the Republic of Korea.
- The US and Russia joined at the 6th EAS in Bali, Indonesia on 19 November 2011.

### Other Related Groupings:

- ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting (ADMM) Plus
- ASEAN Regional Forum

**Source:** PIB

## Climate Action and Finance Mobilization Dialogue

## Why in News

- **India and the United States (USA)** launched the “**Climate Action and Finance Mobilization Dialogue (CAFMD)**”.
- The **CAFMD** is one of the **two tracks** of the **India-U.S. Climate and Clean Energy Agenda 2030 partnership** launched at the Leaders' Summit on Climate in April 2021, by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Joe Biden.
- Earlier, the **revamped U.S.-India Strategic Clean Energy Partnership (SCEP) (first track)** was launched.

## Key Points

- The dialogue was launched by **Union Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Bhupender Yadav** and **John Kerry, U.S. Special Presidential Envoy for Climate** in **New Delhi**.
- The dialogue will help to demonstrate how the world can align swift climate action with inclusive and resilient economic development, taking into account national circumstances and sustainable development priorities.

## Note:

- The launch was preceded by a bilateral meet where both sides discussed at length a wide range of climate issues relating to COP26, Climate Ambition, Climate Finance, Global Climate Initiatives including International Solar Alliance, Agriculture Innovation Mission for Climate (AIM4C).
- Currently India's installed power capacity is projected to be 476 GW by 2021-22 and is expected to rise to at least 817 GW by 2030.

**Source: The Hindu**

## 6th edition of SCO Peaceful Mission Exercise 2021

### Why in News

- The **Indian military contingent** comprising of an all arms combined force of 200 personnel to include 38 personnel from the Indian Air Force is participating in the **6th edition of SCO Peaceful Mission Exercise 2021**.
- The Exercise is being hosted by **Russia** in the **Orenburg Region of South West Russia** from 13 to 25 September 2021.

### Key Points

**About SCO Peaceful Mission Exercise:**

- Joint Counter Terrorism Exercise Peaceful Mission is a Multilateral Exercise, which is conducted biennially as part of military diplomacy between **Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)** member states.
- The aim is to foster close relations between SCO member states and to enhance abilities of the military leaders to command multi-national military contingents.

#### **Facts about Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO):**

- SCO or Shanghai Pact is a Eurasian political, economic and security alliance.
- **Formed:** 15 June 2001
- **Members:** China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, India & Pakistan.
- **Headquarter:** Beijing, China

**Source:** PIB

### **First 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue between India and Australia**

#### **Why in News**

- **Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, External Affairs Minister Dr. S Jaishankar of India and Minister for Defence Peter Dutton and Minister for Foreign Affairs Marise Payne of Australia** held the first 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue between India and Australia in **New Delhi**.

#### **Key Points**

- A number of issues were discussed during the meeting, including possibilities of further expanding bilateral strategic and economic cooperation, the common approach of both countries towards the Indo-Pacific region, and the growing importance of the Indian community in Australia as a human-bridge between both sides.

#### **India-Australia Relations**

- Geo-Political Relations
- **Defence Relations:** Bilateral naval exercise (AUSINDEX), EX PITCH BLACK (Australia's multilateral air combat training exercise), Ex AUSTRALIA HIND (Bilateral Exercise with Army) and multilateral Malabar Exercise (Quad countries).

#### **Multilateral Cooperation:**

- Both Australia and India are part of Quad that resolved to work towards ensuring a free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific. The other two members of the Quad are the US and Japan.

- Further, recently India-Australia Circular Economy Hackathon (I-ACE) was also organised.

**Note:** India also holds '2+2' Dialogue with Japan and the USA.

**Source: Indian Express**

## **U.S.-India Strategic Clean Energy Partnership (SCEP)**

### **Why in News**

- **Hardeep Singh Puri, Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas** co-chaired a virtual Ministerial meeting with **Jennifer Granholm, U.S. Secretary of Energy** to launch the **revamped U.S.-India Strategic Clean Energy Partnership (SCEP)**.
- The SCEP is launched in accordance with **U.S.-India Climate and Clean Energy Agenda 2030 Partnership** announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Joe Biden at the Leaders Summit on Climate held in April this year (2021).

### **Key Points**

#### **About Strategic Clean Energy Partnership (SCEP):**

- The SCEP organizes inter-governmental engagement across five pillars of cooperation: (1) Power and Energy Efficiency; (2) Responsible Oil and Gas; (3) Renewable Energy; (4) Sustainable Growth and (5) Emerging Fuels.
- A new **India-US Task Force on Biofuels** was also announced to build on the scope of work on cooperation in the biofuels sector.
- The two sides also announced rechristening of the **Gas Task Force to India-US Low Emissions Gas Task Force**.
- Both sides have initiated institutionalization of **India Energy Modeling Forum**.
- Joint Committees have been set up to deliberate on **Energy Data Management, Low Carbon Technologies and Just Transition in the Coal Sector**.
- The two sides agreed to expand the scope of the work to include smart grid and grid storage as part of the second phase of the **Partnership to Advance Clean Energy (PACE)-R** initiative.
- The meeting also reviewed the progress on the **India-US Civil Nuclear Energy cooperation**.

#### **Recent Updates on US-India Relations:**

- India-US Agreement on Air-launched Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (ALUAV)

- NISAR (NASA and ISRO are collaborating on developing an SUV-sized satellite called NISAR)
- 25th edition of Malabar Exercise

**Source: The Hindu**

## **Mullah Mohammad Hasan Akhund named as acting Prime Minister of Afghanistan**

### **Why in News**

- The Taliban named Mullah Mohammad Hasan Akhund as acting Prime Minister of Afghanistan.
- Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar and Molavi Abdul Salam Hanafi have been appointed as the deputy Prime Ministers of Afghanistan.

### **Key Points**

- Mullah Mohammad Hasan Akhund has been the head of the Taliban's Rehbari Shura or Leadership council, for more than 20 years.
- He had also served as foreign minister and deputy prime minister during the Taliban's previous government in Afghanistan from 1996 to 2001.

**Source: TOI**

## **13th BRICS Summit**

### **Why in News**

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi chaired** the 13th BRICS Summit on 9 September 2021 virtually.
- The **Summit's theme** was **BRICS@15: Intra-BRICS Cooperation for Continuity, Consolidation and Consensus.**
- The Summit saw the participation of all other BRICS Leaders - President Jair Bolsonaro of Brazil, President Xi Jinping of China, President Vladimir Putin of Russia and President Cyril Ramaphosa of South Africa.

### **Key Points:**

#### **Prime Minister's Address:**

- The Prime Minister expressed his appreciation for the cooperation received from BRICS partners during **India's Chairship this year (2021)**, which allowed the achievement of several new initiatives.
- These included the first BRICS Digital Health Summit; the first BRICS Ministerial Joint Statement on multilateral reforms; a

- BRICS Counter-Terrorism Action Plan; an Agreement on cooperation in field of remote-sensing satellites; a virtual BRICS vaccine Research & Development Centre; BRICS Alliance on Green Tourism, etc.
- Highlighting the leading role that BRICS countries can play in the post-COVID global recovery, Prime Minister called for enhanced BRICS cooperation under the motto of 'Build-back Resiliently, Innovatively, Credibly and Sustainably'.
  - The leaders also adopted the 'New Delhi Declaration'.

**About 'New Delhi Declaration':** The declaration called for reforms of the principal organs of the United Nations including that of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).

**Note:** It is the third time India hosted the BRICS Summit after 2012 and 2016.

**Facts about BRICS:**

- **Formation:** 2009
  - **Countries:** Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa
- It is an important grouping bringing together the major emerging economies from the world, comprising:
- 41% of world population
  - Total combined area of 29.3% of the total land surface of the world
  - 24% of global GDP
  - 16% of world trade

**Note:** The above data is based on World Bank data (2019).

**Source: PIB**

## Sri Lanka declares Economic Emergency to contain Inflation

### Why in News

- The **President of Sri Lanka Gotabaya Rajapaksa** had declared an economic emergency due to rapidly **depleting forex reserves, depreciating currency**, and **rising food prices** in the country.
- The emergency was declared under the **Public Security Ordinance** to prevent the hoarding of essential items, including sugar and rice.

### Key Points

#### Reasons for Sri Lankan Economic Crisis:

- Sri Lanka during the COVID-19 pandemic suffered a severe setback in its tourism industry which contributes to over 10

percent of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and brings in foreign exchange.

- Due to the depletion in the forex reserves, the country had to increase the amount of money to purchase the foreign exchange to import goods. This increase has led to the depreciation of the Sri Lankan rupee by approximately 8 percent so far in 2021.
- Since Sri Lanka heavily relies on imports to fulfill the basic food supplies in the country, the depreciating currency has further led to a rise in the price of food items.
- The ban on the use of chemical fertilizers in farming by the government has led to a reduction in the agricultural production sector.

#### **Measures Taken Under Economic Emergency Crisis:**

- The Sri Lankan government has ascertained that the rise in food prices is due to speculators hoarding essential supplies.
- The government has appointed a **former Army General as Commissioner of essential services** who is authorized to seize food stocks held by traders and retailers and regulate their prices.
- The army has also been given powers to ensure that forex reserves be used only for the purchase of essential goods.

**Source: The Hindu**

### **New Development Bank admits UAE, Uruguay and Bangladesh as new members**

#### **Why in News**

- The **New Development Bank (NDB)** has admitted the **United Arab Emirates (UAE), Uruguay and Bangladesh** as the first batch of new members as part of its expansion drive.

#### **Key Points**

- **New Development Bank** has initiated its membership expansion and started formal negotiations with prospective members in late 2020.
- After a round of successful negotiations, NDB approved the admission of the UAE, Uruguay and Bangladesh as its first new member countries.
- New members will have in NDB a platform to foster their cooperation in infrastructure and sustainable development.

#### **About New Development Bank (NDB):**

- It is a multilateral development bank established by the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) countries.
- It is headquartered in Shanghai, China.
- On 15 July 2014, the first day of the 6th BRICS summit held in Fortaleza, Brazil, the BRICS states signed the Agreement on the New Development Bank.

**Authorized Capital:** NDB has an authorized capital of US\$ 100 billion, which is open for subscription by members of the United Nations.

- Since the beginning of its operations, the bank approved about 80 projects in all of its members, totalling a portfolio of USD 30 billion.

**Projects:** Projects in areas such as transport, water and sanitation, clean energy, digital infrastructure, social infrastructure and urban development are within the scope of the bank.

**Source: newsonair**

## 6th Eastern Economic Forum 2021

### Why in News

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** recently addressed the plenary session of the **6th Eastern Economic Forum (EEF) 2021 in Vladivostok, Russia**.
- The **theme** of the forum was **“The Opportunities for the Far East in a World under Transformation”**.
- It may be recalled that the Prime Minister was the Chief Guest for the 5th EEF in 2019, the first by an Indian Prime Minister.

### Key Points

#### Highlights of Prime Minister’s Address:

- Applauding President Putin’s vision for the development of the Russian Far East, Prime Minister reiterated India’s commitment as part of its ‘Act East Policy’ of being a reliable partner of Russia in this regard.
- He underlined the natural complementarities of India and Russia in the development of the Russian Far East.
- He stressed on the importance of greater economic and commercial engagement between the two sides in line with the ‘Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership’.

#### About Eastern Economic Forum (EEF):

- EEF was established by the President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin in 2015.

- The Forum business programme includes a number of business dialogues with leading partner countries in the Asia-Pacific region, and with ASEAN.

#### **India-Russia Relations:**

- Russia is the largest investment destination for the Indian oil and gas companies and Indian public sector companies have made investments in Russia of about \$16 billion, including in the Far East and East Siberia, in oil and gas assets such as Sakhalin-1, Vankor and Taas-Yuryakh.
- Russia is also the largest investor in India's oil and gas sector.
- India is the second largest market for the Russian defence industry.

**Source: PIB**

### **India and US sign Project Agreement for Air-Launched Unmanned Aerial Vehicle**

#### **Why in News**

- **Ministry of Defence, Government of India** and **United States (US) Department of Defence** signed a **Project Agreement (PA) for Air-Launched Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (ALUAV)** under the Joint Working Group Air Systems in the **Defence Technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI)** on July 30, 2021.

#### **Key Points**

- The **Project Agreement (PA)** outlines the collaboration between Air Force Research Laboratory, Indian Air Force, and Defence Research and Development Organisation towards design, development, demonstration, testing and evaluation of systems to co-develop an ALUAV Prototype.

#### **Background:**

- The PA for ALUAV falls under the Research, Development, Testing and Evaluation (RDT&E) Memorandum of Agreement between Ministry of Defence and US Department of Defence, which was first signed in January 2006 and renewed in January 2015.

#### **Significance:**

- The agreement is a significant step towards deepening defence technology collaboration between the two nations through co-development of defence equipment.

#### **Aim of the Defence Technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI):**

- The main aim of DTTI is to bring sustained leadership focus to promote collaborative technology exchange and create opportunities for co-production and co-development of future technologies for Indian and US military forces.
- Under DTTI, Joint Working Groups on land, naval, air, and aircraft carrier technologies have been established to focus on mutually agreed projects in respective domains.

**Source: The Hindu**

## **UNSC adopts resolution on Afghanistan**

### **Why in News**

- The **United Nations Security Council (UNSC)**, under **India's Presidency**, adopted a strong **resolution 2593 (2021) on Afghanistan**.

### **Key Points**

- The resolution, sponsored by the United Kingdom, France and United States, was adopted with 13 members, including India.
- But permanent and veto-wielding members Russia and China abstained.
- This was the first resolution adopted by the powerful 15-nation Council on the situation in Afghanistan following the takeover of Kabul by the Taliban and came on the penultimate day of India's Presidency of the Security Council for the month of August, 2021.
- **The resolution-** The territory of Afghanistan is not to be used to threaten any country or shelter terrorists, and that the international community expects the Taliban to adhere to the commitments they made regarding the safe and orderly departure of Afghans and all foreign nationals from the country.

### **India's steps:**

- India has directed a high-level group composed of EAM (External Affairs Minister) S. Jaishankar, NSA (National Security Adviser) Ajit Doval and Other Senior officials to monitor the ground situation in Afghanistan with a focus on the immediate priorities of India.

**Source: Indian Express**

## **Leaded Petrol Eradicated Globally: UNEP**

### **Why in News**

- The **UN Environment Programme (UNEP)** announced that the use of leaded petrol has been eradicated from the globe.
- The **last country** to switch was **Algeria in July 2021**.

### **Key Points**

- The successful enforcement of the ban on leaded petrol is a huge milestone for global health, economy and environment.
- It will prevent **more than 1.2 million premature deaths** and save **world economies over \$2.4 trillion annually**.
- Leaded petrol causes heart disease, stroke and cancer. It also affects the development of the human brain, especially harming children, with studies suggesting it reduced 5-10 IQ points.

### **Leaded Petrol History:**

- Until the 1970s almost all the gasoline/ petrol sold across the globe contained lead.
- When UNEP launched its campaign (**PCFV**) in 2002, many major powers had already stopped using the leaded fuel, including the United States, China and India.

### **About the Partnership for Clean Fuels and Vehicles (PCFV):**

- In 2002, PCFV was set up at the World Summit on Sustainable Development.
- UNEP hosted the Secretariat with the aim of eliminating leaded petrol globally and provided support to many countries and regional initiatives.

### **Need of Eradication:**

- The transport sector is responsible for nearly a quarter of energy-related global greenhouse gas emissions and is set to grow to one third by 2050, adding that 1.2 billion new vehicles would hit the streets in the coming decades.

### **Significance:**

- The end of leaded petrol is expected to support the realization of multiple Sustainable Development Goals, including good health and well-being (SDG3), clean water (SDG6), clean energy (SDG7), sustainable cities (SDG11), climate action (SDG13) and life on land (SDG15).

### **About United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP):**

- UNEP is responsible for coordinating responses to environmental issues.
- **Headquarters:** Nairobi, Kenya
- **Founded:** 5 June 197

**Source: unep.org**

## **8th Meeting of Agricultural Experts of BIMSTEC Countries**

### **Why in News**

- **India** hosted the 8th Meeting of Agriculture Experts of **Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC)** Countries.

### **Key Points**

**Objective:** To enhance the engagement and deepen the cooperation in agriculture and allied sectors amongst the BIMSTEC Member States by encouraging the exchange of knowledge, germplasm, students and experts.

### **About Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC):**

- The BIMSTEC provides a unique link between **South and South-East Asia with 5 countries - Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal and Sri Lanka from South Asia and 2 countries - Myanmar and Thailand from South-East Asia.**
- The **BIMSTEC was founded in 1997** with an ambition to pursue mutual trade, connectivity and cultural, technical and economic development in the region.
- Initially, six sectors- trade, technology, energy, transport, tourism and fisheries were included for sectoral cooperation which was later expanded to 14 areas of cooperation.
- Agriculture is one of the 14 sectors. As about 1.7 billion+ people i.e., 22 percent of the global population live in BIMSTEC countries, agriculture & allied activities are central to the economic and social development of the region.

**Source: PIB**

## **Important News: Environment**

### **Sea Cucumber**

#### **Why in News**

- The **Indian Coast Guard (ICG)** has seized two tonnes of sea cucumber, a banned marine species, in **Tamil Nadu's Mandapam.**
- The teams were deployed in the **Gulf of Mannar and Palk Bay** areas to effectively cordon the likely escape by sea route.

#### **Key Points**

- **Sea cucumbers** are marine invertebrates commonly found in tropical regions.
- Sea cucumber helps keep up a balance the marine ecosystem.
- Sea cucumber in India is treated as an **endangered species** listed under **schedule I of Wildlife Protection Act of 1972**.

**Note:** The Lakshadweep Islands administration created the world's first conservation area — 239 sq. km — for endangered sea cucumbers in 2020.

**Source: PIB**

## **Tamil Nadu's Kovalam beach, Puducherry's Eden get Blue Flag certification**

### **Why in News**

- The **Kovalam beach in Tamil Nadu and Eden beach in Puducherry** have been awarded the prestigious Blue Flag certification, an international eco-level tag.
- India now has **10 Blue Flag beaches**.

### **Key Points**

- **Foundation for Environment Education (FEE) in Denmark** which accords the globally recognized eco-label - Blue Flag certification, has also given re-certification for 8 nominated beaches **Shivrajpur-Gujarat, Kappad-Kerala, Ghoghla-Diu, Kasarkod and Padubidri-Karnataka, Rushikonda- Andhra Pradesh, Golden-Odisha and Radhanagar- Andaman and Nicobar**, which were awarded the Blue Flag certificate in 2020.
- **India** started its journey of sustainable development of coastal regions on **World Environment Day in June 2018** by launching its beach cleaning campaign **I-AM- SAVING-MY-BEACH** simultaneously at 13 coastal states and thereafter implementing the ministry's coveted program **BEAMS (Beach Environment & Aesthetics Management Services)**.
- The Ministry is further committed to develop and deliver 100 more beaches under its **Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) initiative** in the ensuing 5 years of the Ministry's vision agenda.

### **About Blue Flag certification:**

- It is a globally recognised eco-label accorded on the basis of 33 stringent criteria in four major heads which are environmental education and information, bathing water quality,

environmental management and conservation and safety and services in the beaches.

- The Blue Flag label is accorded by the international jury composed of eminent members - United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), Denmark-based NGO Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE), UNESCO and International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

**Source: PIB**

## **Discovery of new species of Hybodont Shark**

### **Why in News**

- Researchers from the **Geological Survey of India (GSI)** and the **Indian Institute of Technology, Roorkee** have discovered a new extinct species of **Hybodont Shark** from the **Jaisalmer Basin of Rajasthan**.

### **Key Points**

- The newly discovered crushing teeth from Jaisalmer represent a new species named by the research team as *Strophodusjaisalmerensis*.
- The genus *Strophodus* has been identified for the first time from the Indian subcontinent and is only the third such record from Asia, the other two being from Thailand and Japan.
- Hybodont sharks have been reported for the first time from the Jurassic rocks (approximately, between 160 and 168 million-years-old) of the Jaisalmer region of Rajasthan.

### **About Hybodont Sharks:**

- Hybodonts, an extinct group of sharks, was a dominant group of fishes in both marine and fluvial environments during the Triassic and early Jurassic time.
- Hybodonts finally became extinct at the end of the Cretaceous time 65 million years ago.

### **Significance:**

- This discovery marks an important milestone in the study of Jurassic vertebrate fossils in the Jaisalmer region of Rajasthan.

**Source: Indian Express**

## **World's first '5-country biosphere reserve' in 'Amazon of Europe'**

### **Why in News**

- **UNESCO** designated **Mura-Drava-Danube (MDD)** as the world's first '**5-country biosphere reserve**'.

### **Key Points**

#### **About Mura-Drava-Danube (MDD):**

- The biosphere reserve covers 700 kilometres of the Mura, Drava and Danube rivers and stretches across Austria, Slovenia, Croatia, Hungary and Serbia.
- The total area of the reserve — a million hectares — in the so-called 'Amazon of Europe', makes it the largest riverine protected area on the continent.
- The new reserve "represents an important contribution to the European Green Deal and contributes to the implementation of the EU Biodiversity Strategy in the Mura-Drava-Danube region."

#### **Biosphere Reserve:**

- Biosphere reserves are sites established by countries and recognized under UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Program to promote sustainable development.
- There are 727 biosphere reserves in 131 countries, including 22 transboundary sites.

#### **Biosphere Reserves in India:**

- Presently, there are 18 Biosphere Reserves in India.
- Twelve of the eighteen biosphere reserves are a part of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves, based on the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme list.

**Source: DTE**

## **Climate change can force 216 million people to migrate within their own countries by 2050**

### **Why in News**

- The **World Bank's updated Groundswell report** released recently finds Climate change can force some 216 million people in 6 world regions to move within their own countries by 2050.
- Hotspots of internal climate migration can emerge as early as 2030 and continue to spread and intensify by 2050.

### **Key Points**

#### **About the Report:**

- The updated report includes projections and analysis for 3 regions: **East Asia and the Pacific, North Africa, and Eastern Europe and Central Asia.**
- It builds on the pioneering modeling approach of the previous World Bank Groundswell report from 2018, which covered **Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, and Latin America.**

#### **Findings:**

- By 2050, Sub-Saharan Africa could see as many as 86 million internal climate migrants; East Asia and the Pacific, 49 million; South Asia, 40 million; North Africa, 19 million; Latin America, 17 million; and Eastern Europe and Central Asia, 5 million.
- The report finds that immediate and concerted action to reduce global emissions, and support green, inclusive, and resilient development, could reduce the scale of climate migration by as much as 80 percent.

#### **Global Efforts:**

- Cancun Adaptation Framework, 2010
- UNFCCC Task Force on Displacement, 2013
- Paris Agreement, 2015
- Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, 2015-30
- UN Global Compact on Refugees, 2016

**Source: DownToEarth**

## **Important News: Economy**

### **FDI inflows in April-July, 2021-22**

#### **Why in News**

- **India** has attracted total **Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)** inflows of US\$ 27.37 billion during the **first four months (April-July) of F.Y. 2021-22** which is 62% higher as compared to corresponding period of F.Y. 2020-21 (US\$ 16.92 billion).

#### **Key Points**

- FDI equity inflow grew by 112% in the first four months of F.Y. 2021-22 (US\$ 20.42 billion) compared to the year ago period (US\$ 9.61 billion).
- **'Automobile Industry'** has emerged as the **top sector** during the first four months of F.Y. 2021-22 with 23% share of the total FDI Equity inflow followed by Computer Software & Hardware (18%) and Services Sector (10%) respectively.

- Under the sector 'Automobile Industry', majority of FDI Equity inflow (87%) was reported in the state of Karnataka during the first four months of the current financial year (2021-22).
- **Karnataka** is the **top recipient state** during the F.Y. 2021-22 (upto July, 2021) with 45% share of the total FDI Equity inflows followed by Maharashtra (23%) and Delhi (12%).

#### **About Foreign Direct Investment (FDI):**

- **FDI** is an investment in the form of a controlling ownership in a business in one country by an entity based in another country.
- **Routes through which India gets FDI:** Government Route, Automatic Route
- **Government Measures to promote FDI:** Measures taken by the Government on the fronts of FDI policy reforms, investment facilitation and ease of doing business have resulted in increased FDI inflows into the country.

**Source: PIB**

### **Cabinet approves major Reforms in Telecom Sector**

#### **Why in News**

- The Union Cabinet approved a number of structural and process reforms in the Telecom sector.
- These are expected to protect and generate employment opportunities, promote healthy competition, protect interests of consumers, infuse liquidity, encourage investment and reduce regulatory burden on **Telecom Service Providers (TSPs)**.

#### **Key Points**

##### **About the Main Reforms:**

- Rationalization of Adjusted Gross Revenue (AGR): Non-telecom revenue will be excluded on prospective basis from the definition of AGR.
- **Spectrum Tenure:** In future Auctions, tenure of spectrum increased from 20 to 30 years. Surrender of spectrum will be permitted after 10 years for spectrum acquired in the future auctions.
- **FDI:** To encourage investment, **100% Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) under automatic route** permitted in Telecom Sector.
- Auction calendar fixed - Spectrum auctions to be normally held in the last quarter of every financial year.

- Moratorium/Deferment of upto four years in annual payments of dues arising out of the AGR judgement, with however, by protecting the Net Present Value (NPV) of the due amounts being protected.

**Source: PIB**

## **Task Force and Expert Committee to prepare road map for Coal based Hydrogen Production**

### **Why in News**

- The **Ministry of Coal** has constituted a Task Force and Expert Committee to prepare a road map for Coal based Hydrogen Production.
- **Chairman of the Task Force-** Vinod Kumar Tiwari, Additional Secretary Coal  
**Note:** Task Force is responsible to coordinate with the **Coal Gasification Mission** and NITI Aayog.
- **Chairman of the Expert Committee-** R.K. Malhotra, Director General (FIPI)

### **Key Points**

#### **About Coal based Hydrogen Production:**

- **Coal** is one of the important sources of **hydrogen making (Brown Hydrogen)** apart from **Natural Gas (Grey Hydrogen)** and **renewable energy (Green Hydrogen)** through electrolysis.
- However, Coal has not been encouraged elsewhere because of the fear that while extracting hydrogen via coal there may be carbon emission.
- Almost **100% of Hydrogen produced in India is through Natural Gas.**
- Globally, 73 MT Hydrogen is used for refining, ammonia making and other pure use and about 42 MT is used for Methanol, steel making and other mixed uses.
- Cost of Hydrogen produced from coal can be cheaper and less sensitive to imports when compared with hydrogen production through electrolysis and Natural Gas respectively.

#### **Related Initiatives:**

- Green Hydrogen Mobility project
- National Hydrogen Energy Mission
- Hydrogen Fuel Cell Based Vehicles

**Source: PIB**

## NITI Aayog launches 'Shoonya' Campaign

### Why in News

- NITI Aayog, with RMI and RMI India's support, launched '**Shoonya**' Campaign.
- It is an initiative to promote zero-pollution delivery vehicles by working with consumers and industry.

### Key Points

#### About 'Shoonya' Campaign:

- The **campaign aims** to accelerate adoption of **Electric Vehicles (EVs) in the urban deliveries segment**.
- As part of the campaign, a corporate branding and certification programme is being launched to recognise and promote industry's efforts towards transitioning to Electric Vehicles for final-mile deliveries.
- An **online tracking platform** will share the campaign's impact through data such as vehicle kilometers electrified, carbon savings, criteria pollutant savings and other benefits from clean delivery vehicles.

#### Need:

- Urban freight vehicles account for 10 percent of freight transportation-related CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in India, and these emissions are expected to grow by 114 percent by 2030.
- Electric Vehicles emit no tailpipe emissions, which can contribute immensely to an improved air quality.
- Even when accounting for their manufacture, they emit 15-40 percent less CO<sub>2</sub> compared to their internal combustion engine counterparts and have lower operational cost.

#### Initiatives Taken:

- National Mission on Transformative Mobility and Battery Storage
- National Electric Mobility Mission Plan
- Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of (Hybrid &) Electric Vehicles in India (FAME India)

**Source: PIB**

## Digital Agriculture

### Why in News

- The **Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare** signed **5 MoUs with private companies** for taking forward **Digital Agriculture**.
- MoUs were signed for **pilot projects** with **CISCO, Ninjacart, Jio Platforms Limited, ITC Limited and NCDEX e-Markets Limited (NeML)**.
- The MoUs are on the line of the **Digital agriculture mission**.

### **Key Points**

#### **About Digital Agriculture:**

- Digital Agriculture is “ICT and data ecosystems to support the development and delivery of timely, targeted information and services to make farming profitable and sustainable while delivering safe, nutritious and affordable food for all.”

#### **Benefits:**

- Based on these pilot projects farmers will be able to take informed decisions on what crop to grow, what variety of seed to use and what best practises to adopt to maximise the yield.
- The agriculture supply chain players can plan their procurement and logistics on precise and timely information.

#### **About Digital agriculture mission:**

- A Digital agriculture mission has been initiated for 2021 -2025 by the government for projects based on new technologies like artificial intelligence, block chain, remote sensing and GIS technology, use of drones and robots etc.

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

- Unified Farmer Service Platform
- “Digital agri-stack”, a hi-tech national farmers’ database
- **National e-Governance Plan in Agriculture (NeGP-A)**
- Kisan Call Centres
- Kisan Suvidha App
- Soil Health Card (SHC) Portal
- Agri Market App

**Source: PIB**

### **'Main Bhi Digital 3.0' Campaign**

#### **Why in News**

- **The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs** in collaboration with the **Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology** launched the **'Main Bhi Digital 3.0' - A special Campaign for Digital Onboarding and Training for street**

**vendors** under **PM SVANidhi scheme** across 223 cities in the country.

### Key Points

- **Participating agency:** The **BharatPe, Mswipe, Paytm, PhonePe, Aceware** are participating in this drive to issue UPI IDs, QR code and provide digital training.
- Digital Payment Aggregators will handhold the street vendors to bring about enhanced adoption of digital transactions and behaviour change.

### Loans and Amounts:

- So far, 45.5 lakh applications have been received. Out of these, 27.2 lakh loans have been sanctioned and 24.6 lakh loans have been disbursed.
- The amount disbursed so far is ₹2,444 Cr.

### About PM Street Vendor's AtmaNirbhar Nidhi (PM SVANidhi) scheme:

- It was launched on June 1, 2020 as a Central Sector Scheme.
- The scheme facilitates affordable working capital loans of up to ₹10,000 with an interest subsidy @7% on regular repayment.
- The street vendors also stand a chance to avail a loan of ₹20,000 and ₹50,000 in the second and third tranches respectively on timely repayment of the loan.
- **SIDBI** has been appointed as the implementation agency for scheme administration.

**Source: PIB**

### Rs. 56,027 crore to be released under various Export Promotion Schemes

#### Why in News

- Government of India has decided to budget Rs 56,027 crore in this Financial Year FY 21-22 itself in order to disburse all pending export incentives due to exporters under various Export Promotion Schemes.
- Merchandise exports for April-August, 2021 was nearly \$164 billion, which is an increase of 67% over 2020-21 and 23% over 2019-20.

### Key Points

- This amount includes claims relating to Merchandise Exports from India Scheme (MEIS), Service Exports from India Scheme (SEIS), Rebate of State Levies (RoSL), Rebate of State and

- Central Taxes and Levies (RoSCTL), other scrip based schemes relating to earlier policies and the remission support for Remission of Duties and Taxes on Exported Products (RoDTEP) and RoSCTL for exports made in the 4th quarter of FY 20-21.
- Benefits would be disbursed to more than 45,000 exporters, out of which about 98% are small exporters in the MSME (Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises) category.
  - This amount is over and above duty remission amount of Rs 12,454 crore for the RoDTEP scheme and Rs 6,946 crore for RoSCTL scheme already announced for exports made in this year i.e. FY 2021-22.

**Significance:**

- Benefits would help sectors to maintain cash flows and meet export demand in international market
- Employment generation
- Lower Current Account Deficit
- Help Bring in Foreign Exchange

**Source: PIB****Transport and Marketing Assistance (TMA) Scheme****Why in News**

- **The Ministry of Commerce & Industry** has revised the "Transport and Marketing Assistance" (TMA) scheme for Specified Agriculture Products'.

**Key Points****About Transport and Marketing Assistance (TMA) Scheme:**

- In February 2019, the Department of Commerce had introduced 'Transport and Marketing Assistance (TMA) for Specified Agriculture Products Scheme' to provide assistance for the international component of freight, to mitigate the disadvantage of higher freight costs faced by the Indian exporters of agriculture products.
- In the year **2018**, the government approved an **Agriculture Export Policy** with an aim to double the shipments to USD 60 billion by 2022.
- **APEDA** works towards expanding the export potential of Indian agricultural and food products.
- The scheme was initially applicable for exports affected during the period from 01.03.2019 to 31.03.2020 and was later extended for exports affected up to 31.03.2021.

- Now the Department has notified **Revised Transport and Marketing Assistance (TMA) for Specified Agriculture Products Scheme** for exports affected **on or after 01.04.2021 up to 31.03.2022**.
- Enhanced assistance under the revised scheme is expected to help Indian exporters of agricultural products to meet rising freight and logistics costs.

**About APEDA (Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority):**

- It was established by the Government of India under the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority Act passed by the Parliament in December, 1985.

**About Agri Export Policy (AEP):**

- AEP was launched in 2018 with an emphasis on agricultural export-oriented production, export promotion, improved price realization to farmers, and synchronization with Government's different policies and programmes.
- The policy focuses on a "Farmers' Centric Approach" to increase revenue.

**Source: PIB**

**IIT Ropar's startup company introduces World's first 'Plant based' smart air-purifier "Ubreathe Life"**

**Why in News**

- Scientists of **Indian Institutes of Technology, Ropar and Kanpur and Faculty of Management Studies of Delhi University** have developed a living-plant based air purifier "Ubreathe Life".
- It amplifies the air purification process in the indoor spaces. These indoor spaces can either be hospitals, schools, offices and Homes.

**Key Points**

- **IIT Ropar's startup company, Urban Air Laboratory**, that has developed the product claims it to be the world's first, state-of-the-art 'Smart Bio-Filter' that can make breathing fresh.
- It has been incubated at IIT Ropar, which is a designated iHub - AWaDH (Agriculture and Water Technology Development Hub) by the Department of Science and Technology, Govt. of India.

### **About Air purifier “Ubreathe Life”:**

- The technology works through the air-purifying natural leafy plant.
- The room-air interacts with leaves and goes to the soil-root zone where maximum pollutants are purified.
- The novel technology used in this product is ‘Urban Munnar Effect’ along with patent pending “Breathing Roots” to exponentially amplify the phytoremediation process of the plants.
- Phytoremediation is a process by which plants effectively remove pollutants from the air.

**Note:** According to a World Health Organization (WHO) report the indoor air spaces are five times more polluted than outdoor air space.

**Source: PIB**

### **Loan Guarantee Scheme for COVID-affected Sectors**

#### **Why in News**

- Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman asked all stakeholders to conclude **Rs 50,000 crore Loan Guarantee Scheme for COVID-affected Sectors (LGSCAS)**, aimed at shoring up healthcare infrastructure in non-metros in time to deal with any future third wave.
- The Scheme is aimed at upscaling the medical infrastructure in the country specifically targeting underserved areas.

#### **Key Points**

#### **About Loan Guarantee Scheme for COVID-affected Sectors (LGSCAS):**

- LGSCAS was approved by the Union Cabinet on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2021.
- Loans under the scheme are made available at a cheaper interest rate of 7.95%.
- It is expected to provide the help the country needs in getting the much-needed healthcare infrastructure and provide employment opportunities after the second wave of COVID-19 pandemic.
- This is necessary across the country, from metro cities to small towns as well as rural areas.
- It provides a guarantee of 50 percent for brownfield projects and 75 per cent to greenfield projects for loans sanctioned up to Rs.100 crore, set up at urban or rural locations other than 8 Metropolitan Tier 1 cities (Class X cities).

- For aspirational districts, the guarantee cover for both brownfield expansion and greenfield projects is 75%.
- The Scheme is applicable to all eligible loans sanctioned up to 31.03.2022, or till an amount of Rs. 50,000 crore is sanctioned, whichever is earlier.

**Note:**

- Recently, the **Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance** has released an amount of **Rs. 13,385.70 crore to 25 States for providing grants to the Rural Local Bodies.**
- This Grant-in-aid is the 1st installment of Tied grants of the year 2021-22.
- The grants have been released as per the recommendations of the **15th Finance Commission.**

**Source: PIB**

## **India's first green hydrogen electrolyzer gigafactory**

### **Why in News**

- USA-based renewable energy start-up, **Ohmium International**, has launched India's first green hydrogen electrolyzer gigafactory at Bengaluru through its India subsidiary.

### **Key Points**

#### **About Green Hydrogen:**

- Green Hydrogen is the pollution-free fuel of the future.
- With zero carbon footprint, the green hydrogen can be utilized for fertilizer production, refinery processing, steel production, conventional vehicle transportation with methanol blending, and direct hydrogen transportation in fuel-cell-based vehicles.
- Green Hydrogen can also be stored and transported.
- Green hydrogen is made from non-fossil sources, while blue hydrogen is made from fossil sources.
- To produce green hydrogen through any process, electrolysis is required.

#### **About Gigafactory:**

- It will manufacture India-made PEM (Proton Exchange Membrane) hydrogen electrolyzers with an initial manufacturing capacity of about 500 MW per year and will scale it up to 2 GW per year.
- The PEM hydrogen electrolyzer is the main equipment for the **production of green hydrogen** as it uses power generated

from renewable resources to break water into hydrogen and oxygen.

**Note:**

- India has already set a target of achieving 450 GW renewable energy by 2030.
- According to industry data, the world is currently producing around 70 million metric tonnes of hydrogen (blue), out of which 6 MT is coming from India.

**Source: TOI**

## **e-Shram Portal**

### **Why in News**

- **Minister for Labour and Employment, Bhupender Yadav** launched **e-Shram portal**.
- Portal will help build a comprehensive **National Database of Unorganized Workers (NDUW)** in India.
- For the first time in India, a system is being made **to register 38 crore Unorganised Workers**.

### **Key Points**

#### **About e-Shram Portal:**

- The registration under the e-Shram portal is totally free and workers do not have to pay anything for his or her registration at Common Service Centres (CSCs) or anywhere.
- It will not only register them but would also be helpful in delivering various social security schemes being implemented by the Central and State Governments.
- After registration, the workers shall be issued an **e-Shram card with a unique Universal Account Number (UAN)** and will be able to access the benefits of the various social security schemes through this Card anywhere anytime.

#### **Insurance Coverage:**

- If a worker is registered on the e-Shram portal and meets with an accident, he will be eligible for Rs 2.0 Lakh on death or permanent disability and Rs 1.0 lakh on partial disability.

#### **Other Initiatives to Support Unorganised Sector:**

- Pradhan Mantri Rojgar Protsahan Yojana
- Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-dhan
- Labour Code
- PM SVANidhi

- Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Urban Livelihoods Mission
- PM Garib Kalyan Ann Yojana
- One Nation One Ration Card
- Atmanirbhar Bharat Rozgar Yojana
- Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi

**Source: PIB**

### **e-GOPALA & IMAP web portal**

#### **Why in News**

- **Parshottam Rupala, Union Minister of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying** launched the **National Dairy Development Board's web version of e-GOPALA application and IMAP web portal.**
- It is a digital platform for dairy farmers to provide real-time information on animal health, nutrition and breed development.

#### **Key Points**

##### **About e-GOPALA:**

- The web version of e-GOPALA application has been developed by **National Dairy Development Board (NDDB).**
- The e-GOPALA platform helps farmers manage their livestock including buying and selling of disease-free germplasm in all forms; informs about availability of quality breeding services and guides farmers for animal nutrition, treatment of animals using appropriate Ayurvedic ethno veterinary medicine.
- **Note:** The e-GOPALA app was launched in September 2020 as a breed improvement marketplace for the direct use of farmers.
- **IMAP web portal** will facilitate real time checking of coverage and progress of various projects and government schemes.

**Source: The Hindu**

### **Important News: Defense**

### **3<sup>rd</sup> edition of Bilateral Maritime Exercise 'Samudra Shakti'**

#### **Why in News**

- **Indian Navy** and **Indonesian Navy** participated in the **3<sup>rd</sup> edition of Bilateral Maritime Exercise 'Samudra Shakti'** at **Sunda Strait, Indonesia** from September 20 to 22, 2021.

#### **Key Points**

- **Indian Naval Ships Shivalik and Kadmatt** participated in the Exercise.
- The aim of the exercise is to strengthen the bilateral relationship, enhance mutual understanding and interoperability in maritime operations.

**Note:** In pursuance of India's Act East Policy, Exercise 'Samudra Shakti' was conceived in 2018 as a bilateral IN-IDN exercise.

**Other Exercises with Indonesia:**

- **Military Exercise:** Garuda Shakti
- **Maritime Exercise:** IND-INDO CORPAT, IND-INDO BILAT

**Source: PIB**

**AUKUS- a new trilateral security partnership for Indo-Pacific**

**Why in News**

- The **US, UK and Australia** have announced the formation of AUKUS – a new trilateral security partnership for the Indo-Pacific region.
- It was announced in a joint address by British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, his Australian counterpart Scott Morrison and US President Joe Biden with a vision for a safer and more secure Indo-Pacific.

**Key Points**

- Under the AUKUS alliance, the 3 nations have agreed to enhance the development of joint capabilities and technology sharing, foster deeper integration of security and defence-related science, technology, industrial bases and supply chains.
- Under the first major initiative of AUKUS, Australia would build a fleet of nuclear-powered submarines with the help of the US and the UK, a capability aimed at promoting stability in the Indo-Pacific region.

**Other Groups:**

- ANZUS (Australia, New Zealand and the US)
- Quad (The US, India, Japan and Australia)
- Five Eyes (US, UK, Australia, Canada and New Zealand)

**Source: TOI**

**15th Edition of Indo - Nepal Joint Military Training Exercise 'Surya Kiran'**

**Why in News**

- **15th Edition of Indo - Nepal Joint Military Training Exercise 'Surya Kiran'** between Indian Army and Nepali Army commenced from 20 September 2021 at **Pithoragarh in Uttarakhand**.
- It will continue till 03 October 2021.

### **Key Points**

- During this exercise, an Infantry Battalion from Indian Army and an equivalent strength from Nepali Army would be sharing their experiences gained during the conduct of various counter-insurgency operations over a prolonged period in their respective countries.
- Also, there would be a series of Expert Academic Discussions on various subjects such as Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief, High Altitude Warfare, Jungle Warfare etc.
- The exercise is part of an initiative to develop inter-operability and sharing expertise between the two nations.
- **Note:** Last edition of Exercise Surya Kiran was conducted in Nepal in 2019.

**Source: PIB**

## **First satellite and nuclear missile tracking ship INS Dhruv**

### **Why in News**

- India has launched its first satellite and nuclear missile tracking ship INS Dhruv in Visakhapatnam.

### **Key Points**

#### **About INS Dhruv:**

- INS Dhruv, with its anti-ballistic missile capabilities, will act as an early warning system for enemy missiles headed towards Indian cities and military establishments.
- It is India's first naval vessel that is capable of tracking nuclear missiles at a long range, which assumes a special significance with an increasing threat of nuclear ballistic warfare in the Indo-Pacific region.
- It was built by the **Hindustan Shipyard Ltd.** in collaboration with the **National Technical Research Organisation (NTRO)** and the **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)**.

**Note:** India now joins an elite list of countries that presently consists of only **France, the US, the UK, Russia, and China**, who possess and operate such vessels.

**Source: Hindustan Times**

## **India's first Emergency Landing Facility for Indian Air Force in Barmer, Rajasthan**

### **Why in News**

- **Rajnath Singh, Defence Minister and Nitin Gadkari, Minister for Road Transport and Highways** jointly inaugurated **Emergency Landing Facility (ELF)** for the Indian Air Force at Satta-Gandhav stretch on **NH-925A near Barmer, Rajasthan.**

### **Key Points**

- This is the first time that a National Highway has been used for emergency landing of aircraft of the Indian Air Force (IAF).
- The NHAI has developed the 3 kilometre section as an ELF for the Indian Air Force.
- It is part of the newly-developed two-lane paved shoulder of Gagariya-Bakhasar & Satta-Gandhav Section having total length of 196.97 kilometres and costing Rs 765.52 crore under Bharatmala Pariyojana.
- The work commenced in July 2019 and was completed in January 2021.

**Source: The Hindu**

## **Delegation of Financial Powers to Defence Services (DFPDS) 2021**

### **Why in News**

- **Defence Minister Rajnath Singh** released an order on **Delegation of Financial Powers to Defence Services (DFPDS) 2021**, providing enhanced delegation of Revenue Procurement powers to the Armed Forces.
- DFPDS 2021 is another big step in the series of defence reforms to strengthen the security infrastructure of the country.
- It will overcome procedural delays, bring about greater decentralisation and operational efficiency.

### **Key Points**

- The enhanced delegation of Financial Powers to functionaries in Service Headquarters and lower formations would result in quicker decision making at all levels leading to better planning and operational preparedness of the Services in a quicker time frame and optimum utilisation of resources.
- The DFPDS 2021 consists of guidelines related to the following Schedules of Financial Powers:

**Army Schedules of Powers-2021 (ASP-2021)**  
**Navy Schedules of Powers-2021 (NSP-2021)**  
**Air Force Schedules of Powers-2021 (AFSP- 2021)**  
**IDS Schedules of Powers-2021 (ISP-2021)**

- Delegated Financial Powers of Vice Chiefs of the Services have been increased by 10 percent, subject to an overall ceiling of Rs 500 crore.

**Recent Reforms in Defence Sector:**

- Defence Acquisition Procedure 2020
- Creation of Chief of Defence Staff
- Indigenisation of Defense Technology: Project 75, LCA Tejas, etc.
- Establishment of Department of Military Affairs
- Participation of Women in Armed Forces

**Source: PIB**

**C-295MW transport aircraft for Indian Air Force**

**Why in News**

- **Cabinet Committee on Security** approved the procurement of **56 C-295MW transport aircraft** for the **Indian Air Force (IAF)** under the **'Make in India' initiative**.
- It will be purchased from **M/s Airbus Defence and Space S.A., Spain**.

**Key Points**

**About C-295MW aircraft:**

- It is a transport aircraft of 5-10 Tonne capacity with contemporary technology that will replace the ageing Avro aircraft of IAF.

**Project Execution:**

- 16 aircraft will be delivered in flyaway condition from Spain within 48 months of signing of the contract and 40 aircraft will be manufactured in India by **TATA Consortium** within 10 years of signing of the contract.
- This is the **first project of its kind** in which a military aircraft will be manufactured in India by a **private company**.
- During the process of manufacturing in India, it is expected that all the suppliers of TATA Consortium who will be involved in special processes will gain and maintain globally recognized **National Aerospace and Defence Contractors Accreditation Program (NADCAP)** accreditation.

### Significance of the Deal:

- The project will give a boost to the aerospace ecosystem in India wherein several MSMEs spread over the country will be involved in manufacturing of parts of the aircraft.
- The programme will provide a major boost to the **'Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan'** as it offers a unique opportunity for the **Indian Private Sector**.

### Employment Generation:

- The programme will act as a catalyst in employment generation in the aerospace ecosystem of the country and is expected to generate 600 highly skilled jobs directly, over 3000 indirect jobs and an additional 3000 medium skill employment opportunities with more than 42.5 lakh man hours of work within the aerospace and defence sector of India.

**Source: PIB**

### President's Colour presented to Naval Aviation Why in News

- Shri **Ram Nath Kovind, President of India and the Supreme Commander of Indian Armed Forces**, presented the **President's Colour to Indian Naval Aviation** at INS Hansa, Goa.

### Key Points

- Award of the President's Colour to Indian Naval Aviation, is in recognition of the yeoman service rendered both during peace and combat.
- The Naval Aviation arm came into being with acquisition of the first *Sealand* aircraft on 13 Jan 1951 and commissioning of INS Garuda, at Kochi on 11 May 1953.
- Today, Naval Aviation boasts of nine Air Stations and three Naval Air Enclaves, along the Indian coastline and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.
- Over the past seven decades, it has transformed into a modern, technologically advanced and highly potent force, with more than 250 aircraft.

### About President's Colour:

- It is bestowed on a military unit, in recognition of exceptional service rendered to the Nation, both in peace and in war.

- The Indian Navy was the first Indian Armed Force, to receive the President's Colour, from Dr Rajendra Prasad, the then President of India on 27 May 1951.

**Source: PIB**

## **'AUSINDEX 21'- a bilateral maritime exercise between Australia and India**

### **Why in News**

- The **Royal Australian Navy (RAN)** and **Indian Navy (IN)** conduct the **4th edition** of bilateral exercise – '**AUSINDEX**' in **Australia** from 06 to 10 September, 2021.

### **Key Points**

- Indian Navy Task Group comprising *IN Ships Shivalik* and *Kadmatt* participated in the exercise.
- From Australia, Royal Australian Navy Anzac Class Frigate, *HMAS Warramunga* participated.
- The exercise will provide an opportunity for both Navies to further bolster inter-operability, gain from best practices and develop a common understanding of procedures for Maritime Security Operations.
- The exercise is a true representation of Joint Guidance signed by the Chief of the Naval Staff, IN and Chief of Navy, RAN on 18 Aug 2021.
- This important document is aligned to the '**2020 Comprehensive Strategic Partnership**' between the two nations and aims to further consolidate shared commitment to regional and global security challenges promoting peace, security and stability in the Indo-Pacific region.

**Note:** Commenced in 2015 as a bilateral IN-RAN maritime exercise, AUSINDEX has grown in complexity over the years and the 3rd edition of the exercise, held in 2019 in the Bay of Bengal.

**Source: PIB**

## **Karbi Anglong Agreement**

### **Why in News**

- A tripartite agreement '**Karbi Anglong Agreement**' among **five insurgent groups of Assam**, the **Centre** and the **State government** was signed to end years of violence in the Karbi Anglong region.

- It was signed in the presence of Union Home Minister, Amit Shah.
- The Karbi Agreement is another milestone in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of "Insurgency free prosperous North East".

### **Key Points**

#### **Highlights of the Karbi-Anglong Agreement:**

- The insurgent groups which signed the peace accord include Karbi Longri North Cachar Hills Liberation Front (KLNLF), People's Democratic Council of Karbi Longri (PDCK), United People's Liberation Army (UPLA), Karbi People's Liberation Tigers (KPLT) and the Kuki Liberation Front (KLF).
- With this historic agreement, over 1000 armed cadres have abjured violence and joined the mainstream of society.
- A Special Development Package of Rs. 1000 crores over five years will be given by the Union Government and Assam Government to undertake specific projects for the development of Karbi areas.
- This Memorandum of Settlement will ensure greater devolution of autonomy to the **Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC)**, protection of identity, language, culture, etc. of Karbi people and focused development of the Council area, without affecting the territorial and administrative integrity of Assam.
- The Assam government shall set up a Karbi Welfare Council for focused development of Karbi people living outside the KAAC area.

#### **About Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC):**

- It is an autonomous district council in the state of Assam for development and protection of tribals living in areas namely Karbi Anglong and West Karbi Anglong district.
- The council is constituted under the **Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India** and administratively functions under the Government of Assam.

#### **Other Recent Peace Agreements of the Northeast:**

- NLFT Tripura Agreement, 2019
- Bru Accord, 2020.
- Bodo Peace Accord

**Source: PIB**

## 12<sup>th</sup> edition of DefExpo

### Why in News

- **Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani** jointly reviewed the preparations of DefExpo-2022, at Kevadia, Gujarat.
- **A memorandum of understanding (MoU)** was signed between the Ministry of Defence and Gujarat Government for organising DefExpo-2022.
- The 12<sup>th</sup> edition of DefExpo will be held in Gandhinagar, Gujarat between March 10 and 13, 2022.

### Key Points

#### About DefExpo-2022:

- DefExpo is India's flagship event showcasing the land, naval, air as well as homeland security systems.
- The aim is to build upon the vision to achieve 'Aatmanirbharta' in defence and reach USD 5 billion defence exports target by 2024.

**Note:** The previous edition (11th) of DefExpo was held at Uttar Pradesh capital Lucknow in February 2020.

**Source: PIB**

## Singapore-India Maritime Bilateral Exercise (SIMBEX) 2021

### Why in News

- The **28th edition of Singapore-India Maritime Bilateral Exercise (SIMBEX)** was conducted from 02 to 04 Sep 2021.
- Owing to the ongoing pandemic-related constraints, this year's SIMBEX was planned without any physical interactions as an 'at-sea only' exercise hosted by the **Republic of Singapore Navy (RSN)** in the **southern fringes of the South China Sea**.

### Key Points

- The Indian Navy was represented by Guided Missile Destroyer INS Ranvijay with a ship borne helicopter, ASW Corvette INS Kiltan and Guided Missile Corvette INS Kora and one P8I Long Range Maritime Patrol Aircraft.

#### About Singapore-India Maritime Bilateral Exercise (SIMBEX):

- SIMBEX is an annual bilateral naval exercise conducted by the Indian Navy and the Republic of Singapore Navy (RSN).
- The exercise has been held annually since 1994.
- Both navies have a representation in each other's Maritime Information Fusion Centres and have also recently signed an

agreement on mutual submarine rescue support and coordination.

**Source: PIB**

## **Indian Army to participate in Multilateral Exercise ZAPAD, 2021 in Russia**

### **Why in News**

- A 200 personnel contingent of the Indian Army will participate in **ZAPAD 2021**, a multi-nation military exercise being held at **Nizhniy, Russia** from 3rd to 16th September 2021.

### **Key Points**

- ZAPAD 2021 is one of the theatre level exercises of the Russian Armed Forces and will focus primarily on operations against terrorists.
- The exercise aims to enhance military and strategic ties amongst the participating nations while they plan & execute this exercise.
- Over a dozen countries from Eurasian and South Asian Region will participate in this signature event.

### **Participating countries:**

- In all, **17 countries** have been invited by Russia for the exercise.
- Of these **9 are Participating countries** which include Mongolia, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Serbia, Russia, India and Belarus.
- The other **8 countries are Observers** which include Pakistan, China, Vietnam, Malaysia, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Uzbekistan and Sri Lanka, the source added.

The **NAGA Battalion group (India)**, participating in the exercise will feature an all Arms combined task force.

### **Exercise between India and Russia:**

- Indra: Joint Exercise (Army, Navy, Air Force)

**Source: The Hindu**

## **Indian Navy's Maiden Exercise with Algerian Navy**

### **Why in News**

- As part of her ongoing goodwill visit to Europe and Africa, **INS Tabar** took part in a **Maritime Partnership Exercise** with **Algerian Navy ship 'Ezzadjer'** on 29 Aug 21.
- This naval exercise was conducted off the **Algerian coast**.

### **Key Points**

- As part of the exercise, diverse activities including co-ordinated manoeuvring, communication procedures and steam past were undertaken between the Indian and Algerian warships.
- The exercise enabled the two navies to understand the concept of operations followed by each other, enhanced interoperability and opened the possibility of increasing interaction and collaboration between them in future.

**Source: PIB**

## **Indian Coast Guard Ship 'Vigraha'**

### **Why in News**

- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh dedicated to the Nation, **indigenously built Coast Guard Ship 'Vigraha'** in Chennai.
- **ICGS Vigraha** is the last vessel in the series of **7 Offshore Patrol Vessels (OPVs)** built by L&T under a Ministry of Defence contract signed in 2015.
- Other OPVs are **Vikram, Vijaya, Veera, Varaha, Varad and Vajra.**

### **Key Points**

#### **About Vigraha:**

- ICGS Vigraha will be based at Visakhapatnam and operate on India's Eastern Seaboard under the Operational and Administrative Control of the Commander, Coast Guard Region (East).
- The 98 meters OPV has been designed and built indigenously by **M/s Larsen & Toubro Ship Building Ltd.,** and is fitted with advanced technology Radars, Navigation and Communication Equipment, Sensor and Machinery capable of operating in tropical sea conditions.
- The ship, on joining the Coast Guard Eastern fleet, will be deployed extensively for EEZ (Exclusive Economic Zone) surveillance and other duties as enshrined in the Coast Guard Charter, to safeguard the maritime interests of India.

**Note:** The Indian Coast Guard with this ship joining the fleet, will have 157 Ships and 66 Aircraft in its inventory.

**Source: PIB**

## **Army Sports Institute Stadium, Pune renamed after Tokyo Olympics gold medalist Neeraj Chopra**

## Why in News

- **Defence Minister Rajnath Singh** renamed the Army Sports Institute Stadium of Army Sports Institute (ASI), Pune after Tokyo Olympics gold medalist Neeraj Chopra.

### Key Points

#### About Neeraj Chopra:

- Neeraj Chopra is an Indian track and field athlete who competes in the javelin throw.
- As of August 2021, he is ranked second internationally by World Athletics.
- Chopra is the first track and field athlete to win a gold medal for India at the Tokyo Olympics 2020.

#### About Army Sports Institute (ASI), Pune:

- Established in 2001 under the Indian Army's Mission Olympic programme, ASI is a multi-disciplinary sports training institute.
- The institute imparts training in seven fields: Archery, Athletics, Boxing, Diving, Wrestling, Fencing and Weightlifting.

**Source: Indian Express**

## Awards and Honours

### Bangladesh PM Sheikh Hasina conferred with SDG Progress Award

#### Why in News

- **Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina** has been conferred with **SDG Progress award** for Bangladesh's steady progress in achieving the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**.

#### Key Points

##### About SDG Progress Award:

- It was conferred by the **UN sponsored Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN)**.
- The SDSN was set up in 2012 under the auspices of the UN Secretary General.

##### About SDG (Sustainable Development Goals):

- The SDGs are a collection of 17 interlinked global goals designed to be a "blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all".
- The SDGs were set up in 2015 by the United Nations General Assembly and are intended to be achieved by the year 2030.

**Source: newsonair**

## National Florence Nightingale Award 2020 to Brigadier S V Saraswati

### Why in News

- **Deputy Director General of Military Nursing Service (MNS) Brig S V Saraswati** has been bestowed with the National Florence Nightingale Award 2020.
- **President Ram Nath Kovind** conferred the award for her immense contribution to the MNS as nurse administrator.

### Key Points

- Brig Saraswati hails from Chittoor district of Andhra Pradesh and was commissioned into the MNS on December 28, 1983.
- The **National Florence Nightingale Award** is the highest national distinction a nurse can achieve for selfless devotion and exceptional professionalism.

**Source: The Hindu**

## 'Super 30' founder Anand Kumar conferred with Swami Brahmanand Award 2021

### Why in News

- **Anand Kumar, Mathematician** was conferred with the **Swami Brahmanand Award 2021** for his contribution in the field of education through his 'Super 30' initiative.

### Key Points

#### About Swami Brahmanand Award:

- The award is given every year to people who have done special work in the education sector or for the welfare of the cow.
- It has been instituted in the name of Swami Brahmananda, a freedom fighter, former MP and a saint known for his sacrifices and his contribution in the field of education.
- **Note:** Friederike Irina Bruening, a German national, received the first Swami Brahmanand Award for cow protection in 2019.

**Source: TOI**

## Sahitya Akademi Fellowship 2021

### Why in News

- The Sahitya Akademi announced Sahitya Akademi Fellowship 2021 for eight writers, including eminent **English author Ruskin Bond** and **Hindi writer Vinod Kumar Shukla**.

### Key Points

- The others who received the Fellowship are **Sirshendu Mukhopadhyay (Bengali), M Leelavathy (Malayalam), Dr. Bhalchandra Nemade (Marathi), Dr Tejwant Singh Gill (Punjabi), Swami Rambhadracharya (Sanskrit), Indira Parthasarthy (Tamil).**
- The general council of Sahitya Akademi had met under the chairmanship of President Dr. Chandrashekar Kambar to announce the winners of the literary honour- Sahitya Akademi fellowship.
- The Sahitya Akademi Fellowship is a literary honour in India bestowed by the **Sahitya Akademi, India's National Academy of Letters.**

Source: TOI

### Kaushalacharya Awards 2021

- **Union Education Minister and Skill Development Minister Dharmendra Pradhan** presented **Kaushalacharya Awards 2021** to **41 skill trainers** for their exemplary contribution to the skill ecosystem.
- These **41 trainers** are from several initiatives and training programmes of **Skill India— Directorate General of Training (DGT), Apprenticeship, Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY), Jan Shikshan Sansthan (JSS) and Entrepreneurship.**

Source: PIB

### Earthshot Prize 2021

#### Why in News

- **Two Indian Projects** have been selected to get the first ever **Earthshot Prize 2021.**

#### Key Points

- **Vinisha Umashankar, a 14-year-old Tamil Nadu schoolgirl's** solar-powered ironing cart project and **Vidyut Mohan (Co-founder of Takachar), a Delhi entrepreneur's** agricultural waste recycling concept were named among 15 finalists for the first-ever Earthshot Prize 2021.

#### About Earthshot Prize:

- It is a prize awarded annually from 2021 to 2030, to five winners each year whose solutions substantially help the environment.

- The Prize is given by the **Royal Foundation**, headquartered in London, England.
- The Earthshot Prize was launched in 2020 by **Prince William, Duke of Cambridge and David Attenborough**, with the support of a broad range of individuals and organizations dedicated to climate action.

**Source: Indian Express**

## **UNESCO Literacy Prize awarded to NIOS**

### **Why in News**

- The **National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS)** of India won the prestigious **UNESCO King Sejong Literacy Prize 2021** for Innovation in Education.

### **Key Points**

- **NIOS** won this award for 'enabling education of persons with disabilities through technology-enabled inclusive learning materials, with a specific focus on Indian Sign language-based content'.
- **Every year, the UNESCO International Literacy Prizes focus on a specific theme. This year, the spotlight was on inclusive distance and digital literacy learning.**
- Along with NIOS, this year's UNESCO International Literacy Prizes were awarded to five other outstanding literacy programmes from Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Guatemala, Mexico, and South Africa.

**Source: India Today**

## **Hyderabad-based ICRISAT wins Africa Food Prize 2021**

### **Why in News**

- Hyderabad-based **International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT)** has been awarded the **Africa Food Prize 2021** for improving food security in sub-Saharan Africa.

### **Key Points**

- Africa Food Prize 2021 was awarded at the **Africa Forum for Green Revolution 2021 Summit in Nairobi, Kenya.**
- ICRISAT got the award for the Tropical Legumes Project that has improved food security across 13 countries in sub-Saharan Africa.

**About ICRISAT:** It is a non-profit, non-political public international research organization that conducts agricultural research for development in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa with a wide array of partners throughout the world.

**Source: Indian Express**

## **INSPIRE Awards - MANAK**

### **Why in News**

- The 8th **National Level Exhibition and Project Competition (NLEPC)** for the **INSPIRE Awards – MANAK (Million Minds Augmenting National Aspiration and Knowledge)**, has commenced.
- It is showcasing the innovative ideas from 581 students representing various States and UTs of the country.

### **Key Points**

#### **About The INSPIRE Awards - MANAK scheme:**

- The INSPIRE Awards - MANAK scheme is aligned with the 'Start-up India'.
- It aims to motivate students in the age group of 10-15 years and studying in classes 6 to 10 to become future innovators and critical thinkers.

#### **About INSPIRE scheme:**

- **Innovation in Science Pursuit for Inspired Research (INSPIRE)** was approved by the **Government of India** for implementation through the **Department of Science & Technology** to promote science and attract talents for pursuing career in research.
- It was launched by the Prime Minister on 31st December, 2008.
- INSPIRE Scheme has included **three programs and five components.**

#### **Three programs:**

- i) Scheme for Early Attraction of Talents for Science (SEATS)
- ii) Scholarship for Higher Education (SHE)
- iii) Assured Opportunity for Research Careers (AORC)

#### **Five components:**

- i) INSPIRE Awards - MANAK
- ii) INSPIRE Internship
- iii) INSPIRE Scholarship
- iv) INSPIRE Fellowship
- v) INSPIRE Faculty

### Related Initiatives:

- Swarna Jayanti Fellowship (It provides special assistance and support to a selected young scientists)
- Science Technology and Innovation Policy, 2020
- SERB-POWER Scheme (For women scientists)

**Source: PIB**

## Behler Turtle Conservation Award 2021

### Why in News

- **Indian biologist Dr. Shailendra Singh** has been awarded the **Behler Turtle Conservation Award 2021** for bringing **three critically endangered turtle** conservation species again from the brink of extinction.
- There are **29 species of freshwater turtles and tortoises** in India.

### Key Points

- These **critically endangered turtles** are being conserved as part of TSA India's analysis, conservation breeding and training programme in numerous elements of the nation.
- The Northern River Terrapin (Batagur baska) is being conserved on the Sunderbans; the Crimson-crowned Roofed Turtle (Batagur kachuga) at Chambal; and the Black Softshell Turtle (Nilssonina nigricans) at completely different temples in Assam.

### About Behler Turtle Conservation Award:

- It was established in 2006 to recognise excellent achievements, contributions and management excellence in worldwide turtle conservation and biology.
- It carries an honorarium of \$5000 and is widely considered the "Nobel Prize" of turtle conservation and biology.
- It is co-presented by the Turtle Survival Alliance (TSA), IUCN/SSC Tortoise and Freshwater Turtle Specialist Group, Turtle Conservancy, and the Turtle Conservation Fund.

### Protection Status:

- International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List: Critically Endangered
- CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora)
- Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972

**Source: The Hindu**

## Ramon Magsaysay Award 2021 Winners

### Why in News

- Recently, the 63<sup>rd</sup> Ramon Magsaysay Award 2021 was announced.

### Key Points

#### List of Ramon Magsaysay Award 2021 Awardees:

- Dr. Firdausi Qadri, Bangladesh (Affordable Vaccine Champion)
- Roberto Ballon, Philippines (Fisherman, Community Environmentalist)
- Steven Muncy, Southeast Asia (Humanitarian, Peace Builder)
- Muhammad Amjad Saqib, Pakistan (Poverty Alleviation Visionary)
- Watchdoc, Indonesia (Media Truth Crusaders)

#### About Ramon Magsaysay Award:

- It was established in April 1957 and is regarded as the Asian version of the Nobel Prize.
- The award is named after Ramon Magsaysay, the third president of the Republic of the Philippines after World War II.
- The Ramon Magsaysay Award Foundation gives the prize to Asian individuals achieving excellence in their respective fields.
- The Award is presented in a formal ceremony in Manila, Philippines on August 31<sup>st</sup> each year.

**Source: The Hindu**

## POWERGRID wins the global ATD BEST Award 2021

### Why in News

- **Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (POWERGRID)**, a Maharatna CPSU under Ministry of Power, Government of India has been awarded the coveted **“Association for Talent Development (ATD) 2021 BEST Award”**.
- It secured **8<sup>th</sup> rank** among the 71 organizations from around the globe.

### Key Points

- POWERGRID has won this International recognition for its diligent efforts in talent development practices and programmes.
- The talent development initiative in POWERGRID is driven by **POWERGRID Academy of Leadership (PAL)**.

#### About the Award:

- The Association for Talent Development (ATD, formerly ASTD) is the world's largest association dedicated to those who develop talent in organizations and ATD's BEST Award is the talent development industry's most rigorous and coveted recognition.

**Source: PIB**

## Ranks and Indices

### 3rd State Food Safety Index: FSSAI

#### Why in News

- **Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare Mansukh Mandaviya** released the 3rd State Food Safety Index (SFSI).
- He also flagged off **19 Mobile Food Testing Vans (Food Safety on Wheels)** to supplement the food safety ecosystem across the country taking the total number of such mobile testing vans to 109.

#### Key Points

##### Rankings of States:

- The Union Minister felicitated 9 leading States/UTs based on the ranking for the year 2020-21 for their impressive performance.
- **Among the larger states**, Gujarat was the top ranking state, followed by Kerala and Tamil Nadu.
- **Among the smaller states**, Goa stood first followed by Meghalaya and Manipur.
- **Among UTs**, Jammu & Kashmir, Andaman & Nicobar Islands and New Delhi secured top ranks.

##### About State Food Safety Index:

- The **Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)** has developed State Food Safety Index to measure the performance of states on 5 significant parameters of Food Safety.
- **Parameters:** Human Resources and Institutional Data, Compliance, Food Testing – Infrastructure and Surveillance, Training & Capacity Building and Consumer Empowerment
- The Index is a dynamic quantitative and qualitative benchmarking model that provides an objective framework for evaluating food safety across all States/UTs.

- The first State Food Safety Index (for 2018-19) was announced on the first-ever World Food Safety Day on 7th June 2019.

**Related Initiatives:**

- Eat Right India Movement
- Eat Right Research Awards and Grants
- Eat Right Station Certification

**Source: PIB**

## Global Innovation Index 2021

### Why in News

- **India** has climbed 2 spots and has been **ranked 46<sup>th</sup>** in the **Global Innovation Index (GII) 2021** rankings.
- India has been on a rising trajectory, over the past several years in the Global Innovation Index, from a **rank of 81 in 2015 to 46 in 2021.**

### Key Points

#### Global Performance:

- **Rank 1:** Switzerland
- **Rank 2:** Sweden
- **Rank 3:** U.S.
- **Rank 46:** India

#### India's Performance:

- The consistent improvement in the GI ranking is owing to the immense knowledge capital, the vibrant start-up ecosystem, and the amazing work done by the public and the private research organizations.
- The Scientific Departments like the Department of Atomic Energy; the Department of Science and Technology; the Department of Biotechnology and the Department of Space have played a pivotal role in enriching the National Innovation Ecosystem.
- **India ranks 2nd among the 34 lower middle-income group economies.**
- **India ranks 1st among the 10 economies in Central and Southern Asia.**

#### About Global Innovation Index (GII) 2021:

- The GI report is published by **World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)** in partnership with the Portulans Institute, with support of corporate network partners, such as the Confederation of Indian Industry, Brazilian National

- Confederation of Industry, Ecopetrol Group (Colombia), and the Turkish Exporters Assembly.
- The 2021 edition of the GII presents the latest global innovation ranking of 132 economies, relying on 81 different indicators.

**Source: PIB**

## **World Bank discontinues 'Ease of Doing Business' report**

### **Why in News**

- The World Bank Group has decided to discontinue the 'Ease of Doing Business' report.
- The World Bank has now said that a new approach will be worked out to assess countries' business and investment climates.

### **Key Points**

- In August 2020, World Bank paused the publication of the Doing Business report following a number of irregularities were reported regarding changes to the data.
- The international financial institution later confirmed that the changes were inconsistent with the Doing Business methodology.

### **About Ease of Doing Business Report:**

- The Ease of Doing Business Report was introduced in 2003 to provide an assessment of objective measures of business regulations and their enforcement across 190 economies.

### **India's Performance:**

- In 2014, India was at 142nd position on the Ease of Doing Business Index and made significant improvements after the government launched an ambitious program of regulatory reforms.
- India moved to 63rd position on World Bank's Ease of Doing Business Ranking 2020.

### **Other World Bank's major report:**

- World Development Report
- Human Capital Index

**Source: The Hindu**

## **THE World University Rankings 2022**

### **Why in News**

- The **Times Higher Education (THE)** released **World University Rankings 2022.**

## Key Points

### Global Ranking:

- The **University of Oxford, UK** tops the ranking for the sixth consecutive year.
- Colleges from the United States continue to dominate the top 20 ranks, with **California Institute of Technology, Harvard University and Stanford University** taking the second, third and the fourth spot respectively.

### India's Ranking:

- **Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru** is the country's top performing institute, but is ranked in the 301-350 bracket.
- It is followed by IIT Ropar and JSS Academy of Higher Education and Research. Both are in the 351-400 bracket.
- Overall, India is home to 35 of the world's top 1,000 universities.

### About THE World University Rankings 2022:

- The THE World University Rankings 2022 include more than 1,600 universities across 99 countries and territories, making them the largest and most diverse university rankings to date.
- The table is based on 13 carefully calibrated performance indicators that measure an institution's performance across four areas: teaching, research, knowledge transfer and international outlook.

### About Times Higher Education (THE):

- Times Higher Education, formerly The Times Higher Education Supplement, is a magazine reporting specifically on news and issues related to higher education.

### Related India's Initiatives:

- National Education Policy, 2020
- Institutions of Eminence (IoE) Scheme
- Uchhatar Avishkar Yojana
- Impacting Research Innovation and Technology (IMPRINT)

**Source: Indian Express**

## BGCI launches the State of the World's Trees Report 2021

### Why in News

- **Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI)** launched the **State of the World's Trees Report 2021**.
- Almost a third of the world's tree species are at risk of extinction, while hundreds are on the brink of being wiped out.

### Key Points

- According to the State of the World's Trees report 17,500 tree species – some 30% of the total – are at risk of extinction, while 440 species have fewer than 50 individuals left in the wild.
- Among the most at-risk trees are species including magnolias and dipterocarps – which are commonly found in Southeast Asian rainforests. Oak trees, maple trees and ebonies also face threats.
- Thousands of varieties of trees in the world's top 6 countries for tree-species diversity are at risk of extinction. The greatest single number is in Brazil. The other 5 countries are Indonesia, Malaysia, China, Colombia and Venezuela.
- The top three threats facing tree species are crop production, timber logging and livestock farming, while climate change and extreme weather are emerging threats.

#### **Need of saving Trees:**

- Trees help support the natural ecosystem and are considered vital for combating global warming and climate change.
- They store 50% of the world's terrestrial carbon and provide a buffer from extreme weather, such hurricanes and tsunamis.

#### **India's Related Initiatives:**

- National Mission for a Green India
- Nagar Van (Urban Forest) Scheme
- Sankalp Parva
- National Afforestation Programme
- Compensatory Afforestation Fund Act

**Source: Indian Express**

### **Weather disasters killed 2 million in last 50 years, UN Agency**

#### **Why in News**

- According to the **WMO 'Atlas of Mortality and Economic Losses from Weather, Climate and Water Extremes (1970 – 2019)' report**, weather disasters killed 2 million in last 50 years.
- **WMO (World Meteorological Organization)** is a specialized **agency of the United Nations** responsible for promoting international cooperation on atmospheric science, climatology, hydrology and geophysics.

#### **Key Points**

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

- The number of disasters has increased by a factor of five over the 50 year period, driven by climate change, more extreme weather and improved reporting.
- Due to improved early warnings and disaster management, the number of deaths decreased almost three-fold from 1970 to 2019.
- From 1970 to 2019, weather, climate and water hazards accounted for 50% of all disasters, 45% of all reported deaths and 74% of all reported economic losses.
- More than 91% of these deaths occurred in developing countries.
- During the 50 year period, US\$ 202 million dollars in damage occurred on average every day. Economic losses have increased sevenfold from the 1970s to the 2010s.
- Storms were the most prevalent cause of damage, resulting in the largest economic losses around the globe.

#### **Failure of Sendai Framework:**

- The failure to reduce disaster losses as set out in the **Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction adopted by UN Member States in 2015** is putting at risk the ability of developing countries to eradicate poverty and to achieve other important **SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals)**.

#### **India's Recent Initiatives:**

- National Disaster Management Plan (NDMP)
- Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI)
- National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA)

**Source: [public.wmo.int](https://public.wmo.int)**

### **The Climate Crisis is a Child Rights Crisis: Introducing the Children's Climate Risk Index, UNICEF Report**

#### **Why in News**

- **UNICEF** in collaboration with **Fridays for Future (FFF)** has launched the report named **'The Climate Crisis is a Child Rights Crisis: Introducing the Children's Climate Risk Index' 2021**.
- The report is the first comprehensive analysis of climate risk from a child's perspective.

#### **Key Points**

#### **About Children's Climate Risk Index (CCRI):**

- It ranks countries based on children's exposure to climate and environmental shocks, such as cyclones and heat waves, as well as their vulnerability to those shocks, based on their access to essential services.
- The report finds approximately **1 billion children** – nearly half the world's 2.2 billion children – live in one of the **33 countries classified as “extremely high-risk”**.
- These children face a deadly combination of exposure to multiple climate and environmental shocks with a high vulnerability due to inadequate essential services, such as water and sanitation, healthcare and education.

CCRI Rank:

- Rank 1: Central African Republic
- Rank 2: Chad, Nigeria
- Rank 26: India

Recommendations:

- Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Increase investment in climate adaptation and resilience
- Provide Climate Education
- Ensure Pandemic Recovery is Inclusive
- Include Young People in Decisions

Source: [unicef.org](https://www.unicef.org)

## Books and Authors

**A book titled ‘Human Rights and Terrorism in India’ by Subramanian Swamy**

**Why in News**

- A book titled ‘Human Rights and Terrorism in India’ authored by **Rajya Sabha member Subramanian Swamy**, has been released.

**Key Points**

- The book traces how the combating of terrorism can be harmonised with human and fundamental rights within reasonable restrictions that is permitted by the Constitution and upheld by the Supreme Court.

**Source: the Hindu**

**The book “Gita Govinda: Jaydeva’s Divine Odyssey” and program 'Bujurgon ki Baat–Desh Ke Saath'**

**Why in News**

- **Union Minister of Culture Gangapuram Kishan Reddy** launched the book **“Gita Govinda: Jaydeva’s Divine Odyssey”** written by Padma Shri Dr. Utpal K. Banerjee and program **'Bujurgon ki Baat–Desh Ke Saath'** in New Delhi.

### **Key Points**

#### **About 'Bujurgon ki Baat–Desh Ke Saath' Programme:**

- The programme aims at enhancing the interaction between the youth and the elder persons who are 95 years and above and thus have spent around 18 years in India before independence.

#### **About “Gita Govinda: Jaydeva’s Divine Odyssey” Book:**

- Gita Govinda was originally written by 12<sup>th</sup> century poet Jayadeva.
- It describes the relationship between Krishna and Radha.

**Source: PIB**

## **New Appointments**

### **Justin Trudeau wins third term as Canada’s PM**

#### **Why in News**

- Justin Trudeau has won a third term as Canada’s Prime Minister after his party won the 2021 election.

#### **Key Points**

- Justin Trudeau is a Canadian politician who is the 23<sup>rd</sup> and current Prime Minister of Canada since November 2015 and the leader of the Liberal Party since 2013.
- Trudeau is the second-youngest prime minister in Canadian history after Joe Clark.

#### **Facts about Canada:**

- **Capital:** Ottawa
- **Currency:** Canadian Dollar

**Source: Indian Express**

### **Air Marshal V R Chaudhari appointed next Chief of Air Staff**

#### **Why in News**

- Government has decided to appoint **Air Marshal V R Chaudhari**, presently Vice Chief of Air Staff, as the next **Chief of the Air Staff** after the retirement of Air Chief Marshal RKS Bhaduria on 30<sup>th</sup> September, 2021.

### Key Points

- V R Chaudhari was commissioned into the Fighter stream of Indian Air Force on 29<sup>th</sup> December 1982 and has held various Command, Staff and Instructional Appointments at various levels including the present one as Vice Chief of Air Staff.
- Chaudhari is a recipient of the Param Vishisht Seva Medal, Ati Vishisht Seva Medal and the Vayu Sena Medals.

**Source: Indian Express**

## Charanjit Singh Channi takes oath as Punjab CM

### Why in News

- **Congress leader Charanjit Singh Channi** took oath as **16<sup>th</sup> Chief Minister of Punjab**.
- **Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa** and **Om Prakash Soni** took oath as **Deputy Chief Ministers**.

### Key Points

- Punjab Governor Banwarilal Purohit administered the oath of office and secrecy at the Raj Bhawan in Chandigarh.
- Channi a three-time MLA from Rupnagar's Chamkaur Sahib - is the first Dalit to hold this post in the state.

**Note:** Captain Amarinder Singh resigned from the post of Chief Minister of Punjab on 18 September 2021.

**Source: Indian Express**

## Bhupendra Patel sworn-in as new chief minister of Gujarat

### Why in News

- Bhupendra Patel has been sworn-in as the 17<sup>th</sup> chief minister of Gujarat.

### Key Points

- Governor Acharya Devvrat administered the oath of office to him at Rajbhavan.
- Bhupendra Patel is a MLA from the Ghatlodia constituency in Ahmedabad.
- Bhupendra Patel replaced Vijay Rupani, who unexpectedly stepped down from the chief minister of Gujarat.

**Source: indiatoday**

## New Governors appointed for Uttarakhand, Punjab, Nagaland & Tamil Nadu

### Why in News

- President Ram Nath Kovind has appointed new governors in four states, namely, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Nagaland & Tamil Nadu.

### **Key Points**

#### **Uttarakhand:**

- **Lt. Gen. Gurmit Singh** (ret'd), former deputy chief of Army, has been appointed Governor of Uttarakhand.
- **Note:** Recently, the President of India had accepted the resignation of Baby Rani Maurya as Governor of Uttarakhand.

#### **Punjab:**

- **Banwarilal Purohit**, Governor of Tamil Nadu holding additional charge of the Governor of Punjab is appointed as regular Governor of Punjab.

#### **Nagaland:**

- **Jagdish Mukhi**, who is presently the governor of Assam, has been appointed to discharge the functions of the governor of Nagaland in addition to his charge till a fresh appointment is made.

#### **Tamil Nadu:**

- The incumbent Governor of Nagaland, **R N Ravi** is shifted to Tamil Nadu.

**Source: TOI**

## **Sardar Iqbal Singh Lalpura takes charge as the Chairman, National Commission for Minorities**

### **Why in News**

- Sardar Iqbal Singh Lalpura took charge as the Chairman of the National Commission for Minorities (NCM).

### **Key Points**

- Sardar Iqbal Singh Lalpura was the former IPS officer from Punjab.

### **About National Commission for Minorities (NCM):**

- The Union Government had set up the NCM under the National Commission for Minorities Act, 1992.
- Initially five religious communities, namely, **Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Buddhists and Zoroastrians (Parsis)** were notified as minority communities by the Union Government. Further, on January 27, 2014, **Jains** were also notified as another minority community.

**Source: PIB**

## Pankaj Kumar Singh appointed as BSF director general

### Why in News

- The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved the proposal of the Ministry of Home Affairs to appoint **Pankaj Kumar Singh as director general (DG) of Border Security Force (BSF)**.

### Key Points

#### About Pankaj Kumar Singh:

- He is a 1988-batch Indian Police Service (IPS) officer from Rajasthan cadre.
- **Note:** Singh's father and retired IPS officer Prakash Singh also headed the Border Security Force as its DG in the past.

#### Other Appointments:

- The government also appointed 1988-batch IPS Officers **Sanjay Arora** (Tamil Nadu cadre) and **Balaji Srivastav** (AGMUT cadre) as the new heads (**director general**) of the **Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP)** and the **Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPRD)**.

Source: TOI

## Obituaries

### Akhara Parishad's President, Narendra Giri passes away

#### Why in News

- **Mahant Narendra Giri**, president of the **Akhil Bharatiya Akhara Parishad**, passed away.

#### Key Points

- Narendra Giri was elected president of the all-powerful Akhil Bharatiya Akhara Parishad, the apex decision-making body of the 13 recognised Hindu monastic orders of the country in 2014 for five years.
- He was re-elected to the post at a meeting of the Akhara Parishad held in Haridwar in October 2019.

Source: HT

### Noted litterateur Manorama Mohapatra passes away

- Eminent litterateur, social worker and former editor of Odia daily 'The Samaja' Manorama Mohapatra passed away at 87.
- Mohapatra has more than 40 books and novels to her credit.

- She was honoured with **Sahitya Akademi Award** in 1984, Soviet Nehru Award in 1988, Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar Samman in 1991, Utkal Sahitya Samaj Award, Gangadhar Meher Samman, Sarala Award and Sucharita Award etc.
- For her immense contribution to the field of literature, she was appointed as secretary of Utkal Sahitya Samaj from 1982 to 1990 and President of Odisha Sahitya Akademi in 1991, the first woman to hold this post, till 1994.

**Source: Indian Express**

### **Former Union Minister Oscar Fernandes passes away**

- Former Union Minister and member of Rajya Sabha Oscar Fernandes passed away.
- He was an Indian politician, a senior Indian National Congress leader and was the Union Cabinet Minister for Transport, Road and Highways and Labour and Employment in the UPA government.
- He represented Udupi constituency in the Lok Sabha 5 times and was elected to the Rajya Sabha 4 times.

**Source: The Hindu**

### **J B Mohapatra appointed CBDT chairman**

- The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has approved the appointment of J B Mohapatra, as chairman, **Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT)**.
- He has been holding the additional charge of CBDT chairman since May 31, 2021 after the extended tenure of incumbent P C Mody had ended.
- Mohapatra, a 1985-batch Indian Revenue Service (Income Tax) officer, is currently the member in the board that frames the policy for the Income Tax department.

**Source: The Hindu**

### **Former Rajya Sabha MP and senior journalist Chandan Mitra passes away**

- Former Rajya Sabha MP and senior journalist Chandan Mitra passed away at 65.
- Mitra was a nominated member of the Rajya Sabha from August 2003 to 2009.

- In June 2010, BJP got him elected to the upper house from Madhya Pradesh. His term ended in 2016.
- In July 2018, Mitra, Editor and Managing Director of The Pioneer, resigned from the BJP and **joined the Trinamool Congress (TMC)**.

**Source: Indian Express**

## Important Days

### September 23, International Day of Sign Languages

#### Why in News

- The **United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)** has proclaimed 23 September as the **International Day of Sign Languages (IDSL)** in order to raise awareness of the importance of sign language.

#### Key Points

- The 2021 **theme**, declared by the World Federation of the Deaf, is **“We Sign For Human Rights”**.

#### Background:

- The proposal for the Day came from the **World Federation of the Deaf (WFD)**, a federation of 135 national associations of deaf people.
- The International Day of Sign Languages was first celebrated in 2018 as part of the International Week of the Deaf.
- The International Week of the Deaf was first celebrated in September 1958.

#### Note:

- According to the World Federation of the Deaf, there are more than 70 million deaf people worldwide.
- More than 80% of them live in developing countries. Collectively, they use more than 300 different sign languages.

**Source: un.org**

### September 21, International Day of Peace

#### Why in News

- Each year the International Day of Peace is observed around the world on 21 September.

#### Key Points

- The 2021 **theme** for the International Day of Peace is **“Recovering better for an equitable and sustainable world”**.

**Background:**

- The International Day of Peace was established in 1981 by the United Nations General Assembly.
- Two decades later, in 2001, the General Assembly unanimously voted to designate the Day as a period of non-violence and cease-fire.

**Source: un.org**

## **September 16, International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer**

### **Why in News**

- September 16 was designated by the **United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)** as the International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer.

### **Key Points**

- The **theme** for 2021 is ‘Montreal Protocol – keeping us, our food and vaccines cool’.
- The **ozone layer**, a fragile shield of gas, protects the Earth from the harmful portion of the rays of the sun, thus helping preserve life on the planet.

### **Background:**

- On 19 December 1994, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 16 September the International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer, commemorating the date, in 1987, on which the **Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer** was signed.

**Source: un.org**

## **September 15, International Day of Democracy**

### **Why in News**

- The International Day of Democracy is celebrated around the world on 15 September each year.

### **Key Points**

### **History:**

- It was established through a resolution passed by the **United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)** in 2007, encouraging governments to strengthen and consolidate democracy.

- The International Day of Democracy owes its existence to the Universal Declaration on Democracy, which was adopted on September 15, 1997 by the **Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)**, which is an international organisation of national parliaments.

**Source: Hindustan Times**

## September 15, Engineer's Day

### Why in News

- India celebrates Engineer's Day to commemorate the birth anniversary of the greatest Indian Engineer, **Mokshagundam Visvesvaraya**, on September 15 every year.

### Key Points

- Engineer's Day is observed to acknowledge the efforts of various engineers who have made contributions in this field to make our present lives comfortable.
- A prolific civic engineer, educationist, economist, scholar of the 20th century, M Visvesvaraya made significant contributions in the field of engineering.
- He received India's highest honour, the Bharat Ratna, in 1955.

**Note:** World Engineer's Day- March 4

**Source: India Today**

## September 14, Hindi Diwas

### Why in News

- Hindi Diwas or National Hindi Day is celebrated every year on the 14th of September, to commemorate the adoption of Hindi in Devanagari script as one of the official languages in different Hindi speaking states of India.

### Key Points

#### History:

- On 14 September 1949, Hindi was adopted as the official language in India.
- Under Article 343 of the Indian Constitution, Hindi written in Devanagari script was adopted as one of the official languages. In all, there are **22 Scheduled languages of India**.

#### Related Awards:

- Rajbhasha Kirti Puraskar and Rajbhasha Gaurav Puraskar

**Note:** World Hindi Day (Vishwa Hindi Divas)- January 10

**Source: indiatoday**

## September 08, International Literacy Day

### Why in News

- **International Literacy Day (ILD) 2021** is an international observance, celebrated each year on 8 September.

### Key Points

- The **theme** of ILD 2021 is **“Literacy for a human-centred recovery: Narrowing the digital divide”**.

### History:

- 8th September was proclaimed International Literacy Day by UNESCO in 1966 to remind the international community of the importance of literacy for individuals, communities and societies.
- The issue of literacy is a key component of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals and the **UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**.
- The UN's Sustainable Development Agenda, adopted by world leaders in September 2015, promotes universal access to quality education and learning opportunities throughout people's lives.
- **Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4** has as one of its targets ensuring all young people achieve literacy and numeracy and that adults, who lack these skills are given the opportunity to acquire them.

### Recent Facts:

- 773 million adults and young people lack basic literacy skills.
- 617 million children and adolescents are not achieving minimum proficiency levels in reading and mathematics.

**Source:** [un.org](https://www.un.org)

## Sports

### Raja Rithvik becomes India's 70th Chess Grandmaster

#### Why in News

- **R Raja Rithvik** from **Telangana** has become **India's 70th Chess Grandmaster (GM)**, achieving his third and final norm at a recent event in Hungary.

#### Key Points

- Rithvik, who earned his first GM norm in 2019, achieved his second and third norms in less than a month.

**Note:**

- Viswanathan Anand became the 1st GM from India in 1988.
- Pune's Harshit Raja became India's 69th GM in August 2021

**Source: The Hindu**

## **MS Dhoni's appointment as Team India mentor for T20 World Cup 2021**

### **Why in News**

- **BCCI** has appointed MS Dhoni as the mentor of the Indian national team for the T20 World Cup 2021.

### **Key Points**

- T20 World Cup is scheduled to be played in Oman and the UAE from October 17 to November 14.
- Notably, India last won an ICC trophy back in 2013 when they defeated England in the final of the Champions Trophy, under the leadership of Dhoni.
- Dhoni remains the only captain to win all three major ICC tournaments – the Champions Trophy, T20 World Cup and 50-over World Cup.

**Source: Indian Express**

## **Lasith Malinga announces retirement from all forms of cricket**

### **Why in News**

- **Sri Lanka fast bowler Lasith Malinga** announced his retirement from all forms of cricket, ending a decorated 16-year international career that began in 2004.

### **Key Points**

- Malinga had already ended his Test and ODI career, and by announcing his decision to step away from T20 cricket, He marked his retirement from all forms.
- Malinga played 30 Tests, 226 ODIs and 84 T20Is for Sri Lanka in which he picked 546 wickets (101 in Tests, 338 in ODIs and 107 in T20Is) across formats.

**Source: India Today**

## **US Open Tennis Championships 2021**

- The 2021 US Open was the 141st edition of the tournament and took place in New York City, New York, United States.
- It was the fourth and final Grand Slam event of the year (2021).

- **List of winners:**

<b>Men's singles</b>	<b>Women's singles</b>	<b>Men's doubles</b>	<b>Women's doubles</b>	<b>Mixed doubles</b>
<b>Winner-</b> Daniil Medvedev (Russia)	<b>Winner-</b> Emma Raducanu (Britain)	<b>Winner-</b> Rajeev Ram (America), Joe Salisbury (Britain)	<b>Winner-</b> Samantha Stosur (Australia), Zhang Shuai (China)	<b>Winner-</b> Desirae Krawczyk (America), Joe Salisbury (Britain)
<b>Runner-up-</b> Novak Djokovic (Serbia)	<b>Runner-up-</b> Leylah Fernandez (Canada)	<b>Runner-up-</b> Bruno Soares (Brazil), Jamie Murray (Britain)	<b>Runner-up-</b> Coco Gauff (America), Caty McNally (America)	<b>Runner-up-</b> Giuliana Olmos (Mexico), Marcelo Arevalo (El Salvador)

**Source: The Hindu**

### Tokyo 2020 Paralympics Games

- **Place:** Tokyo, Japan (24 August- 5 September 2021)
- **16th Paralympics Mascot:** Someity

#### India at Tokyo Paralympics:

- India's flag bearers in the opening ceremony- Tek Chand (Shot-putter)
- India's flag bearers in the closing ceremony- Avani Lekhara (Shooter)

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Countries</b>	<b>Gold</b>	<b>Silver</b>	<b>Bronze</b>	<b>Total</b>
1	China	96	60	51	207
2	Britain	41	38	45	124
3	United States	37	36	31	104
24	India	5	8	6	19

#### India's performance:

- **Avani Lekhara** won the Gold Medal in Shooting. She became the **first Indian woman to win a Gold medal at the Paralympics Games**. She is only the Indian to **win multiple**

**medals in a single edition** of the Games (1 Gold, 1 Bronze in Shooting in Tokyo 2020 Paralympics Games).

- Sumit Antil won the Gold medal in Javelin throw.
- Pramod Bhagat won the Gold Medal in Badminton.
- Manish Narwal won the Gold Medal in Shooting.
- Krishna Nagar won the Gold Medal in Badminton.

**Source: olympics.com**

## Monthly Current Affairs August 2021

मासिक सम सामयिकी अगस्त 2021

### Important News: State

#### Hisar Airport renamed as Maharaja Agrasen International Airport

##### Why in News

**Manohar Lal Khattar, Chief Minister of Haryana** has announced to rename the Hisar Airport as the Maharaja Agrasen International Airport (MAIA).

##### Key Points

The Hisar airport became Haryana's first DGCA licensed public aerodrome on September 27, 2018.

The Hisar airport is presently under up-gradation to be transformed as an international airport by **March 2024**.

**Source: TOI**

#### Mission Shakti 3.0 launched in Uttar Pradesh

##### Why in News

**Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath** launched the 3<sup>rd</sup> phase of Mission Shakti (**Mission Shakti 3.0**).

##### Key Points

##### About Mission Shakti:

It is the Uttar Pradesh government's flagship programme aimed at promoting the security, dignity and empowerment of women.

The first phase was launched in October 2020.

##### About Mission Shakti 3.0:

The 3<sup>rd</sup> phase will end on December 31, 2021.

Under this scheme, CM Adityanath transferred Rs 30.12 crore into the accounts of 1.55 lakh girls and women as a part of the Mukhyamantri Kanya Sumangla Yojana.

The main schemes that are scheduled to be implemented in this phases are the launch of Mission Shakti Kaksha (classrooms), formation of one lakh women self-help groups, linking of 1.73 lakh new beneficiaries to the destitute women pension scheme, construction of pink toilets (for women) in 1,286 police stations, special recruitment for women battalions of Provincial Armed Constabulary (PAC) to 2,982 posts etc.

**Source: TOI**

## **India's first Smog Tower inaugurated in Delhi**

### **Why in News**

**Arvind Kejriwal, Chief Minister of Delhi** inaugurated the "**country's first smog tower**" at Connaught Place in Delhi.

### **Key Points**

#### **About Smog Tower:**

**Developed by: Tata Projects Limited** built the tower with technical support from **IIT-Delhi and IIT-Bombay**, which will analyse its data.

**NBCC India Ltd** is the project management consultant.

The **DPCC (Delhi Pollution Control Committee)** is the nodal agency for the tower.

The tower was raised at a height of 24.2 metres.

The tower can filter around 1,000 cubic metres of air per second.

It is expected to have an impact on a 1 km radius from the centre of the tower.

A total of 40 fans have been installed at the bottom of the tower — air will be sucked in from the top, filtered and released through the fans at the bottom.

#### **Background:**

In November 2019, an expert panel estimated that the capital will need 213 such anti-smog towers.

Following this, the Delhi cabinet approved the smog tower project in October 2020.

**"IQAir", a Switzerland-based air quality technology company** that measures air quality levels of selected cities based on PM2.5 concentration, ranked **Delhi the world's most polluted capital** for the third straight year in 2020.

**Note:** Another 25-metre-tall smog tower, built by the central government at Anand Vihar, is expected to become fully operational by September 7.

**Steps Taken to control Pollution in Delhi:**

Introduction of BS-VI vehicles

Electric vehicles

Odd-Even as an emergency measure

Implementation of the Graded Response Action Plan

Development of the National Air Quality Index (AQI)

Use of Green Crackers

**Source: Indian Express**

**Prime Minister inaugurates and lays foundation stone of multiple projects in Somnath**

**Why in News**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated and laid the foundation stone of multiple projects in Somnath, Gujarat.

The projects inaugurated include the **Somnath Promenade, Somnath Exhibition Centre and reconstructed temple precinct of Old (Juna) Somnath.**

He also laid the foundation stone of **Shree Parvati Temple** during the event.

The project **“Development of Pilgrimage Amenities at Somnath, Gujarat under PRASHAD Scheme”** was approved by the Ministry of Tourism with the cost of Rs. 45.36 crores in March 2017.

**Key Points**

Development of Somnath has been proposed as one of the iconic tourism destinations by the Ministry of Tourism under its **Integrated Destination Development Scheme (IDDS)** for development of components such as Prabhas Patan Museum, Tourist Amenities, Haat etc.

**About PRASHAD scheme:**

The **‘National Mission on Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual, Heritage Augmentation Drive’ (PRASHAD)** was launched by the Ministry of Tourism in the year 2014-15 with the objective of integrated development of identified pilgrimage and heritage destinations.

The scheme aimed at creation of pilgrimage / religious and heritage tourism infrastructure development at the destinations.

Under PRASHAD Scheme, the Tourism Ministry is developing 40 major places of pilgrimage out of which, 15 are already completed.

**Note:** India has moved from 65th place in 2013 on Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Index to 34th place in 2019.

**Source: PIB**

### **Chhattisgarh CM announces 4 New Districts**

#### **Why in News**

Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel announced 4 new districts in the state and 18 new tehsils as well.

#### **Key Points**

The 4 new districts are **Mohla Manpur, Sarangarh-Bilaigarh, Shakti, and Manendragarh.**

At present, there are 28 districts in Chhattisgarh and after the announcement of 4 new districts, the number will increase to 32.

Apart from this, in every district headquarters and Municipal Corporation, a park will be developed exclusively for women, which will be known as the '**Minimata Udyan**'.

**Source: Indian Express**

### **Community policing programme 'Ummeed'**

#### **Why in News**

Delhi Police Commissioner Rakesh Asthana inaugurated a community policing programme 'Ummeed' to promote communal harmony.

#### **Key Points**

The essence of Community Policing is to minimize the gap between policemen and citizens to such an extent that the policemen become an integrated part of the community they serve.

#### **Other Community Policing Models in India:**

Community Policing Project: West Bengal

Maithri: Andhra Pradesh

Mohalla Committees: Maharashtra

Friends of Police: Tamil Nadu

Janamaithri Suraksha Project: Kerala

Joint Patrolling Committees: Rajasthan  
Meira Paibi: Manipur

**Source: The Hindu**

## **New algal species discovered from Andaman and Nicobar Islands**

### **Why in News**

A group of botanists from Central University of Punjab, Bathinda (CUPB) have discovered **an algal species with 'umbrella head' from the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.**

The Andaman and Nicobar Islands are home to coral reefs and are rich in marine biodiversity.

### **Key Points**

Measuring as small as 20 to 40 mm, the stunning bright green algae, resembling an umbrella or a mushroom, has grooves on its cap measuring 15 to 20 mm in diameter.

Named after the imaginary sea mermaid, *Acetabularia jalakanyakae* is very primitive and is a single-cell organism.

It is the first species of the genus *Acetabularia* discovered in India.

### **About Algae:**

It is an informal term for a large and diverse group of photosynthetic eukaryotic organisms.

It is a polyphyletic grouping that includes species from multiple distinct clades.

Included organisms range from unicellular microalgae, such as *Chlorella*, *Prototheca* and the diatoms, to multicellular forms, such as the giant kelp, a large brown alga which may grow up to 50 metres in length.

**Source: Indian Express**

## **Forensic Sciences Institute in Lucknow**

### **Why in News**

**Union Home Minister Amit Shah** laid the foundation of a **Forensic Sciences Institute in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh.**

The Forensic Sciences Institute, which would operate under the **Ministry of Home Affairs**, is proposed to be affiliated to Gujarat-based **National Forensics Sciences University (NFSU).**

### **Key Points**

The Forensic Sciences Institute will provide expertise in discourses such as behavioural science, civil and criminal law, police science, criminology and forensics.

Around Rs 200 crore will be spent and Rs 15 crore has been sanctioned for setting up a DNA centre, which will be the most modern in the country.

**Source: Indian Express**

## **West Bengal receives four SKOCH awards**

### **Why in News**

The **Government of West Bengal** has received **four SKOCH awards** for its schemes under the Ease of Doing Business initiative.

### **Key Points**

The **State scheme 'Silpasathi'**-the online single window portal won the **platinum award**.

The **Auto Renewal of Certificate of Enlistment through an online system for urban areas** has received the **gold award**.

**Online issuance of trade licences in rural areas** and the **E-Nathikaran**: the online system for registration, preparation and submission of deeds have won **two silver awards**.

### **About SKOCH Award:**

SKOCH Award, independently instituted in 2003, is India's honest civilian honour conferred by an independent organisation as a third party assessment.

It is the only award in the country that is based on felt-needs assessment and outcome evaluation based on evidence.

It recognises people, projects and institutions.

**Source: newsonair**

## **Important News: India**

### **37th PRAGATI Meeting**

#### **Why in News**

**Prime Minister Narendra Modi** chaired the meeting of the **37th edition of PRAGATI (Pro-Active Governance and Timely Implementation)** - the ICT based multi-modal platform, involving Centre and State governments.

In the meeting, 9 agenda items were taken for review including 8 projects and 1 scheme.

These 8 projects have a cumulative cost of Rs. 1,26,000 crore concerning 14 states.

He reviewed the scheme of **'One Nation – One Ration Card' (ONORC)**.

### **Key Points**

#### **About PRAGATI:**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched multi-purpose and multi-modal platform **PRAGATI (Pro-Active Governance And Timely Implementation)** in 2015.

PRAGATI is a unique integrating and interactive platform.

The platform is aimed at addressing common man's grievances, and simultaneously monitoring and reviewing important programmes and projects of the Government of India as well as projects flagged by State Governments.

It is a **three-tier system** (PMO, Union Government Secretaries, and Chief Secretaries of the States).

The system has been designed in-house by the **PMO team** with the help of **National Informatics Center (NIC)**.

**Note:** In the previous 36 PRAGATI meetings, 292 projects having a total cost of 13.78 lakh crore have been reviewed.

**Source: PIB**

## **UN Women and MyGov launch Amrit Mahotsav Shri Shakti Innovation Challenge 2021 on Women's Safety and Empowerment**

### **Why in News**

On this special occasion of Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav, the 75th year of Independence of India, **MyGov** under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, and **UN Women** jointly launched the **Amrit Mahotsav Shri Shakti Innovation Challenge 2021** on Women's Safety and Empowerment.

The aim of the Challenge is **'Nari Sashaktikaran'**, that is to empower women to help them achieve their full potential.

### **Key Points**

#### **About Amrit Mahotsav Shri Shakti Innovation Challenge 2021:**

It will support and promote women entrepreneurs and women led Start-ups to find technology solutions for women's safety and empowerment.

It provides a much-needed platform to foster women-led solutions that can improve women's safety, build economic gains and benefit thousands of other women as we build back from COVID-19.

The **first Shri Shakti Challenge** was held in 2020.

### **About MyGov:**

It is the citizen-centric platform of the Government of India that empowers people to connect with the Government and contribute towards good governance.

It is a unique path-breaking initiative which was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2014.

### **About UN Women:**

UN Women, as the UN agency with the mandate to work on gender equality, is responsible for leading and coordinating United Nations system efforts to ensure that commitments on gender equality and gender mainstreaming translate into action throughout the world and at the country level.

### **Government's Initiatives towards Women Empowerment:**

MUDRA scheme

Ujjwala scheme

Beti Bachao Beti Padhao

Abolition of Triple Talaq

New Labour Code

POSHAN Abhiyaan

**Source: PIB**

## **India's evacuation mission from Afghanistan named "Operation Devi Shakti"**

### **Why in News**

India's complex mission to evacuate its citizens and Afghan partners from Kabul after its swift takeover by the Taliban has been named as "**Operation Devi Shakti**".

Apart from them, **three sarroops of the Guru Granth Sahib** were also brought back.

**Note:** There were **13 sarroops of Guru Granth Sahib in Afghanistan** of which 7 were already shifted to India earlier.

### **Key Points**

India began the complex evacuation mission by airlifting 40 Indians from Kabul to Delhi on August 16, a day after the Taliban seized control of the Afghan capital city.

### **Background:**

**Afghanistan President Ashraf Ghani** fled to Tajikistan on August 15, 2021.

This was followed by the capture of Kabul by Taliban insurgents who took over the presidential palace and claimed that the war was over.

Afghanistan's first **Vice President Amrullah Saleh** declared himself as the caretaker president of Afghanistan.

The Taliban were removed from power in Afghanistan by US-led forces in 2001, but the group has seized control of the country once again following a rapid offensive.

#### **About Taliban:**

The Taliban, or "students" in the Pashto language, emerged in the early 1990s in northern Pakistan following the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan.

**Source: Indian Express**

### **New Geospatial Planning Portal, 'Yuktdhara'**

#### **Why in News**

**Union Minister of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Giriraj Singh** launched a new **Geospatial Planning Portal, 'Yuktdhara'**.

It will help in facilitating new **MGNREGA assets** using **Remote Sensing** and **GIS (Geographic Information System)** based information.

Yuktdhara is a new portal under **Bhuvan**.

#### **Key Points**

##### **About 'Yuktdhara':**

**Objective:** Yuktdhara platform will serve as a repository of assets (Geotags) created under various national rural development programmes i.e. **MGNREGA, Integrated Watershed Management Programme, Per Drop More Crop and Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana** etc., along with field photographs.

It is definitely a culmination of untiring joint efforts of **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** and **Ministry of Rural development** made towards realising a **Government to Government (G2G) service** for rural planning in support of decentralized decision making.

##### **About Bhuvan:**

Bhuvan, is the national Geo-portal developed and hosted by ISRO comprising Geo Spatial Data, Services and Tools for Analysis.

It has many versatile features, for Example (1) Visualization of Satellite Imagery and Maps (2) Analysis (3) Free Data Download and (4) Download Reports to name a few.

The Satellite Imageries are of Multi-sensor, Multi-platform and Multi-temporal in nature and can be visualized in 2D and 3D.

Varieties of thematic maps are also hosted for analysis of various natural resources themes.

Geoportal Bhuvan has become a de-facto geospatial platform for a number of developmental planning activities in the country.

**Source: PIB**

## **Earthquake Observatories**

### **Why in News**

Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Science & Technology; Minister of State (Independent Charge) Earth Sciences Dr Jitendra Singh said that India is going to have **35 more Earthquake Observatories by the end of 2021** and **100 more such Observatories by 2026**.

He announced it while addressing the inaugural ceremony of Joint Scientific Assembly of **International Association of Geomagnetism and Aeronomy (IAGA) - International Association of Seismology and Physics of the Earth's Interior (IASPEI)**.

### **Key Points**

#### **About Earthquake Observatories:**

**National Center for Seismology** is the nodal agency of the Government for monitoring of earthquake activity in the country.

At present, India has only **115 Earthquake Observatories**.

The most important aspect is to be able to accurately predict the time of the earthquake. This work is done by Earthquake observatories.

#### **Earthquakes in India:**

The Indian subcontinent is considered as one of the world's most disaster-prone areas in terms of earthquakes, landslides, cyclones, floods, and tsunamis.

According to seismic zoning mapping, India is divided into **4 zones**.

These zones are divided on the basis of the estimation of the intensity of the earthquake. India is divided into **Zone 2, Zone 3, Zone 4, and Zone 5.**

While Zone 2 is the least dangerous, Zone 5 is the most dangerous.

According to the country's current seismic zone map, 59% of India's land area is under a moderate to severe seismic hazard warning, which means that India is prone to earthquakes of magnitude 7 and above.

**Some of the major earthquakes in the Indian Subcontinent:**

Shillong (1897), Kangra (1905), Bihar-Nepal border (1934), Assam-Tibet border (1950), Bhuj (2001), Kashmir (2005), Sikkim (2011) and Manipur (2016).

**Source: PIB**

**NeoBolt, India's first indigenous motorised wheelchair vehicle**

**Why in News**

**Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IIT-M)** has developed India's first indigenous motorised wheelchair vehicle, NeoBolt.

**Key Points**

**About NeoBolt:**

It empowers wheelchair users with a convenient, safe and low-cost mode of outdoor mobility when compared to cars, auto rickshaws or modified scooters.

It can be used even on uneven terrains.

It has a maximum speed of 25 kmph and travels up to 25 km per charge.

It is powered by a lithium-ion battery.

It has been commercialised through a start-up called **'NeoMotion.'**

**Note:**

The start-up has also developed and commercially launched **'NeoFly,'** a **personalized wheelchair** designed to enhance health and lifestyle.

NeoFly is the first Indian Wheelchair that is customised to the user

**Source: The Hindu**

**HAL conducts taxi trials of Hindustan-228 aircraft**

**Why in News**

The public sector aircraft manufacturing company, **Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL)** carried out a successful ground run and low speed taxi trials of a commercial aircraft '**Hindustan-228**' (Do-228).

### Key Points

#### About Hindustan-228 (Do-228):

The **19-seater Hindustan-228** is the first major attempt in India to develop a small civil transport aircraft after the **14-seater Saras aircraft** development program at the National Aeronautics Laboratory was shelved in 2009 on account of multiple problems in its development.

#### Need of Civil Aircraft:

Small civilian aircrafts are considered to be an essential element of the **UDAN scheme** that the central government is attempting to put in place for regional connectivity.

#### About UDAN Scheme:

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

**RCS (Regional Connectivity Scheme)** offers a unique opportunity to a common man to fly at an affordable price.

The UDAN Scheme is a key component of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's **National Civil Aviation Policy (NCAP)** which was released by the Ministry of Civil Aviation (India) on 15 June 2016.

About 359 routes and 59 airports including 5 heliports and 2 Water Aerodromes have been operationalized under the scheme.

#### Note:

The Government of India aims to set up 1,000 new air routes and establish 100 new airports, under the UDAN scheme.

**Source: Indian Express**

### NTPC commissions largest Floating Solar PV Project in the country

#### Why in News

The **National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) Ltd.** has commissioned the **largest Floating Solar Photo Voltaic (PV) Project of 25MW** on the reservoir of its **Simhadri thermal station** in **Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh**.

This is also the first solar project to be set up under the **Flexibilisation Scheme**, notified by the Government of India in 2018.

### **Key Points**

#### **About Floating Solar PV Project:**

The floating solar installation which has a unique anchoring design is spread over 75 acres in an RW reservoir.

This floating solar project has the potential to generate electricity from more than 1 lakh solar PV modules.

#### **Note:**

NTPC is also planning to set up a hydrogen-based micro-grid system on a pilot basis at Simhadri.

With a total installed capacity of 66900 MW, NTPC Group has 71 Power stations including 29 Renewable projects.

NTPC has set a target to install 60 gigawatts of renewable energy capacity by 2032.

NTPC is also India's first energy company to declare its energy compact goals as part of the **UN High-level Dialogue on Energy (HLDE)**

## **Ministry of Tourism signs MoUs with MakeMyTrip (India) Private Limited and Ibibo Group Private Limited**

### **Why in News**

The Ministry of Tourism has signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **MakeMyTrip (India) Private Limited** and **Ibibo Group Private Limited** to strengthen hospitality and tourism industry in the country especially in pandemic times.

The Ministry of Tourism has already signed MoUs with Easy my Trip, Clear trip and Yatra.com.

### **Key Points**

The primary objective of this MoU is to provide an extensive visibility to accommodation units, which have self-certified themselves on **SAATHI (System for Assessment, Awareness & Training for the Hospitality Industry)** on the **OTA platform (Online travel agencies)**.

The MoU also outlines both parties to encourage Units to register on **NIDHI (National Integrated Database of Hospitality Industry)** and thereby on SAATHI and encourage local tourism

Industry with appropriate safeguards for curbing spread of COVID-19.

**Note**

**National Tourism Day: 25 January**

**World Tourism Day: 27 September**

**Source: PIB**

**'IndiGau' India's first Cattle Genomic Chip**

**Why in News**

Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Science & Technology Dr Jitendra Singh released **"IndiGau', India's first Cattle Genomic Chip** for the conservation of pure varieties of indigenous cattle breeds like, Gir, Kankrej, Sahiwal, Ongole etc.

This indigenous chip was developed by the **National Institute of Animal Biotechnology (NAIB), Hyderabad**, an autonomous institution under the aegis of the **Department of Biotechnology**.

**Key Points**

**About IndiGau:**

IndiGau is purely indigenous and the largest cattle chip of the world.

It has 11,496 markers (SNPs) more than that placed on 777K Illumina chip of United States & United Kingdom breeds.

This chip will have practical utility in the Government's schemes to achieve the goal of conservation of own breeds with better characteristics and help towards doubling of farmers' income by 2022.

The manufacturing of IndiGau Chip is in synergy with **Rashtriya Gokul Mission** and a great example of Atmanirbhar Bharat.

**About Rashtriya Gokul Mission (RGM):**

It was launched in December 2014 for development and conservation of indigenous breeds through selective breeding in the breeding tract and genetic upgradation of nondescript bovine population.

The scheme comprises two components namely **National Programme for Bovine Breeding (NPBB)** and **National Mission on Bovine Productivity (NMBP)**.

**Source: PIB**

## 2nd Phase of SAMVAD Initiative

### Why in News

The **Union Minister of Women and Child Development, Smriti Zubin Irani** launched the 2nd phase of SAMVAD programme and commemorated the successful completion of one year of SAMVAD.

### Key Points

#### About SAMVAD:

**SAMVAD (Support, Advocacy & Mental health interventions for children in Vulnerable circumstances And Distress)** is a National Initiative and Integrated Resource that works in **child protection, mental health and psychosocial care** in difficult circumstances.

The initiative is funded by the **Ministry of Women and Child Development.**

#### Purpose:

SAMVAD's efforts is providing coping mechanisms for children in distress by training close to 1 lakh stakeholders comprising of Child Protection Functionaries, tele-counsellors, educators, law professionals among others.

SAMVAD is slated to begin work with Panchayati Raj systems to integrate child protection and mental health in aspirational districts across the country to facilitate awareness generation and improve service delivery at the grassroot level.

#### Mental Health Scenario in India:

A report published in The Lancet Psychiatry in February 2020 indicates that in 2017, there were 197.3 million people with mental disorders in India.

#### Steps Taken by the Government:

National Mental Health Program

Mental Health Care Act 2017

#### Other Initiatives:

**KIRAN** (a 24/7 toll-free helpline to provide support to people facing anxiety, stress, depression, suicidal thoughts and other mental health concerns)

**Manodarpan Initiative** (To provide psychosocial support to students, family members and teachers for their mental health and well-being during the times of Covid-19)

**National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR)** is providing Tele-Counselling to children through **SAMVEDNA**

**(Sensitizing Action on Mental Health Vulnerability through Emotional Development and Necessary Acceptance)** during COVID-19 Pandemic.

**Source: PIB**

## **Vehicle Scrapping Policy launched**

### **Why in News**

Recently, Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched Vehicle Scrapping Policy during the Investor Summit in Gujarat.

The Summit was organized to invite investment for setting up vehicle scrapping infrastructure under the Voluntary Vehicle-Fleet Modernization Program or the Vehicle Scrapping Policy.

Nitin Gadkari, Minister for Road Transport and Highways announced the **“Vehicle Scrapping Policy”** in March 2021.

### **Key Points**

#### **About Vehicle Scrapping Policy:**

It is proposed that **commercial vehicles be de-registered after 15 years** in case of failure to get the fitness certificate.

It is proposed that **Private Vehicles be de-registered after 20 years** if found unfit or in case of a failure to renew registration certificate.

The scheme shall provide strong incentives to owners of old vehicles to scrap old and unfit vehicles through registered scrapping centres.

The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways will promote setting up of **Registered Vehicle Scrapping Facility (RVSF)** across India.

**Note:** Criteria to determine vehicle fitness will be primarily emission tests, braking, safety equipment, among many other tests which are as per the **Central Motor Vehicle Rules, 1989.**

#### **Advantages of the Policy:**

Vehicle Scrapping Policy will play a big role in the modernization of the vehicular population in the country, removing unfit vehicles from the roads in a scientific manner.

It is an important link in the circular economy and in the waste to wealth campaign.

It will bring in a fresh investment of more than Rs 10 thousand crores and will create thousands of jobs.

**Note:** India has 51 lakh light motor vehicles that are more than 20 years old and 34 lakh over 15 years old. Around 17 lakh medium

and heavy commercial vehicles are older than 15 years without valid fitness certificates, according to data with the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways.

**Other Initiatives to Curb Vehicular Pollution:**

FAME India Scheme Phase II

Go Electric Campaign

Electric Vehicles (EV) Policy 2020 for Delhi

National Electric Mobility Mission 2020

**Source: PIB**

**GSLV-F10: Earth Observation Satellite (EOS-03)**

**Why in News**

The **GSLV-F10 rocket** failed to put the **Earth Observation Satellite (EOS-03)** in orbit.

**Key Points**

The launch took place from the second launch pad at the Satish Dhawan Space Centre SHAR, Sriharikota. The performance of the first and second stages of the launch was normal. However, the cryogenic upper stage ignition failed due to a technical anomaly.

An Ogive shaped payload fairing was flown for the first time in this GSLV flight. It was the **fourteenth flight of the GSLV.**

The GSLV-F10 was a three-stage/engine rocket.

**Objective of the satellite EOS-03:**

The objective of the satellite EOS-03, which was to have a mission life of 10 years, was to provide near real time imaging of a large region of interest at frequent intervals for quick monitoring of natural disasters, episodic events and any short-term events to obtain spectral signatures for agriculture, forestry, water bodies as well as for disaster warning, cyclone monitoring and cloud burst / thunderstorm monitoring.

**Note:** For ISRO, the launch of GSLV-F10 was the second space mission in 2021 after the successful launch of the Brazilian satellite Amazonia-1 by the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle early this year.

**Future Missions:**

Satellites: OCEANSAT-3, GISAT-2, RISAT-2A, etc.

Gaganyaan and Chandrayaan-3 will be launched on GSLV Mk-III

NISAR mission, a first-of-its-kind collaboration between NASA and ISRO for a joint earth-observation satellite

**Source: The Hindu**

## Prime Minister interacts with women Self Help Groups in 'Atmanirbhar Narishakti se Samvad'

### Why in News

Prime Minister Narendra Modi participated in '**Atmanirbhar Narishakti se Samvad**' and interacted with **women Self Help Group (SHG)** members promoted under the **Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM)**.

### Key Points

#### Self-Help Groups (SHGs):

SHGs are defined as a self-governed, peer-controlled information group of people coming from similar socio-economic backgrounds with a desire to perform common purpose collectively.

There are 70 lakh self help groups across the country which is more than three times the figure during 6-7 years.

#### Initiatives for Women Empowerment:

##### Financial Inclusion:

The Prime Minister released capitalization support funds to the tune of **Rs. 1625 Crore to over 4 lakh SHGs**.

He released **Rs. 25 crore as seed money for 7500 SHG** members under the **PMFME (PM Formalisation of Micro Food Processing Enterprises) Scheme** of Ministry of Food Processing Industries and **Rs. 4.13 crore as funds to 75 FPOs (Farmer Producer Organizations)** being promoted under the Mission.

There are more than 42 crore Jan Dhan accounts of which close to 55% of the accounts are of women.

The Prime Minister also announced that **now the limit for loans available to self help groups without guarantee** has been **doubled to Rs 20 lakh**.

##### Marketing of products:

There is no restriction on how much Self Help Groups can store. Self help groups have the option whether to sell produce directly from the farm or by setting up a food processing unit and sell with great packaging.

**SonChiraiya - for Urban SHG products:**

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs launched '**SonChiraiya**' – **(A brand and logo)** - for marketing of urban Self-Help Group (SHG) products.

**Initiatives to Promote SHGs:**

Agriculture Infrastructure Fund  
Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana  
North East Rural Livelihood Project  
Ambedkar Hastshilp Vikas Yojana  
Vigyan Jyoti Scheme  
GATI Scheme  
KIRAN Scheme  
Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Scheme  
Mahila e-haat  
Women Entrepreneurship Platform  
Support to Training and Employment Programme for Women (STEP) Scheme  
New Labour Code  
The Prevention of Sexual Harassment At Workplace Act, 2013  
One Stop Centre Scheme  
Scheme for Adolescent Girls (SAG)' across the country  
POSHAN Abhiyaan  
Ujjwala Yojana

**Source: PIB**

**Fit India Freedom Run 2.0**

**Why in News**

**Union Minister of Youth Affairs & Sports Anurag Singh Thakur** on August 13th launched the nationwide programme of **Fit India Freedom Run 2.0** as part of **Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav** which celebrates 75 years on India's Independence.

The event was held at 75 other locations across the country, including iconic locations.

**Key Points**

The Fit India Freedom Run 2.0 will start on August 15th and will go on till October 2nd, 2021.

The aim is to reach more than 7.50 crore youth and citizens across the country.

Weekly programmes will be held in 75 districts and at 75 villages in each district.

The aim of the campaign is to encourage people to take up fitness activities such as running and sports in their daily life.

**About first edition:**

The **first edition** of the campaign was organized from 15th August to 2nd October, 2020.

More than 5 Crore people participated and covered around 18 crore kms distance.

**About Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav:**

**Prime Minister Narendra Modi** inaugurated '**Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav**' in March 2021 from Sabarmati Ashram, Ahmadabad.

**Note: Prime Minister Narendra Modi** declared **14th August** as **Partition Horrors Remembrance Day** (विभाजन विभीषिका स्मृति दिवस) to be observed every year.

**Source: PIB**

## Elephant and Tiger population estimation protocol

### Why in News

**Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Bhupender Yadav** released the Elephant and Tiger population estimation protocol on the occasion of **World Elephant Day (12<sup>th</sup> August)**.

The protocol is to be adopted in the exercise for the **All India elephant and tiger population estimation in 2022**.

The Ministry for the first time is converging both elephant and tiger population estimation.

The programme also witnessed release of the fourth edition of the quarterly newsletter "Trumpet" of the Elephant Division of the Ministry.

### Key Points

**About Asian Elephants:**

Asian elephants are listed as "**Endangered**" on the **IUCN Red List** of threatened species.

The current population estimates indicate that there are about **50,000 -60000 Asian elephants** in the world. More than **60 % of the population is held in India**.

Indian Elephant has also been listed in the Appendix I of the Convention of the Migratory species in the recently concluded Conference of Parties of CMS 13 at Gandhi Nagar, Gujarat in February 2020.

**Project Elephant** was launched in 1992 by the Government of India Ministry of Environment and Forests to provide financial and technical support to wildlife management efforts by states for their free-ranging populations of wild Asian Elephants.

**Note:** On the occasion of **International Tiger Day (29<sup>th</sup> July)**, Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change announced that **14 tiger reserves in India** have received accreditation of the **Global Conservation Assured Tiger Standards (CA|TS)**.

**Source: PIB**

## **India to host the first-ever 'Internet Governance Forum' Why in News**

**The Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology** announced that India will host first-ever **India Internet Governance Forum (IIGF) 2021**.

It will be planned for three days, starting from 20th October, 2021.

### **Key Points**

The **theme** of this year's meeting is **'Inclusive Internet for Digital India'**.

**Note:** India is the second-largest broadband subscription country in the world and also has the highest data consumption per user per month.

### **About Internet Governance Forum (IGF):**

It is a multi-stakeholder governance group for policy dialogue on issues of Internet governance.

The establishment of the IGF was formally announced by the **United Nations Secretary-General** in July 2006.

**Source: PIB**

## **Kakori Conspiracy renamed to Kakori Train Action**

### **Why in News**

Uttar Pradesh government has renamed **Kakori Train Conspiracy (Kakori Kand)** to **Kakori Train Action**.

### **Key Points**

#### **About Kakori Train Action:**

The Kakori Train Action was a train robbery that took place at Kakori, a village near Lucknow, on 9 August 1925 during the Indian Independence Movement against the British Raj.

The robbery was organised by **Hindustan Republican Association (HRA)**.

On December 19, 1927, freedom fighters Ram Prasad Bismil, Ashfaqulla Khan and Roshan Singh were hanged to death for their involvement in the robbery.

**About Hindustan Socialist Republican Association (HSRA):**

HSRA was a revolutionary organisation, founded by Ram Prasad Bismil, Sachindra Nath Bakshi, Sachindranath Sanyal and Jogesh Chandra Chatterjee.

Previously, it was known as the **Hindustan Republican Association (HRA).**

**Source: Indian Express**

**Prime Minister releases 9th installment of PM-KISAN**

**Why in News**

**Prime Minister Narendra Modi** released the **9<sup>th</sup> installment** of financial benefit under **Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN).**

The Prime Minister also interacted with farmer beneficiaries during the event.

This enabled the transfer of an amount of more than Rs. 19,500 crores to more than 9.75 crore beneficiary farmer families.

**Key Points**

**About Pradhan Mantri Kisan Sammann Nidhi (PM-KISAN):**

It is an initiative by the government of India in which all farmers get up to ₹6,000 per year (In 3 equal installments) as minimum income support.

PM-KISAN is being implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Government of India.

It is a Central Sector Scheme with 100% funding from the Central Government.

**Note:** On 24 February 2019, Narendra Modi launched the scheme in Uttar Pradesh's Gorakhpur by transferring the first installment of ₹2,000 each to over one crore farmers.

**The Prime Minister's Address:**

The Prime Minister highlighted **National Edible Oil Mission-Oil Palm** i.e. NMEO-OP as a pledge for achieving self-reliance in edible oil.

Through the **National Edible Oil Mission-Oil Palm mission**, more than Rs 11,000 crore will be invested in the cooking oil ecosystem.

The scheme of **Kisan Infrastructure Fund** with 1 lakh crore rupees corpus also completes one year.

The **Honey mission** has led to 700 crore export of honey resulting in extra income for farmers.

The Prime Minister remarked that our agriculture and our farmers have a big role in determining the condition of India in 2047, when the country completes 100 years of independence.

#### **Other Initiatives for Farmers:**

Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana

Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana

National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture

Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana

Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana

Nutrient Based Subsidy Programme

**Note:** In 2019, **India ranked 9<sup>th</sup>** with a share of 3.1% in **global agricultural exports** as per a report by **World Trade Organization (WTO)** on the trends in world agricultural trade in the past 25 years (from 1995).

**Source: PIB**

### **PM-DAKSH Portal**

#### **Why in News**

**Union Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment** Dr. Virendra Kumar launched **'PM-DAKSH' Portal and 'PM-DAKSH' Mobile App**, developed by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, in collaboration with **National e-Governance Division (NeGD)**.

This Portal makes the skill development schemes accessible to the target groups of **Scheduled Castes, Backward Classes and Safai Karamcharis**.

#### **Key Points**

##### **About PM-DAKSH Scheme:**

The **Pradhan Mantri Dakshta Aur Kushalta Sampann Hitgrahi (PM-DAKSH) Yojana** is being implemented by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment from the year 2020-21.

Under this Yojana, eligible target groups are being provided skill development training programmes on (i) Up-skilling/Re-skilling (ii) Short Term Training Programme (iii) Long Term Training Programme and (iv) Entrepreneurship Development Program.

These training programs are being implemented through Government Training Institutes, Sector Skill Councils constituted by the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship and other credible institutions.

### **Implementation:**

Under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, **3 Apex Corporations - National Scheduled Castes Finance and Development Corporation, National Backward Classes Finance and Development Corporation and National Safai Karamcharis Finance and Development Corporation** are implementing this scheme.

### **Status of Skill Development Training:**

As per the information available, skill development training has been imparted to **2,73,152 persons** of target groups in the last 5 years by these 3 Apex Corporations.

**During the year 2021-22**, a target has been set to provide skill development training to **approximately 50,000 persons** of the target groups through the above 3 Apex Corporations.

### **Initiatives Related to Skill Development:**

National Career Service Project  
Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana 3.0  
Skills Acquisition and Knowledge Awareness for Livelihood  
Atmanirbhar Skilled Employee Employer Mapping  
Scheme for Higher Education Youth in Apprenticeship and Skills

**Source: PIB**

## **Major Administrative Reforms**

### **Why in News**

The Union Government gave the information on administrative reforms which were introduced in recent years.

Administrative reforms are a continuous process and the Government follows the **“Minimum Government - Maximum Governance”**.

Administrative reforms aim to encourage greater efficiency, transparent and corruption free governance, accountability and reduce scope for discretion.

### **Key Points**

**Mission Karmayogi- National Programme for Civil Services Capacity Building (NPCSCB)**, a new national architecture for civil services capacity building has been launched. It is a

comprehensive reform of the capacity building apparatus at individual, institutional and process levels for efficient public service delivery.

**e-Samiksha-** A real time online system for monitoring and follow up action on the decisions taken by the Government at the Apex level in respect of implementation of important Government programmes / projects.

**e-Office-** e-Office Mission Mode Project has been strengthened for enabling Ministries/ Departments to switchover to paperless office and efficient decision making.

**Citizen Charters-**Government has mandated Citizen Charters for all Ministries/Departments which are updated and reviewed on a regular basis.

**Good Governance Index 2019-** was launched, which assesses the Status of Governance and impact of various interventions taken up by the State Government and Union Territories (UTs).

**National Conference on e-Governance -** provides a platform for government to engage with experts, intellectuals from industry and academic institutions to exchange experiences relating to e-Governance initiatives.

**National e-Governance Service Delivery Assessment -** aims at assessing the States, UTs and Central Ministries on the efficiency of e-Governance service delivery.

**Centralized Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS)-**The Government is undertaking CPGRAMS reforms in the top grievance receiving Ministries/ Departments by enabling questionnaire guided registration process and providing for automatic forwarding of grievances to field level functionaries thereby reducing the redress time.

Comprehensive restructuring of the Scheme for '**Prime Minister's Awards for Excellence in Public Administration**' in 2014 and thereafter in 2020.

#### **About Administrative Reforms Commission (ARC):**

It is the committee appointed by the Government of India for giving recommendations for reviewing the public administration system of India.

The **first ARC** was established on 5 January 1966.

The Administrative Reforms Commission was initially chaired by Morarji Desai, and later on K. Hanumanthaiah became its chairman.

The **second ARC** was constituted on 31 August 2005, as a Commission of Inquiry, under the Chairmanship of Veerappa Moily.

**Source: PIB**

## **Second Phase of Dam Rehabilitation and Improvement Project (DRIP Phase II)**

### **Why in News**

The Government of India signed a **\$250 million** loan agreement with the World Bank for the **DRIP Phase II**.

### **Key Points**

#### **About Second Phase of Dam Rehabilitation and Improvement Project (DRIP Phase II):**

DRIP Phase II is the first phase of externally aided DRIP Phase II and Phase III, approved by Government of India in October 2020.

The Scheme has the participation of 19 States and 3 Central Agencies.

The Budget Outlay for both Phases of DRIP is Rs 10,211 Cr for an implementation period of ten years.

The Scheme will be implemented in two Phases, each of six years' duration, with two years' overlap.

**Objective:** This new Scheme will strengthen dam safety initiatives through physical rehabilitation of selected dams by addressing various concerns to improve safety and operational performance, institutional strengthening in various ways, incidental revenue generation for sustainable operation & maintenance of dams etc.

This programme complements the provisions in the **Dam Safety Bill 2019**, by ensuring capacity building of the dam owners as well as the proposed regulators, as well as creating necessary protocols for dam safety.

**Finance:** DRIP Phase II is being co-financed by World Bank and Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank with US\$250 million each, covering large dams in 19 states of the country.

#### **Number of Dams in the Country:**

India ranks 3<sup>rd</sup> globally after China and the United States of America, with 5334 large dams in operation.

Presently, about 411 dams are under construction.

There are also several thousand smaller dams.

### **About First phase of the DRIP programme:**

The first phase of the DRIP programme, which covered **223 dams in 7 states**, improved the safety and operational performance of selected dams, along with institutional strengthening through a system wide management approach, has been recently **closed in March 2021**.

#### **Note:**

Ageing Dams in India, US, and other nations pose growing threat according to a UN report, titled '**Ageing water infrastructure: An emerging global risk**'.

In India, there are over 1,115 large dams that will be roughly 50 years old in 2025, more than 4,250 large dams in the country will be over 50 years old in 2050 and 64 large dams will be more than 150 years old in 2050.

**Source: PIB**

### **India's first Earthquake Early Warning Mobile Application developed by IIT-Roorkee**

#### **Why in News**

**Pushkar Singh Dhami, Chief Minister of Uttarakhand** launched the country's first Earthquake Early Warning Mobile Application '**Uttarakhand Bhookamp Alert**' developed by **IIT Roorkee**.

The project was sponsored by the **Uttarakhand State Disaster Management Authority**.

#### **Key Points**

#### **About Earthquake Early Warning Mobile Application:**

Earthquake Early Warning (EEW) is a real-time earthquake information system that can detect the onset of the earthquake and issue warnings before the significant tremors take hold of an area.

The physical basis for an earthquake early warning system is the speed of the seismic waves, which propagate after the release of stress from faults movement.

It can also help tell the location of people trapped inside a structure following an earthquake.

**Source: TOI**

### **KVIC's Unique Plastic-Mixed Handmade Paper**

#### **Why in News**

**Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC)** has secured Patent registration for its innovative Plastic-mixed Handmade Paper developed to reduce plastic menace from nature.

The patent certificate was issued to **KVIC's Kumarappa National Handmade Paper Institute, Jaipur.**

### Key Points

The plastic-mixed handmade paper was developed under **Project REPLAN (REducing PLAstic from Nature).**

This is the **first of its kind project in India**, where plastic waste is de-structured, degraded, diluted and used with paper pulp while making handmade paper and thus reduces plastic waste from nature.

Its production is likely to serve the twin objectives of **protecting the environment alongside creating sustainable employment.**

KVIC has developed products such as carry bags, envelopes, files/folders, etc. using plastic mixed handmade paper.

### About Patents:

A patent is a type of intellectual property that gives its owner the legal right to exclude others from making, using, or selling an invention for a limited period of years, in exchange for publishing an enabling public disclosure of the invention.

The term of every patent in India is 20 years from the date of filing. In India, the **Patents Act, 1970** was brought into the force on 20 April 1972.

The Patent Rules, 2003 were introduced along with the Patent Act (amendment), 2002, and recent amendments were carried in 2016, and 2017.

**Source: PIB**

## **Cabinet approves continuation of Samagra Shiksha Scheme for next 5 years**

### Why in News

The Cabinet Committee has approved continuation of the revised **Samagra Shiksha Scheme for a period of 5 years (from 2021-22 to 2025-26).**

Under 'Samagra Shiksha Scheme', financial outlay of Rs.2,94,283.04 crore, which includes central share of Rs.1,85,398.32 crore, has been made to implement the scheme.

The scheme treats school education as a continuum and is in accordance with **Sustainable Development Goal for Education (SDG-4)**.

The scheme has been aligned with the recommendations of **New Education Policy (NEP 2020)** to ensure that all children have access to quality education.

### **Key Points**

#### **About Samagra Shiksha Scheme:**

It is an integrated scheme for school education covering the entire range from **pre-school to class XII**.

The Ministry of Education launched the Samagra Shiksha in 2018 by subsuming the erstwhile Centrally Sponsored Schemes of **Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) and Teacher Education (TE)**.

#### **Benefits:**

The scheme covers **1.16 million schools**, over 156 million students and 5.7 million Teachers of Govt. and Aided schools (from pre-primary to senior secondary level).

#### **New interventions incorporated in the revamped Samagra Shiksha based on the recommendations of the NEP 2020:**

In order to enhance the direct outreach of the scheme, **all child centric interventions will be provided directly to the students** through **DBT mode** on an **IT based platform** over a period of time.

Provision of training of Master Trainers for training of Anganwadi workers and In-service teacher training for **Early childhood care and education (ECCE)** teachers

Provision of upto Rs 500 per child for **Teaching Learning Materials**, indigenous toys and games, play based activities per annum for pre-primary sections in Government Schools.

**NIPUN Bharat, a National Mission on Foundational Literacy and Numeracy** to ensure that every child achieves the desired learning competencies in reading, writing and numeracy at the end of grade III and not later than grade V has been launched under the scheme.

Holistic, 360-degree, multi-dimensional report showing progress/ uniqueness of each learner in the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains will be introduced in the form of **Holistic Progress Card**.

Support for activities of **PARAKH**, a national assessment centre (**Performance, Assessments, Review and Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development**)

**Additional Sports grant of upto Rs. 25000** to schools in case at least 2 students of that school win a medal in **Khelo India school games** at the National level.

Provision for Bagless days, school complexes, internships with local artisans, curriculum and pedagogical reforms etc included.

Provision of **ICT labs**, Smart classrooms including support for digital boards, smart classrooms, virtual classrooms and DTH channels have been provided

Support for **Social Audit** covering 20% of schools per year so that all schools are covered in a period of Five years.

**Source: PIB**

## **Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order (Amendment) Bill, 2021**

### **Why in News**

The Rajya Sabha passed the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order (Amendment) Bill, 2021.

The bill seeks to amend the constitutional list of Scheduled Tribes as recommended by **Arunachal Pradesh**.

### **Key Points**

On the basis of recommendations made by the state of Arunachal Pradesh, the new bill provides for modifying **Part-XVIII of the Schedule to the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order, 1950**, relating to the state of Arunachal Pradesh.

At present, there are 18 communities with their synonyms appearing in the illustrative list of Scheduled Tribes with respect to the state of Arunachal Pradesh.

The Bill removes the Abor tribe from the list of identified STs in Arunachal Pradesh.

Further, it replaces certain STs with other tribes.

### **Proposed changes in list of STs in Arunachal Pradesh under the Bill**

<b>Original list</b>	<b>Proposed changes under the Bill</b>
Abor	Deleted from the list

Khampati	Tai Khamti
Mishmi, Idu, and Taroan	Mishmi-Kaman (Miju Mishmi), Idu (Mishmi), and Taroan (Digaru Mishmi)
Momba	Monpa, Memba, Sartang, and Sajolang (Miji)
Any Naga Tribes	Nocte, Tangsa, Tutsa, and Wancho

### About Scheduled Tribe:

The Constitution of India in **Article 366 (25)** prescribes that the Scheduled Tribes means such tribes or tribal communities as are deemed under **Article 342** of the Constitution.

### National Commissions:

To effectively implement the safeguards built into the Constitution and other legislation, the Constitution under **Articles 338** and **338A** provides for two statutory commissions: the **National Commission for Scheduled Castes**, and the **National Commission for Scheduled Tribes**.

### Source: The Hindu

### Governor of a State can pardon prisoners, including death row ones: Supreme Court of India

### Why in News

The Supreme Court of India held that the Governor of a State can pardon prisoners, including death row ones, even before they have served a minimum 14 years of prison sentence.

In fact, the Governor's power to pardon overrides a provision in the Code of Criminal Procedure, Section 433A which mandates that a prisoner's sentence can be remitted only after 14 years of jail.

### Key Points

Governors can pardon the prisoners even before they have completed a minimum 14 years of prison sentence.

Section 433A of the Code cannot and does not in any way affect the constitutional power conferred on the President/Governor to grant pardon under Articles 72 or 161 of the Indian Constitution.

The court noted that the sovereign power of a Governor to pardon a prisoner under Article 161 is actually exercised by the State government and not the Governor on his own.

### **Pardoning Power of the President in India:**

Under Article 72, the President shall have the power to grant pardons, reprieves, respites or remissions of punishment or to suspend, remit or commute the sentence of any person convicted of any offence where the sentence is a sentence of death.

### **Governor's Pardoning Power:**

Under Article 161, the Governor of a State shall have the power to grant pardons, reprieves, respites or remissions of punishment or to suspend, remit or commute the sentence of any person convicted of any offence against any law relating to a matter.

**Source: The Hindu**

## **BRO constructs highest motorable road in the world in Eastern Ladakh**

### **Why in News**

**Border Roads Organisation (BRO)** has constructed the highest motorable road in the world at 19,300 ft at **Umling La Pass** in Eastern Ladakh, creating a record in high-altitude road construction.

### **Key Points**

#### **About the Road:**

It has constructed a 52-km long tarmac road through Umling La Pass, bettering the previous record of a road in Bolivia connecting to its volcano Uturuncu at 18,953 ft.

The road now connects the important towns in Chumar sector of Eastern Ladakh.

#### **Comparison:**

The road has been constructed at an altitude higher than the Mt Everest Base Camps as the South Base Camp in Nepal is at an altitude of 17,598 ft, while North Base Camp in Tibet is at 16,900 ft.

The road has been constructed much above the altitude of Siachen Glacier which is at 17,700 ft. The Khardung La Pass in Leh is at an altitude of 17,582 ft.

**Source: PIB**

## Fast Track Special Courts

### Why in News

The Union Cabinet has approved the continuation of **1023 Fast Track Special Court (FTSCs)** including **389 exclusive POCSO Courts** as a **Centrally Sponsored Scheme from 01.04.2021 to 31.03.2023**.

The Cabinet has approved an outlay of Rs. 1572.86 crore (Rs.971.70 crore as Central Share and Rs.601.16 crore as State share).

Central Share is to be funded from **Nirbhaya Fund**.

### Key Points

#### Background:

**Fast Track Courts** were first recommended by the **11<sup>th</sup> Finance Commission in 2000**.

Rs 502.90 crore was granted by the central government to create 1,734 additional courts in different states for a period of 5 years. The central government stopped funding fast track courts in 2011. 3 states--Maharashtra, Kerala and Tamil Nadu had said they would continue running these courts while Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, West Bengal and Karnataka said they would continue them till 2013.

In 2013, the government at the Centre set up a '**Nirbhaya Fund**', amended the **Juvenile Justice Act** and set up **Fast-Track Mahila Courts**.

Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jammu and Kashmir etc. also set up fast track courts **for rape cases** thereafter.

#### Scheme for Fast Track Special Courts (FTSCs):

In 2019, the government approved a scheme for setting up **1,023 FTSCs** across the country for expeditious disposal of pending rape cases under the IPC and crimes under the POCSO Act.

#### Note:

To bring more stringent provisions and expeditious trial and disposal of such cases, the Central Government enacted "**The Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2018**" and made provision of stringent punishment including death penalty for perpetrators of rape.

This led to the establishment of the Fast Track Special Courts.

#### Expected outcomes of the scheme:

Safety and security of women and girl child.

Reduce the number of pending cases of Rape & POCSO Act.

Provide speedy access to justice to the victims of sexual crimes and act as a deterrent for sexual offenders.

**Source: PIB**

## **SATNAV Policy – 2021**

### **Why in News**

The **Department of Space** plans to devise a "comprehensive and substantive" national policy for satellite based navigation '**Indian Satellite Navigation Policy - 2021 (SATNAV Policy - 2021)**'.

The draft of the **SATNAV Policy – 2021** has been presented on the official website of the **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** that seeks public consultation, after which, the draft would be placed before the Union Cabinet for approval and authorization.

### **Key Points**

#### **About Indian Satellite Navigation Policy – 2021:**

The policy has been formulated with the objective to address the growing demands of space-based navigation and timing applications.

These applications include tracking, telematics, location-based services, automotive, survey, mapping & GIS, and timing.

For aviation safety in the defined coverage area, the draft ensures guaranteed and continuous availability of the **Satellite-Based Augmentation System (SBAS)**.

The draft also aims to focus on technology development for enhancing the navigation satellite systems and work towards compatibility and interoperability of Indian satellite navigation and augmentation signals with other **GNSS/SBAS signals**.

Over the last few decades, there has been tremendous growth in the number of applications that depend on **Position, Velocity, and Time (PVT)** services that are provided by **Space-Based Navigation Systems**.

#### **About Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS):**

It is a general term describing a space-based navigation system that provides **positioning, navigation, and precise-time (PNT)** services on a global or regional basis.

Currently, there are 4 GNSS -- **GPS** from the USA; **GLONASS** from Russia; **Galileo** from European Union & **BeiDou** from China -- offering PVT solutions globally.

In addition, there are **2 regional navigation satellite systems** -- **NavIC** from **India** and **QZSS** from **Japan**.

**Source: AIR**

## Languages in Eighth Schedule

### Why in News

**Union Minister of Education, Dharmendra Pradhan** has informed in the Lok Sabha about Steps taken by the government to promote the Languages in Eighth Schedule.

### Key Points

#### About Eighth Schedule:

The Eighth Schedule to the Constitution of India lists the official languages of the Republic of India.

As per **Articles 344(1) and 351** of the Indian Constitution, the eighth schedule includes the recognition of the **official 22 languages**.

#### Official languages:

Assamese, Bengali, Bodo, Dogri, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Kashmiri, Konkani, Maithili, Malayalam, Meitei (Manipuri), Marathi, Nepali, Odia, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Santhali, Sindhi, Tamil, Telugu and Urdu

Of these languages, 14 were initially included in the Constitution. Subsequently, Sindhi was added in 1967 by the 21st Constitutional Amendment Act.

Konkani, Manipuri (Meitei) and Nepali were added in 1992 by the 71st Constitutional Amendment Act.

Bodo, Dogri, Maithili and Santali were added in 2003 by the 92nd Constitutional Amendment Act.

#### Classical Languages:

Currently, **6 Classical Languages: Tamil** (declared in 2004), **Sanskrit** (2005), **Kannada** (2008), **Telugu** (2008), **Malayalam** (2013), and **Odia** (2014).

Classical language status is given to languages which have a rich heritage and independent nature.

#### Note:

**Central Institute of Indian Languages (CIIL), Mysore** works for the promotion of all Indian languages including Scheduled/Non-Scheduled and Classical languages.

CIIIL works for development of languages through its various schemes like **National Translation Mission, Linguistic Data Consortium of Indian Languages, Bharatavani**, etc.

**Source: PIB**

## **Haldibari-Chilahati railway link between India and Bangladesh**

### **Why in News**

Commercial services on the **Haldibari-Chilahati railway link** between India and Bangladesh, which had been defunct for over 50 years, commenced with a goods train.

The **Haldibari (India)-Chilahati (Bangladesh) rail link** was reopened by both the Prime Ministers of India and Bangladesh on 17<sup>th</sup> December, 2020 for movement of passenger and goods traffic.

### **Key Points**

#### **Background:**

The Haldibari-Chilahati railway link was operational till 1965.

The (Indo-Pak) war of 1965 effectively cut off all railway links between India and Bangladesh (then East Pakistan).

As of now, 5 links connecting India with Bangladesh have been made operational which include Petrapole (India) - Benapole (Bangladesh), Singhabad (India) Rohanpur (Bangladesh), Gede (India) - Darshana (Bangladesh), Radhikapur (India) - Birol (Bangladesh) with Haldibari-Chilahati forming the 5th such link.

#### **Significance:**

The Rail link will aid the growth of trade and economic development.

The 75-kilometre long track will also help better integrate the rest of the country with the **Siliguri corridor**, also known as the '**Chicken's Neck**.'

#### **Note:**

A passenger train service **Mitali Express (New Jalpaiguri-Dhaka)** was announced jointly by Indian PM and Bangladesh PM during the Indian Prime Minister's visit to Dhaka, Bangladesh, on 27<sup>th</sup> March'21.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated '**Maitri Setu**' (1.9 Km long bridge) between India and Bangladesh on 9th March 2021. It has been built over the **Feni River** which flows between Indian boundary in Tripura State and Bangladesh.

Another railway line between Agartala and Akhaura in Bangladesh will be completed by the end of 2021.

**Source: Indian Express**

## **27% reservation for OBCs, 10% for EWS in All India Quota Scheme for UG and PG medical/dental courses**

### **Why in News**

The Union Health Ministry has announced **27% reservation for the OBCs (Other Backward Classes)** and **10% quota for the EWS (Economically Weaker Section)** in the **All India Quota Scheme** for undergraduate and postgraduate medical / dental courses from 2021-22 onwards.

### **Key Points**

#### **About All India Quota (AIQ) Scheme:**

The AIQ was introduced in 1986 under the directions of the Supreme Court to provide for **domicile-free merit-based opportunities** to students from any State to aspire to study in a medical college located in another State.

It comprises 15% of UG seats and 50% of PG seats in government medical colleges.

Initially, there was no reservation in the AIQ until 2007. In 2007, the Supreme Court introduced the reservation of 15% for SCs and 7.5% for STs in the AIQ scheme.

When the **Central Educational Institutions (Reservation in Admission) Act** became effective in 2007, providing for uniform 27% reservation to the OBCs, the same was implemented in the Central Educational Institutions.

However, this was not extended to the AIQ seats of State medical and dental colleges.

The 10% EWS quota under the Constitution (One Hundred And Third Amendment) Act, 2019, too, has been implemented in central educational Institutions, but not in the **National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET)** AIQ for state institutions.

#### **Benefit:**

The OBC students from across the country shall now be able to take the benefit of this reservation in AIQ to compete for seats in any State.

Being a Central scheme, the Central List of OBCs shall be used for this reservation. Around 1,500 OBC students in MBBS and 2,500 in post graduation will be benefited through this reservation.

### **About National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET):**

NEET is the entrance examination for entry to all undergraduate (NEET-UG) and postgraduate (NEET-PG) medical and dental courses in the country.

**Source: The Hindu**

### **Social Audit of Social Sector Schemes**

#### **Why in news**

The **Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment** has formulated **Information-Monitoring, Evaluation and Social Audit (I-MESA)** scheme in Financial Year 2021-22.

#### **Key Points**

#### **About Information-Monitoring, Evaluation and Social Audit (I-MESA):**

Under this scheme, Social Audits are to be conducted for all the schemes of the Department starting FY 2021-22.

These social audits are done through **Social Audit Units (SAU)** of the States and National Institute for Rural Development and Panchayati Raj.

#### **About Social Audit:**

It is the audit of a scheme jointly by the Government and the people, especially by those who are affected by the scheme or its beneficiaries.

The aim of the Social Audit is to promote accountability, transparency and people's participation in the schemes meant for them.

#### **Note:**

**Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)** was the first Act to mandate Social Audit by the Gram Sabha of all the projects taken up in the Gram Panchayat.

Most Indian states have set up an independent **Social Audit Unit** and some have even begun to facilitate Social Audit in other programmes, including Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, Midday Meal Scheme and Public Distribution System.

**Source: PIB**

### **Intel launches 'AI For All' initiative in partnership with CBSE**

#### **Why in News**

**Chipmaker Intel** has collaborated with the **Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE)** to launch the **'AI For All' initiative**.

### **Key Points**

#### **About 'AI For All' initiative:**

Based on **Intel's 'AI For Citizens' programme**, 'AI For All' is a 4-hour, self-paced learning programme.

It aims to create a basic understanding of **artificial intelligence (AI)** for people in India.

The programme aims to introduce AI to one million citizens in its first year.

AI has the power to drive faster economic growth, address population-scale challenges and benefit the lives and livelihoods of people.

#### **Note:**

National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 acknowledges the importance of AI and emphasises on preparing everyone for an AI-driven economy.

AI For All is one of the largest AI public awareness programmes worldwide and will help demystify AI in an inclusive manner strengthening India's position as a global leader for emerging technologies.

**Source: The Hindu**

## **First anniversary of National Education Policy 2020 and new initiatives in Education Sector**

### **Why in News**

**The Prime Minister, Narendra Modi** addressed policy makers in the domain of education and skill development, students and teachers, across the country to mark the completion of one year of reforms under the **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020**.

He also launched **multiple new initiatives in the education sector**.

He noted the changes brought by the pandemic and how normal online education became for the students. More than 2300 crore hits on portals like **Diksha** and **Swayam** are clear proof of this fact.

### **Key Points**

#### **Academic Bank of Credit:**

It will provide multiple entry and exit options for students in Higher Education.

#### **Engineering Programmes in Regional Languages:**

14 engineering colleges of 8 states are starting to impart education in 5 Indian languages Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Marathi and Bangla. A tool has been developed for translating engineering courses in 11 languages.

This emphasis on mother tongue as the medium of instruction will instil confidence in the students from poor, rural and tribal backgrounds.

**Vidya Pravesh:**

Vidya Pravesh is a 3 month play based school preparation module for Grade 1 students.

**Indian Sign Language:**

Indian Sign language, for the first time, has been accorded the status of language subject. Students will be able to study it as a language also.

There are more than 3 lakh students who need sign language for their education.

This will give a boost to Indian sign language and will help the divyang people.

**NISHTHA 2.0:**

It is an integrated programme of teacher training designed by **NCERT**.

It will provide training to teachers as per their needs and they will be able to give their suggestions to the department.

**SAFAL (Structured Assessment For Analyzing Learning Levels):**

It is a competency based assessment framework for Grades 3, 5 and 8 in CBSE schools.

**National Digital Education Architecture (NDEAR) and National Education Technology Forum (NETF):**

NDEAR and NETF will go a long way in providing a digital and technological framework to the entire country.

**Artificial Intelligence (AI) programme:**

It will make the student future oriented and will pave the way for an AI-driven economy.

**Previous Initiatives:**

Prime Minister's Research Fellowship

National Programme on Technology Enhanced Learning

RUSA (Rashtriya Ucchar Shiksha Abhiyan)

SPARC (Scheme for Promotion of Academic and Research Collaboration)

PRAGYATA

Mid Day Meal Scheme  
Beti Bachao Beti Padhao  
Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan  
Right To Education Act, 2009

**Source: PIB**

## Important News: World

### Forum for Decarbonizing Transport

#### Why in News

**NITI Aayog** and **World Resources Institute (WRI), India**, jointly launched the '**Forum for Decarbonizing Transport**' in India.

The forum is a part of the **NDC-Transport Initiative for Asia (NDC-TIA) project**.

#### Key Points

##### About NDC-TIA project:

The NDC Transport Initiative for Asia (TIA 2020-2023) is a joint programme of seven organisations that will engage China, India, and Vietnam in promoting a comprehensive approach to decarbonizing transport in their respective countries.

The project is part of the International Climate Initiative (IKI).

NITI Aayog is the implementing partner for the India component of the project.

##### Aim:

The project aims at bringing down the peak level of GHG emissions (transport sector) in Asia (in line with a well below 2-degree pathway), resulting in problems like congestion and air pollution.

##### Need:

India has a massive and diverse transport sector, which is also the third most CO<sub>2</sub> emitting sector.

Data from (International Energy Agency- IEA, 2020; Ministry of Environment Forest and Climate Change, 2018) suggests that within the transport sector, road transport contributes to more than 90% of the total CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

##### Related Initiatives:

FAME Scheme (Part of the National Electric Mobility Mission Plan)  
Incentives under PLI Scheme

Renewable Automotive Industry

**Source: PIB**

## **UNITE AWARE Platform**

### **Why in News**

**India** in collaboration with the **United Nations (UN)** launched **UNITE AWARE - a technology platform** to ensure the safety and security of **peacekeepers** who are operating in complex and risky environments across the world.

The launch of the UNITE AWARE came as **India assumed the Presidency of the 15-nation UN Security Council for the month of August.**

### **Key Points**

#### **About UNITE AWARE Platform:**

"UNITE AWARE" is a situational awareness software programme that allows a Peacekeeping Operations Centre to visualise and analyse the ground situation in a conflict zone on a real-time basis.

#### **Aim:**

This project aims to demonstrate the impact of modern surveillance technology on the detection of asymmetric threats.

It aims to improve camp security for UN peacekeepers, the overall security situation, and the quality of situational awareness.

**India** has **contributed** USD 1.64 million towards the project.

#### **Partnership:**

India has developed it in partnership with the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Operational Support.

India has partnered with the United Nations to roll out this platform initially in 4 UN Peacekeeping Missions: UNFICYP (Cyprus), MINUSMA (Mali), UNMISS (South Sudan) and AMISOM (Somalia).

**UN Peacekeeping** helps countries navigate the difficult path from conflict to peace.

#### **India's Contribution:**

Currently, there are 5506 troops and police from India who have been deployed to 9 different UN peacekeeping missions, the second highest amongst troop-contributing countries.

More than 200,000 Indians have served in 49 of the 71 UN peacekeeping missions established around the world since 1948.

**Source: The Hindu**

## **India to host second United Nations World Geospatial Information Congress (UNWGIC)**

### **Why in News**

India will host the second United Nations World Geospatial Information Congress (UNWGIC) in October 2022, at Hyderabad.

The **theme** for 2022 is 'Towards Geo-enabling the Global Village.'

### **Key Points**

#### **About UNWGIC:**

The **United Nation Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM)** organizes the United Nations World Geospatial Information Congress (UNWGIC) every 4 years.

Its objective is to enhance international collaboration among the Member States and relevant stakeholders in Geospatial information management and capacities.

The first UNWGIC was organized by China in October 2018.

#### **About Geospatial Technologies:**

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

It consists of the following technologies: GIS (Geographic Information System), Remote Sensing, 3D Scanning and GNSS (Global Navigation Satellite System)

#### **Geospatial Policy of India:**

Central government has recently released new guidelines for the Geo-Spatial Sector in India.

The new policy liberalises the sector to a more competitive field.

#### **Web portals to offer geospatial data launched by the Department of Science and Technology (DST):**

**Bhuvan** (The national Geo-portal developed and hosted by ISRO comprising Geo Spatial Data, Services and Tools for Analysis)

**Sarathi** (A Web Geographic Information System developed by the Survey of India)

**Online Maps Portal** (It has over 4,000 maps with national, state, district, and tehsil level data)

**Manchitran:** NATMO (National Atlas and Thematic Mapping Organization) has released thematic maps such as the cultural map of India, the climatic map, or the economic map, on this portal.

**Source: PIB**

## **India expresses desire to expand the horizon of New Development Bank (NDB) for strengthening social infrastructure**

### **Why in News**

**Union Minister of Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal** recently chaired the **“5th meeting of BRICS Industry Ministers” under the Chairship of India.**

During the meeting, India expressed the desire **to expand the horizon of New Development Bank (NDB)** for strengthening social infrastructure besides promotion of the Industrial sector.

**Social infrastructure** includes especially for funding service delivery in the education and health sector.

### **Key Points**

#### **About New Development Bank (NDB):**

NDB is a multilateral development bank established by the **BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa).**

The bank is headquartered in Shanghai, China.

On 15 July 2014, the first day of the 6th BRICS summit held in Fortaleza, Brazil, the BRICS states signed the Agreement on the New Development Bank.

#### **Major Projects funded by NDB in India:**

Major infrastructure projects in India, including the Mumbai Metro rail, Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut Regional Rapid Transit System and many Renewable Energy projects.

The NDB has so far approved 14 Indian projects for an amount of nearly USD 4.2 billion.

In 2020, 1 billion USD loan pact with NDB to boost rural employment and infrastructure

**Source: PIB**

## **11th Annual Meeting of the Forum of the Election Management Bodies of SouthAsia (FEMBoSA) for 2021**

### **Why in News**

**Chief Election Commissioner of India and current Chairman, FEMBoSA Sushil Chandra** inaugurated the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual meeting of the Forum of the Election Management Bodies of South Asia (FEMBoSA) for the year 2021.

The meeting in virtual mode was **hosted by the Election Commission of Bhutan.**

### **Key Points**

#### **About the Meeting:**

The **theme** of the meeting was **'Use of Technology in Elections'**.

Election Commission of India (ECI) handed over the **Chairmanship of FEMBoSA** to the **Election Commission of Bhutan for 2021-22.**

A Thimphu Resolution was unanimously adopted by the FEMBoSA members to extend the tenure of chairmanship to two years during the current pandemic situation.

#### **About Forum of the Election Management Bodies of South Asia (FEMBoSA):**

It was established at the 3rd Conference of Heads of Election Management Bodies (EMBs) of SAARC Countries in 2012.

It has 8 Member Election Management Bodies from Afghanistan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Sri Lanka and Pakistan.

#### **About ECI (Election Commission of India):**

It is a permanent and independent body established by the Constitution of India directly to ensure free and fair elections in the country.

**Formed:** 25 January 1950 (Later celebrated as National Voters Day)

**Headquarters:** New Delhi

#### **Commission executives:**

Sushil Chandra, Chief Election Commissioner of India,  
Rajeev Kumar, Election Commissioner of India,  
Anup Chandra Pandey, Election Commissioner of India

**Source: PIB**

### **IBSA Tourism Ministers' meeting**

#### **Why in News**

India organized the **IBSA (India, Brazil and South Africa) Tourism Ministers'** meeting recently.

The Minister of Tourism of India, G. Kishan Reddy; the Minister of Tourism of the Federative Republic of Brazil, H.E. Gilson

Machado Neto and the Deputy Minister of Tourism of the Republic of South Africa, H.E. Fish Amos Mahlalela, met through videoconferencing **under India's IBSA Chairship**.

### **Key Points**

The aim of the meeting was to promote tourism cooperation among the member states and reviewed the intra IBSA Tourism cooperation.

The main aspect of the meeting was the adoption of the **IBSA Tourism Ministers Joint Statement**, an outcome document on cooperation and promotion for speedy recovery of travel and tourism.

### **About IBSA (India, Brazil and South Africa):**

IBSA is a unique Forum which brings together India, Brazil and South Africa, three large democracies and major economies from three different continents, facing similar challenges.

The grouping was formalized and named the IBSA Dialogue Forum when the Foreign Ministers of the three countries met in Brasilia on 6 June 2003 and issued the Brasilia Declaration.

Five IBSA Leadership Summits have been held so far.

India as the current IBSA Chair has planned to convene the 6th IBSA summit on 5th September 2021, under the theme "Democracy for Demography and Development".

**Joint Naval Exercise:** IBSAMAR (IBSA Maritime Exercise)

**IBSA Fund** (India, Brazil and South Africa Facility for Poverty and Hunger Alleviation)

IBSA Fellowship Programme

**Execution of Human Development Projects:** Over the years, the IBSA fund has contributed \$39 million and partnered in 19 countries from global South to implement 26 projects.

**Source: PIB**

## **PM Narendra Modi chairs UNSC high-level Open Debate on 'Enhancing Maritime Security'**

### **Why in News**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi chaired a high-level **United Nations Security Council (UNSC)** open debate titled, '**Enhancing Maritime Security - A Case for International Cooperation**'.

For the first time, an Indian Prime Minister presided over the UNSC Open Debate.

### Key Points

Open debate was focused on ways to effectively counter maritime crime and insecurity and strengthen coordination in the maritime domain.

The UNSC has discussed and passed resolutions on different aspects of maritime security and maritime crime in the past. However, this is the first time that maritime security is being discussed in a holistic manner as an exclusive agenda item in such a high-level open debate.

PM Narendra Modi proposed **5 basic principles for maritime security.**

### Note:

India assumed the presidency of the UNSC (United Nations Security Council) for the month of August 2021.

India began its 2 year tenure as a non-permanent member of the UNSC on January 1, 2021.

**Source: Indian Express**

## India assumes UNSC presidency for August 2021

### Why in News

India assumed the **presidency of the UNSC (United Nations Security Council)** for the month of August 2021.

This is the **India's first presidency during its 2021-22** tenure as a **non-permanent member of the UNSC.**

India began its 2 year tenure as a non-permanent member of the UNSC on January 1, 2021.

It is India's 8<sup>th</sup> term as a non-permanent member of the UNSC.

### Key Points

#### About India's UNSC presidency:

India is set to organise key events in three major areas of maritime security, counter-terrorism and peacekeeping.

India will decide the United Nations agenda for the month and coordinate important meetings on a range of issues.

UNSC will also have on its agenda several important meetings including Somalia, Yemen, Syria, Iraq and the Middle East.

**Prime Minister Narendra Modi** will be the first Indian PM to preside over a meeting of the UNSC.

The last time an Indian PM was engaged in this effort was the then PM PV Narasimha Rao in 1992 when he attended a UNSC meeting.

**Facts about UNSC (United Nations Security Council):**

**Formation:** 24 October 1945

**Membership:** 15 countries

**Permanent members:** 5 (United States, China, France, Russia and United Kingdom)

**Non-permanent members:** 10 including India

**Source:** Indian Express

**Russia's Nauka Module**

**Why in News**

Russia's uncrewed **Nauka laboratory module** was launched to the International Space Station (ISS).

The Nauka module was launched using a Proton rocket from the Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan.

**Key Points**

**About Russia's new Nauka module:**

Nauka means "science" in Russian. It is the biggest space laboratory.

Russia detached Pirs from the ISS. In its place, Russia's space agency Roscosmos attached the significantly larger module Nauka, which will serve as the country's main research facility on the space station.

**Significance:**

It will serve as a new science facility, docking port, and spacewalk airlock for future operations.

**About International Space Station (ISS):**

ISS is a modular space station (habitable artificial satellite) in low Earth orbit.

It is a multinational collaborative project involving five participating space agencies: NASA (United States), JAXA (Japan), Roscosmos (Russia), ESA (Europe) and CSA (Canada).

**Note:** Recently, China has launched an unmanned module 'Tianhe' of its permanent space station that it plans to complete by the end of 2022.

**Source:** Indian Express

## Important News: Health

### Arogya Dhara 2.0

#### Why in News

**Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare, Mansukh Mandaviya** launched **Arogya Dhara 2.0** to mark the completion of **2 crore treatments** under Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Aarogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY).

#### Key Points

With the completion of more than 2 crore hospital admissions landmark, treatments worth approximately Rs 25,000 crore have been provided till date (18 August 2021) through a growing network of 23,000 public and private empaneled hospitals to patients across 33 States/UTs in the country since the launch of the scheme.

#### The following key initiatives were also launched:

**Adhikar Patra:** to be issued to the beneficiaries during their hospital admissions for treatment under PMJAY scheme to make them aware about their rights.

**Abhinandan Patra:** a 'thank you note' to be issued to the beneficiaries during their discharge after the treatment under PMJAY for availing the benefits of the scheme.

**Ayushman Mitra:** Another key initiative launched which provides an opportunity to all citizens to contribute to the vision of Ayushman Bharat by helping eligible people to get their Ayushman Cards created and bring them under the ambit of the scheme.

#### About Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Aarogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY):

It is an ambitious scheme ensuring quality and affordable healthcare for the poor and underprivileged people.

It has empowered all eligible beneficiaries with cashless and paperless healthcare services benefits of upto Rs 5 Lakhs per family per year.

It was launched on 23 September 2018 at Ranchi, Jharkhand.

**Note:** Under the AB-PMJAY approximately 20.32 lakh COVID-19 tests and 7.08 lakh treatments were authorised from April 2020 to July 2021.

**Source: PIB**

## **112th Annual Day of National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) Why in News**

Recently, **Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare, Mansukh Mandaviya** presided over the 112th Annual Day celebrations of National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC).

### **Key Points**

#### **Initiatives Launched**

##### **Genome Lab:**

At the event, the Union Health Minister inaugurated the **Whole Genome Sequencing National Reference Laboratory for Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) and BSL 3 Laboratory.**

##### **Information, Education & Communication (IEC) Materials:**

The Division of Zoonotic Disease Programme at NCDC under the **"National One health Programme for prevention and Control of Zoonoses"** has created IEC materials (Print, Audio & Video) on 7 priority zoonotic diseases namely Rabies, Scrub Typhus, Anthrax, CCHF, Brucellosis, Nipah, Kyasanur Forest Disease in India.

##### **Adaptation Plan under the "National Programme on Climate Change and Human Health":**

The Minister also launched the **National Health Adaptation Plan on Air Pollution** and **National Health Adaptation Plan on Heat.**

##### **About National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC):**

The National Centre for Disease Control (previously known as the **National Institute of Communicable Diseases**) is an institute under the **Indian Directorate General of Health Services, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.**

##### **History:**

The origin of the NCDC can be traced to the Central Malaria Bureau, which was established at Kasauli, Himachal Pradesh, India in 1909.

It was renamed the Malaria Institute of India in 1938 and in 1963 renamed the National Institute of Communicable Diseases.

On 30 July 2009, it was named the **NCDC.**

**Source: PIB**

## **'Ashwagandha' for promoting recovery from COVID-19**

### **Why in News**

**India and the U.K.** will conduct clinical trials of **'Ashwagandha'** for promoting recovery from **COVID-19.**

The **All India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA)**, an autonomous body under the **Ministry of Ayush**, and the **U.K.'s London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM)** recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding to conduct clinical trials of Ashwagandha.

### Key Points

#### About Ashwagandha:

**Ashwagandha (Withania somnifera)**, commonly known as 'Indian winter cherry', is a traditional Indian herb that boosts energy, reduces stress and makes the immune system stronger.

The successful completion of the trial could be a major breakthrough and give scientific validity to India's traditional medicinal system.

Combined with substantial literature on its pharmacological and immunomodulatory effects, the study suggests 'Ashwagandha' as a potential therapeutic candidate for alleviating the long-term symptoms of COVID-19.

**Source: The Hindu**

## Biotech-PRIDE (Promotion of Research and Innovation through Data Exchange)

### Why in News

**Department of Biotechnology (DBT), Ministry of Science and Technology** has released "**Biotech-PRIDE** (Promotion of Research and Innovation through Data Exchange) Guidelines" and launched a website of **Indian Biological Data Centre (IBDC)**.

### Key Points

#### About Biotech-PRIDE:

#### Need:

With a large population of over 135 crore and heterogeneous character of the country, India needs its own exclusive database for Indian Research and Solutions.

The indigenous database will have a huge enabling mechanism for exchange and adoption of data by young scientists and researchers for the benefit of Indian Citizens.

Advances in DNA sequencing and other high-throughput technologies along with a steep drop in DNA sequencing cost have enabled government agencies to fund research towards

generation of large volumes of biological data in various sectors of Biosciences.

It will contribute to human health on agriculture, animal husbandry, fundamental research and thus will extend to societal benefits.

**Guidelines:**

Initially, these Guidelines will be implemented through **Indian Biological Data Centre (IBDC)** at the Regional Centre for Biotechnology supported by the Department of Biotechnology.

Other existing datasets/ data centres will be bridged to this IBDC which will be called **Bio-Grid**.

This Bio-Grid will be a National Repository for biological knowledge, information and data and will be responsible for enabling its exchange, developing measures for safety, standards and quality for datasets and establishing detailed modalities for accessing data.

**Note:** India ranks number 4 amongst the top 20 countries contributing biological databases.

**Biotech Schemes and Policies:**

Genome India Project

Biotech-KISAN Programme

Atal Jai Anusandhan Biotech Mission - Undertaking Nationally Relevant Technology Innovation (**UNaTI**)

DNA Technology Bill, 2019

**Source: PIB**

## Important News: Economy

### **NITI Aayog releases a Report on Power Distribution Sector** **Why in News**

**NITI Aayog Vice Chairman Dr Rajiv Kumar** released a Report on the Power Distribution Sector.

The report, titled '*Turning Around the Power Distribution Sector*', is co-authored by **NITI Aayog, RMI and RMI India**.

**Key Points**

**Findings of the Report:**

Most power distribution companies (DISCOMS) in India incur losses every year—total losses are estimated to be as high as Rs 90,000 crore in FY 2021.

Due to these accumulated losses, DISCOMS are unable to pay generators on time, make investments required to ensure high-quality power, or prepare for greater use of variable renewable energy.

This report examines many important reforms, such as the role of the private sector in distribution, power procurement, regulatory oversight, integration of renewable energy, and upgradation of infrastructure.

The report focuses on structural reforms, regulatory reforms, operational reforms, managerial reforms, and renewable energy integration.

### **Government Schemes to help DISCOMS:**

Ujwal DISCOM Assurance Yojana (UDAY)

Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojana

Integrated Power Development Scheme

### **Facts about NITI (National Institution for Transforming India)**

#### **Aayog:**

**Formed:** 1 January 2015

**Headquarters:** New Delhi

**Chairperson:** Narendra Modi

**Vice Chairperson:** Rajiv Kumar

**CEO:** Amitabh Kant

**Rocky Mountain Institute (RMI)**, an independent non-profit founded in 1982, transforms global energy use to create a clean, prosperous, and secure low-carbon future.

#### **Source: PIB**

**CBIC launches Compliance Information Portal (CIP)**

#### **Why in News**

The **Central Board for Indirect Taxes & Customs (CBIC)** launched the Indian Customs **Compliance Information Portal (CIP)** for providing free access to information on all Customs procedures and regulatory compliance for nearly 12,000 Customs Tariff Items.

#### **Key Points**

##### **About Compliance Information Portal (CIP):**

CIP is a facilitation tool developed by CBIC to empower business as well as any interested person with up-to-date information on the legal and procedural requirements of Customs and Partner Government Agencies (FSSAI, PQIS, AQIS, Drug Controller etc.) for carrying out imports and exports.

### **About Central Board for Indirect Taxes & Customs (CBIC):**

Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (erstwhile Central Board of Excise & Customs) is a part of the Department of Revenue under the Ministry of Finance, Government of India.

It deals with the tasks of formulation of policy concerning levy and collection of Customs, Central Excise duties, CGST and IGST and prevention of smuggling.

**Source: PIB**

### **Combined Index of Eight Core Industries (ICI) increases by 8.9 percent as compared to the Index of June 2020**

#### **Why in News**

The **combined Index of Eight Core Industries** stood at **126.6 in June 2021**, which **increased by 8.9 percent** as compared to the Index of June 2020.

The production of Coal, Natural Gas, Refinery Products, Fertilizers, Steel, Cement and Electricity industries increased in June 2021 over the corresponding period of last year.

#### **Key Points**

#### **About Index of Eight Core Industries (ICI):**

ICI measures combined and individual performance of production in selected eight core industries viz. **Coal, Natural Gas, Crude Oil, Refinery Products, Fertilizers, Cement, Steel and Electricity.**

The **Eight Core Industries comprise 40.27 percent** of the weight of items included in the **Index of Industrial Production (IIP).**

#### **The summary of the Index of Eight Core Industries:**

**Coal:** Coal production increased by 7.4 percent in June, 2021 over June, 2020.

**Crude Oil:** Crude Oil production declined by 1.8 percent in June, 2021 over June, 2020.

**Natural Gas:** Natural Gas production increased by 20.6 percent in June, 2021 over June, 2020.

**Refinery Products:** Petroleum Refinery production increased by 2.4 percent in June, 2021 over June, 2020.

**Fertilizers:** Fertilizers production increased by 2.0 percent in June, 2021 over June, 2020.

**Steel:** Steel production increased by 25.0 percent in June, 2021 over June, 2020.

**Cement:** Cement production increased by 4.3 percent in June, 2021 over June, 2020.

**Electricity:** Electricity generation increased by 7.2 percent in June, 2021 over June, 2020.

**About Index of Industrial Production (IIP):**

IIP is an index for India which details the growth of various sectors in an economy such as electricity, mineral mining and manufacturing.

The all India IIP is a composite indicator that measures the short-term changes in the volume of production of a basket of industrial products during a given period with respect to that in a chosen base period.

It is compiled and published monthly by the **National Statistics Office (NSO), Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation.**

The current base year is 2011-2012.

**Significance of IIP:**

It is used by various government agencies such as the Ministry of Finance, the Reserve Bank of India, private firms and analysts.

The data is also used to compile the Gross Value Added of the manufacturing sector in the **Gross Domestic Product** on a quarterly basis.

**Source: PIB**

**Digital payment solution 'e-RUPI'**

**Why in News**

**Prime Minister Narendra Modi** launched digital payment solution 'e-RUPI'.

**Key Points**

**About e-RUPI:**

e-RUPI is a **cashless and contactless** instrument for digital payment.

It is a **QR code or SMS string-based e-Voucher**, which is delivered to the mobile of the beneficiaries.

The users of this seamless one-time payment mechanism will be able to redeem the voucher without a card, digital payments app or internet banking access, at the service provider.

It connects the sponsors of the services with the beneficiaries and service providers in a digital manner without any physical interface.

It has been **developed** by **National Payments Corporation of India** on its UPI platform, in collaboration with the **Department of Financial Services, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare** and **National Health Authority**.

**Uses:**

It is expected to be a revolutionary initiative in the direction of ensuring a leak-proof delivery of welfare services.

It can also be used for delivering services under schemes meant for providing drugs and nutritional support under Mother and Child welfare schemes, TB eradication programmes, drugs & diagnostics under schemes like Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana, fertilizer subsidies etc.

Even the private sector can leverage these digital vouchers as part of their employee welfare and corporate social responsibility programmes.

**Significance of e-RUPI:**

The government is already working on developing a central bank digital currency and the launch of e-RUPI could potentially highlight the gaps in digital payments infrastructure that will be necessary for the success of the future digital currency.

**Different from Virtual Currency:**

In effect, e-RUPI is backed by the existing Indian rupee as the underlying asset and specificity of its purpose makes it different to a virtual currency and puts it closer to a voucher-based payment system.

**Note:** Countries such as the US, Sweden, Hong Kong, Colombia, Chile, etc. are using voucher systems.

**Source: PIB**

**Cabinet approves DICGC (Amendment) Bill, 2021**

**Why in News**

The Union Cabinet has approved **the Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation (DICGC) (Amendment) Bill, 2021**.

**Key Points**

**About DICGC (Amendment) Bill, 2021:**

**Insurance Cover:**

The Bill provides account holders security of their money by allowing access to up to **Rs 5 lakh within 90 days** of a bank coming under a moratorium.

Earlier, account holders had to wait for years till the liquidation or restructuring of a distressed lender to get their deposits that are insured against default.

**Note:** In 2020, the Finance Minister had increased its limit from 1 lakh to 5 lakh.

**DICGC** was formed because bank depositors faced problems while withdrawing their money from banks if the RBI imposed a moratorium.

**Coverage:**

Under the latest amendment in the DICGC Bill, 98.3% of all deposits will be covered and in terms of deposit value, 50.9% of deposits will be covered. While the Global deposit value is only 80% of all deposit accounts and covers only 20-30% of the deposit value.

**About Deposit Insurance Credit Guarantee Corporation (DICGC):**

It is a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Reserve Bank of India.

It provides deposit insurance that works as a protection cover for bank deposit holders when the bank fails to pay its depositors.

It protects depositors' money kept in all commercial and foreign banks located in India; central, state, and urban co-operative banks; regional rural banks; and local banks, provided that the bank has opted for DICGC cover.

The agency's operations are performed as per the Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation Act, 1961 and The Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation General Regulations, 1961.

**Source: The Hindu**

## Important News: Environment

### New Frog Species 'Adi Cascade' discovered in Arunachal Pradesh

#### Why in News

A team of biologists from Delhi University, Wildlife Institute of India and North Carolina Museum of Natural Science (USA) has discovered a new species of frog from the Adi hills of Arunachal Pradesh.

The new species of Cascade Frog has been named **Adi Cascade Frog (Amolops adicola)** after the Adi hills, which are home to

Adi tribes, an indigenous group of people from the Himalayan regions in the state.

### **Key Points**

The literal meaning of Adi is "hill" or "mountain top". Historically, this region was also known as Abor Hills.

According to the researchers, the "Cascade Frogs" are named so because of their preference for small waterfalls or cascades in flowing hill streams.

The new species was identified based on multiple criteria, such as external morphology, DNA, and calling pattern.

**Note:** Recently, a team of Delhi University researchers has discovered a new frog species "**Minervarya Pentali**" in the Western Ghats.

**Source: Indian Express**

## **Four more sites of India added to Ramsar list as wetlands**

### **Why in News**

Four more wetlands from India get recognition from the Ramsar Secretariat as Ramsar sites.

These sites are Sultanpur and Bhindawas from Haryana and Thol and Wadhvana from Gujarat.

With this, the number of **Ramsar sites in India is 46** and the surface area covered by these sites is now 1,083,322 hectares.

### **Key Points**

#### **About Ramsar Convention:**

#### **Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance**

especially as Waterfowl Habitat is an international treaty for the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands. It is also known as the Convention on Wetlands. It is named after the city of Ramsar in Iran, where the Convention was signed in 1971.

**Location:** Ramsar, Iran

**Effective:** 21 December 1975

**Signed:** 2 February 1971

#### **Aim:**

The aim of the Ramsar list is "to develop and maintain an international network of wetlands which are important for the conservation of global biological diversity and for sustaining human life through the maintenance of their ecosystem components, processes and benefits".

#### **About New Ramsar Sites:**

**Bhindawas Wildlife Sanctuary**, the largest wetland in **Haryana** is a human-made freshwater wetland. Over 250 bird species use the sanctuary throughout the year as a resting and roosting site.

**Sultanpur National Park** from **Haryana** supports more than 220 species of resident, winter migratory and local migratory waterbirds at critical stages of their life cycles.

**Thol Lake Wildlife Sanctuary** from **Gujarat** lies on the Central Asian Flyway and more than 320 bird species can be found here.

**Wadhvana Wetland** from **Gujarat** is internationally important for its birdlife as it provides wintering ground to migratory waterbirds, including over 80 species that migrate on the Central Asian Flyway.

#### **Global Wetland Conservation Initiatives:**

World Wetland Day

Cities4Forests global campaign

The Ramsar convention

#### **Conservation Efforts by India:**

Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2017

The National Wetland Inventory and Assessment using remote sensing satellites from 2006 to 2011 by ISRO

National Plan for Conservation of Aquatic Ecosystems

**Source: PIB**

### **New frog species in Western Ghats: "Minervarya Pentali"**

#### **Why in News**

A team of Delhi University researchers has discovered a new frog species in the Western Ghats and named it after former DU Vice-Chancellor and plant geneticist Deepak Pentali.

#### **Key Points**

The new species of frog belongs to the **family of Dicroglossidae** and it has been named as "**Minervarya Pentali.**"

#### **About the family of Dicroglossidae:**

The **family Dicroglossidae** comprises 202 species of semiaquatic frogs distributed by the tropical and subtropical regions of Africa and Asia and Papua New Guinea.

The family contains large-sized (e.g., genus *Hoplobatrachus*) and dwarf species, with a total length about 30 mm (e.g., genus *Nannophrys*).

**New frog species** was discovered from the Western Ghats biodiversity hotspot, extending along the southwest coast of the Indian Peninsula, and the research team has stated that this new species is endemic to the southern Western Ghats.

**About Western Ghats:**

It is a mountain range that covers an area of 160,000 km<sup>2</sup> (square kilometer) in a stretch of 1,600 km parallel to the western coast of the Indian peninsula, traversing the states of Karnataka, Goa, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

It is a **UNESCO World Heritage Site** and is one of the eight hotspots of biological diversity in the world.

It is sometimes called the '**Great Escarpment of India**'.

**Source: Indian Express**

## Important News: Economy

### Finance Minister unveils 4th edition of Public Sector Bank Reforms Agenda - EASE 4.0

#### Why in News

Union Minister of Finance and Corporate Affairs Nirmala Sitharaman unveiled the 4<sup>th</sup> edition of the **Public Sector Bank (PSB) Reforms Agenda 'EASE 4.0' for 2021-22**.

She unveiled the **annual report for the PSB Reforms Agenda EASE 3.0 for 2020-21** and participated in the **awards ceremony** to felicitate best performing banks on **EASE 3.0 Banking Reforms Index**.

#### Key Points

##### EASE 3.0 award winners:

**State Bank of India, Bank of Baroda and Union Bank of India** have won the awards for best performing banks for PSB Reforms EASE 3.0 based on the EASE index.

##### About EASE 4.0:

**EASE 4.0 or Enhanced Access and Service Excellence** – a common reform agenda for PSBs aimed at institutionalising clean and smart banking.

It aims to further the agenda of customer-centric digital transformation and deeply embed digital and data into PSBs' ways of working.

### **Key Initiatives:**

Smart Lending  
24x7 Banking with resilient technology  
Data-enabled agricultural financing  
Collaborating with financial ecosystem

### **About EASE Agenda:**

It was launched jointly by the government and Public Sector Banks (PSBs) in January 2018.

### **Various Stages:**

**EASE 1.0** report showed significant improvement in PSB performance in resolution of Non Performing Assets transparently.

**EASE 2.0** was built on the foundation of EASE 1.0 and introduced new reform Action Points to make reforms journey irreversible, strengthen processes and systems, and drive outcomes.

**EASE 3.0** seeks to improve ease of banking working in all customer experiences, using technology.

**EASE Reforms Index:** The Index measures performance of each PSB. The objective of the index is to encourage healthy competition among PSBs

**Source: PIB**

## **'SUJALAM' Campaign**

### **Why in News**

The **Ministry of Jal Shakti** began **'SUJALAM'**, a **'100 days campaign'** as part of the 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' celebrations.

### **Key Points**

The campaign will create more and more **ODF (Open Defecation Free) Plus villages** by undertaking waste water management at village level particularly through creation of **1 million Soak-pits** and also other **Grey water management activities**.

The campaign will aid in sustainable management of waterbodies.

Furthermore, the campaign would boost the momentum of **SBMG phase II** activities through community participation and it will increase awareness about ODF-plus activities.

The Campaign would use the platform of awareness and behaviour change achieved during the first phase of the SBMG

and provides focus for sustaining the same along with achieving the visual cleanliness.

### **About Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM):**

SBM is a country-wide campaign initiated by the Government of India in 2014 to eliminate open defecation and improve solid waste management.

Phase 1 of the SBM lasted till October 2019. Phase 2 is being implemented between 2020-21 and 2024-25.

The mission was divided into two: Rural (SBM-G) and Urban (SBM-U).

**Source: PIB**

### **Union Finance Minister launches the National Monetisation Pipeline (NMP)**

#### **Why in News**

Union Minister for Finance and Corporate Affairs, Nirmala Sitharaman launched the asset monetisation pipeline of Central ministries and public sector entities: **'National Monetisation Pipeline (NMP Volumes 1 & 2)'**.

The pipeline has been developed by **NITI Aayog**, in consultation with infrastructure line ministries, based on the mandate for 'Asset Monetisation' under Union Budget 2021-22.

**NMP** estimates aggregate monetisation potential of **Rs 6.0 lakh crores** through core assets of the Central Government, over a four-year period, from **FY 2022 to FY 2025**.

#### **Key Points**

#### **About National Monetisation Pipeline (NMP):**

Union Budget 2021-22 has identified monetisation of operating public infrastructure assets as a key means for sustainable infrastructure financing.

NMP aims to provide a medium term roadmap of the programme for public asset owners along with visibility on potential assets to the private sector.

#### **Framework:**

The pipeline has been prepared based on inputs and consultations from respective line ministries and departments, along with the assessment of total asset base available therein.

Currently, only assets of central government line ministries and CPSEs in infrastructure sectors have been included.

The framework for monetisation of core asset monetisation has three key imperatives.

**Estimated Potential:**

There are more than 12 line ministries and more than 20 asset classes.

The sectors included are roads, ports, airports, railways, warehousing, gas & product pipeline, power generation and transmission, mining, telecom, stadium, hospitality and housing.

*Sector wise Monetisation Pipeline over FY 2022-25:*

The top 5 sectors (by estimated value) capture ~83% of the aggregate pipeline value. These top 5 sectors include: Roads (27%) followed by Railways (25%), Power (15%), oil & gas pipelines (8%) and Telecom (6%).

In terms of annual phasing by value, 15% of assets with an indicative value of Rs 0.88 lakh crore are envisaged to be rolled out in the current financial year (FY 2021-22).

**Source: PIB**

**Ubharte Sitaare Fund (USF)**

**Why in News**

**Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman** launched the '**Ubharte Sitaare Fund**'-USF for export-oriented firms and startups.

The Fund aims at arranging funds for promotion of **MSME (Micro Small and Medium Enterprises)**.

The fund has been set up by **EXIM Bank** and **SIDBI (Small Industries Development Bank of India)**.

**Key Points**

**About Ubharte Sitaare Fund (USF):**

The corpus of the Fund is ₹ 250 crore with a green shoe option of ₹ 250 crore.

The Fund would invest by way of equity, and equity like products in export-oriented units, both in the manufacturing and services sectors.

**Objective:**

The objective of the Fund is to identify and invest in small and mid-size ventures in manufacturing and service industries with good export potential that could be future champions of export and handhold them through the growth phase.

### **Significance:**

The initiative would play a catalytic role in contributing to the growth of the identified companies and would also have downstream benefits such as growth and diversification of India's exports, impetus to brand India, and employment generation.

### **Note:**

Recently, the government of India has notified the **RoDTEP (Remission of Duties and Taxes on Exported Products) Scheme Guidelines & Rates** for boosting exports by creating a level-playing field for exporters.

### **Initiatives to Promote MSME (Micro Small and Medium Enterprises) Sector:**

Scheme of Fund for Regeneration of Traditional Industries (SFURTI)

Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme

A Scheme for Promoting Innovation, Rural Industry & Entrepreneurship (ASPIRE)

Interest Subvention Scheme for Incremental Credit to MSMEs

Credit Guarantee Scheme for Micro and Small Enterprises

Credit Linked Capital Subsidy and Technology Upgradation Scheme

Micro and Small Enterprises Cluster Development Programme

### **Source: The Hindu**

## **PM-KUSUM and Rooftop Solar Programme Phase-II**

### **Why in News**

Recently, the Union Minister for Power and New and Renewable Energy, R.K. Singh has reviewed the progress of implementation of PM-KUSUM and Rooftop Solar Programme Phase-II and discussed the issues in the implementation of these Schemes.

### **Key Points**

#### **About Pradhan Mantri Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Utthaan Mahabhiyan (PM-KUSUM) Yojana:**

It was launched by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) in 2019 for setting up solar pumps and other new power plants across the country.

It provides a day-time reliable source of power to farmers for irrigation activities and also increasing their income.

Also, expansion of the irrigation cover by providing decentralized solar-based irrigation and moving away from polluting diesel.

20 lakh farmers will be provided subsidy for setting up stand-alone solar pumps. Another 15 lakh farmers to be helped to solarise their grid-connected pump sets.

This scheme will enable farmers to set up solar power generation capacity on their barren lands and to sell it to the power grid.

### **About Rooftop Solar Programme Phase-II:**

The phase II of the rooftop solar programme was initiated in 2019, with an aim of achieving cumulative capacity of 40,000 MW through solar rooftop projects by 2022.

### **Schemes for Promoting Solar Energy:**

National Solar Mission

Suryamitra Skill Development Programme

Development of Solar Parks and Ultra Mega Solar Power Projects

National Wind-Solar Hybrid Policy 2018

International Solar Alliance (ISA)

One Sun, One World, One Grid (OSOWOG)

Atal Jyoti Yojana

**Source: PIB**

## **Financial Inclusion Index (FI-Index)**

### **Why in News**

The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** unveiled the **first composite Financial Inclusion Index (FI-Index)** to capture the financial inclusion across the country.

The announcement regarding the creation of the Financial Inclusion Index was made in the first Bi-monthly Monetary Policy Statement for 2021-2022 on April 7.

The annual FI-Index for the financial year ended March 2021 crossed the halfway mark to 53.9, as compared to 43.4 for the year ended March 2017.

### **Key Points**

#### **About Financial Inclusion Index (FI-Index):**

The FI-Index has been conceptualised as a comprehensive index incorporating details of banking, investments, insurance, postal as well as the pension sector in consultation with government and sectoral regulators.

#### **Parameters:**

The index will reflect various aspects of financial inclusion in a single value ranging between 0 and 100, where 0 represents complete financial exclusion and 100 indicates full financial inclusion.

The FI-Index comprises three broad parameters — access (35 percent weightage), usage (45 percent) and quality (20 percent) — with each of these consisting of various dimensions, which are computed based on a number of indicators.

The index is responsive to ease of access, availability and usage of services, and quality of services, comprising, in all, 97 indicators.

The index has been constructed without any “base year”, and reflects cumulative efforts of all stakeholders.

The index will be published annually in July.

**Related Initiatives:**

**Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana**

**Digital Identity (Aadhaar)**, along with the proliferation of mobile phones with new payment systems, have addressed the first two challenges of access and usage to a large extent.

**National Centre for Financial Education (NCFE):** (2020-2025 document for creating a financially aware and empowered India)

**Centre for Financial Literacy (CFL) Project:** (An innovative and participatory approach to financial literacy at the Block level involving select banks and non-governmental organisations)

**Source: Indian Express**

**Prime Minister launches Ujjwala 2.0**

**Why in News**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched **Ujjwala 2.0 (second phase of Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana – PMUY)** by handing over LPG connections, at Mahoba, Uttar Pradesh.

On the occasion of **World Biofuel Day (10 August)** Prime Minister mentioned plans to promote “**gobar dhan**” – tapping cow dung for energy.

**Key Points**

**About Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY):**

In May 2016, Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas introduced the ‘Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana’ (PMUY) as a flagship

scheme with an objective to make clean cooking fuel such as LPG available to the rural and deprived households.

The scheme was launched on 1st May 2016 in Ballia, Uttar Pradesh by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

### **The journey from Ujjwala 1.0 to Ujjwala 2.0:**

During Ujjwala 1.0 launched in 2016, a target was set to provide LPG connections to **5 crore** women members of BPL households.

Subsequently, the scheme was expanded in April 2018 to include women beneficiaries from seven more categories (SC/ST, PMAY, AAY, Most backward classes, tea garden, forest dwellers, Islands).

Also, the target was revised to **8 Crore** LPG connections. This target was achieved in August 2019, seven months ahead of the target date.

In **Ujjwala 2.0, migrants will not be required to submit ration cards or address proof.**

A self-declaration for both 'family declaration' and as a 'proof of address' will suffice.

**Note:** During the last 6-7 years more than 11 thousand LPG distribution centres have been opened.

**Source: PIB**

## **The Constitution (127th Amendment) Bill, 2021**

### **Why in News**

Lok Sabha passed the **Constitution (127th Amendment) Bill, 2021.**

It amends the Constitution to allow States and Union Territories (UTs) to prepare their own list of **Other Backward Class (OBC).**

### **Key Points**

The Government introduced the bill in the Parliament to clarify some provisions in the **102nd Constitutional Amendment Bill to restore the power of the states to identify the backward classes.**

### **List of socially and educationally backward classes:**

The **National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC)** was established under the **National Commission for Backward Classes Act, 1993.**

The **Constitution (102nd Amendment) Act, 2018** gave constitutional status to the National Commission for Backward

Classes, and empowered the President to notify the list of socially and educationally backward classes for any State/UT. The 2021 Bill amends this to provide that the President may notify the list of socially and educationally backward classes only for purposes of the central government. This central list will be prepared and maintained by the central government. Further, the Bill enables states and union territories to prepare their own list of socially and educationally backward classes.

**Consultation with the NCBC:**

**Article 338B** of the Constitution mandates the central and state governments to consult the NCBC on all major policy matters affecting the socially and educationally backward classes. The Bill exempts states and union territories from this requirement for matters related to preparation of their list of socially and educationally backward classes. If the state list was abolished, nearly 671 OBC communities would have lost access to reservation in educational institutions and in appointments.

**Note:**

Currently, OBCs are granted **27% reservation** in government jobs and educational institutes. There are 2,633 Other Backward Castes in the Central List and earlier this year the **Rohini Commission** proposed to divide them into four subcategories numbered 1, 2, 3 and 4 and split the 27% into 2, 6, 9 and 10%, respectively.

**Source: Indian Express**

## Important News: Defense

### Maritime Partnership Exercise between Indian Navy and the Philippine Navy

#### Why in News

Two ships of the **Indian Navy**, namely **INS Ranvijay** and **INS Kora** carried out a Maritime Partnership Exercise with **BRP Antonio Luna of the Philippine Navy** on 23 Aug 2021 in the **West Philippine Sea**.

#### Key Points

India and The Philippines share a very robust defence and security partnership built over several years and spanning across all domains.

Both navies remain committed to further strengthening bilateral collaboration in the maritime domain towards a collective aim of ensuring a stable, peaceful and prosperous Indo-Pacific.

**Source: PIB**

**Source: PIB**

**Exercise 'Zair-Al-Bahr' conducted between Indian Navy and Qatar Navy**

**Why in News**

The 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of **bilateral maritime exercise 'Zair-Al-Bahr'** between the **Indian Navy** and **Qatar Emiri Naval Force (QENF)** was conducted in August 2021 in the **Persian Gulf**.

**Key Points**

The present edition of the exercise included a three day harbour phase followed by a two day sea phase.

The sea phase comprised of tactical maritime exercises involving Surface Action, Anti-Piracy exercises, Air Defence, Maritime surveillance and Boarding operations.

In the sea phase of the exercise, Indian Navy Stealth Frigate INS Trikanth, QENF Missile Boats of Barzan and Damsah class, Fast-Attack Crafts of MRTP 34 class and Rafale Fighter Aircraft participated.

The bilateral maritime exercise between two navies would further strengthen the maritime exchanges between the two countries and enhance maritime security in the region

**Source: [indiannavy.nic.in](http://indiannavy.nic.in)**

**Defence India Startup Challenge (DISC) 5.0**

**Why in News**

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh launched **Defence India Startup Challenge (DISC) 5.0**.

It was launched under **Innovations for Defence Excellence - Defence Innovation Organisation (iDEX-DIO)**.

**Key Points**

Thirty five Problem Statements – 13 from the Services and 22 from Defence Public Sector Undertakings (DPSUs) – were unveiled under DISC 5.0.

These are in areas such as Situational awareness, Augmented Reality, Artificial Intelligence, Aircraft-trainer, Non-lethal devices, 5G network, Under-water domain awareness, Drone SWARMS and Data Capturing.

**About Defence India Startup Challenge (DISC):**

Defence India Startup Challenge has been launched by the Ministry of Defence in partnership with Atal Innovation Mission, aimed at supporting Startups/MSMEs/Innovators to create prototypes and/or commercialize products/solutions in the area of National Defence and Security.

**Background:**

In the previous four editions of DISC, more than 80 startups, MSMEs and individual innovators have joined as winners in over 40 technological areas.

The launch of DISC 5.0 by iDEX-DIO comes three years after the launch of DISC 1.0.

**About iDEX:**

The iDEX initiative was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in April 2018 to achieve self-reliance and foster innovation & technology development in defence and aerospace sectors.

**Note:** iDEX4fauji is a similar initiative that gives an opportunity to the service personnel to showcase their talent in these fields.

**Indigenisation of Defence Sector**

Indigenisation is the capability of developing and producing defence equipment within the country.

**Initiatives:**

- First Negative Indigenisation
- Positive Indigenisation List
- New FDI Policy in Defence Sector
- Defence Industrial Corridors
- Defence Acquisition Procedure 2020

**Source: PIB**

**Indian Navy undertakes bilateral maritime exercise with Vietnam People's Navy**

**Why in News**

India and Vietnam Navies have carried out bilateral maritime exercise in the **South China Sea**.

India's INS Ranvijay and INS Kora undertook bilateral maritime exercise with Vietnam People's Navy frigate VPNS Ly Thai To on 18 Aug 21.

### **Key Points**

The bilateral interaction aims to consolidate the strong bond shared by the two navies and would be another step towards strengthening India-Vietnam defence relations.

The sea phase included surface warfare exercises, weapon firing drills and helicopter operations.

**Source: PIB**

## **Defence Testing Infrastructure Scheme**

### **Why in News**

The **Ministry of Defence** has launched **Defence Testing Infrastructure Scheme (DTIS)** with an outlay of Rs 400 crore for creating state-of-the-art testing infrastructure in partnership with the private industry.

In this regard, the Department of Defence Production/Directorate General of Quality Assurance (DDP/DGQA) has published 8 Expression of Interest (EOIs) catering to setting up of defence test facilities in selected domains.

### **Key Points**

#### **About Defence Testing Infrastructure Scheme (DTIS):**

The scheme was announced by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on May 08, 2020.

The scheme would run for the duration of five years and envisages setting up of 6-8 Greenfield Defence Testing Infrastructure facilities that are required for defence and aerospace related production.

#### **Finance:**

The projects under the scheme will be provided with up to 75 percent Government funding in the form of 'Grant-in-Aid'.

The remaining 25 percent of the project cost will have to be borne by the **Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV)** constituents of which will be the Indian private entities and state governments.

The SPVs under the Scheme will be registered under Companies Act 2013.

#### **Background:**

Under Make in India, India has accorded high priority to development of the manufacturing base of Defence and

Aerospace sectors in the country so as to reduce dependence on imports.

Towards this, the establishment of **Defence Industrial Corridors (DICs)** in **Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu** was announced.

**Other initiatives:** Revised Make-II procedures, Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX) and Defence Investors Cell

**Source: PIB**

## **Exercise Konkan 2021**

### **Why in News**

A Naval Exercise “Exercise Konkan 2021” held between **the Indian Navy and the Royal Navy (Britain) in Portsmouth, United Kingdom.**

### **Key Points**

INS Tabar from India and HMS Westminster from Britain participated in the bilateral Exercise Konkan 2021.

It aims to enhance interoperability, synergy and cooperation between both the Navies.

**Exercise Konkan** is held annually since 2004 between the Indian Navy and the Royal Navy of Britain.

The 2019 edition was held on the English Channel, United Kingdom.

### **Other Exercise with UK:**

Ajeya Warrior (Joint Military Exercises)

Indradhanush (Joint Air Force Exercises)

**Source: PIB**

## **Indian Navy takes part in US Navy-led SEACAT 2021 exercise in Singapore**

### **Why in News**

The **Indian Navy** demonstrated its maritime maneuvers in U.S. Navy-led 20<sup>th</sup> **Southeast Asia Cooperation and Training (SEACAT) military exercise** in Singapore.

The military exercise also included navies of 20 other partner nations as well.

### **Key Points**

The maritime exercise aimed to foster enhanced cooperation between Southeast Asian countries by incorporating tactics, standardized training, and procedures to combat contingencies or illegal activities in the maritime domain.

In total, the exercise witnessed close to 400 personnel and 10 ships, including the U.S. Navy's littoral combat ship Tulsa.

**Note:** SEACAT began in 2002 as "Southeast Asia Cooperation Against Terrorism".

**Source: AIR**

## **India and Saudi Arabia begin their first naval exercise 'Al-Mohed Al-Hindi 2021'**

### **Why in News**

The Maiden Naval Exercise 'Al-Mohed Al-Hindi 2021' between the Indian Navy and the Royal Saudi Naval Forces commenced.

The harbour phase of this exercise began on August 09, 2021 while the sea-based drills began from August 11, 2021.

### **Key Points**

Indian Navy's guided-missile destroyer INS Kochi reached at the Jubail port, Saudi Arabia for this exercise.

India and Saudi Arabia are conducting their first-ever naval exercise, in reflection of their growing defence and military cooperation.

The exercise comprises a number of shore and sea-based drills between the two navies.

**Source: The Hindu**

## **ITBP inducts women officers in combat for first time**

### **Why in News**

For the first time, the **Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP)** inducted women officers in combat.

Two women, Prakriti and Diksha, joined the ITBP as combatised officers after completing their training at the academy in Mussoorie.

### **Key Points**

The ITBP began recruiting women combat officers in its cadre from 2016 through a national-level examination conducted by the Union Public Service Commission.

### **About Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP):**

The Indo-Tibetan Border Police is India's primary border patrol organization for its border with China's Tibet Autonomous Region.

It is one of the Central Armed Police Forces of India, raised on 24 October 1962, under the CRPF Act, in the wake of the Sino-Indian War of 1962.

**Director General:** S S Deswal

**Other Central Armed Police Forces:**

Assam Rifles (AR)

Border Security Force (BSF)

Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF)

Central Industrial Security Force (CISF)

National Security Guard (NSG)

Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB)

**Source: The Hindu**

## **Indian Navy - United Arab Emirates Navy Bilateral Exercise "Zayed Talwar 2021"**

### **Why in News**

Indian Navy undertook bilateral exercise 'Zayed Talwar 2021' with UAE Navy on 07 August 2021 off the coast of Abu Dhabi.

### **Key Points**

INS Kochi, with two integral Sea King MK 42B helicopters, deployed in the Persian Gulf, participated in the exercise.

UAE participated with UAES AL - Dhafra, a Baynunah class guided missile corvette and one AS - 565B Panther helicopter.

### **Note:**

The exercise also came a week after Chief of Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal RKS Bhadauria's visit to the UAE.

In December 2020, General MM Naravane visited the UAE and Saudi Arabia in a first-ever visit by the head of the Indian Army to the two important Gulf countries.

**Source: AIR**

## **Commencement of sea trials of Indigenous Aircraft Carrier (IAC) 'Vikrant'**

### **Why in News**

**India's first Indigenous Aircraft Carrier (IAC) 'Vikrant'**, the largest and most complex warship built in the country, began its sea trials.

INS Vikrant would be commissioned in 2022.

A recent approval accorded by the Defence Acquisition Council for Request for Proposal (RFP) of **Project 75-I** under the

Strategic Partnership model, which will give further fillip to indigenous development of manufacturing technologies.

### Key Points

**Indigenous Aircraft Carrier 'Vikrant'** designed by Indian Navy's **Directorate of Naval Design (DND)** is being built at **Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL)**, a Public Sector Shipyard under Ministry of Shipping (MoS).

IAC is a leading example of the nation's quest for "Atma Nirbhar Bharat" with **more than 76% indigenous content.**

The ship has been designed with a very high degree of automation for machinery operation, ship navigation and survivability, 'Vikrant' has a top speed of around 28 knots and cruising speed of 18 knots with an endurance of about 7,500 nautical miles.

### Note:

The successful completion of the 40,000 tonne aircraft carrier puts India in the elite group of 4 nations- the US, Russia, France and the UK -in the world capable of designing and constructing aircraft carriers.

At present, India has only one aircraft carrier, the Russian-origin INS Vikramaditya.

**Source: PIB**

## 36th India – Indonesia coordinated patrol (CORPAT)

### Why in News

The 36<sup>th</sup> edition of **Coordinated Patrol (CORPAT)** was held between **Indian Navy and Indonesian Navy** from 30 to 31 July 2021.

### Key Points

#### About Naval Exercise:

Indian Naval Ship (INS) Saryu, an indigenously built Offshore Patrol Vessel participated in CORPAT with Indonesian Naval Ship KRI Bung Tomo from 30 to 31 July 2021 across the Indo Pacific.

There was the participation of Maritime Patrol Aircraft from both nations.

### Background:

India and Indonesia have been carrying out Coordinated Patrols along the **International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL)** twice a year since 2002.

**Aim:**

CORPATs help build understanding and interoperability between navies, and facilitate institution of measures to prevent and suppress Illegal Unreported Unregulated (IUU) fishing, drug trafficking, maritime terrorism, armed robbery and piracy.

**Note:** As part of Government of India's vision of **SAGAR (Security And Growth for All in the Region)**, Indian Navy has been proactively engaging with countries in the Indian Ocean Region to enhance maritime security in the region.

**Other Exercise with Indonesia:**

GARUDA SHAKTI (Military Exercise)

SAMUDRA SHAKTI (Maritime Exercise)

**Source: PIB**

**'INDRA NAVY – 21'**

**Why in News**

The **12th edition of exercise INDRA NAVY**, a biennial bilateral maritime exercise between **Indian Navy and Russian Navy** was held in the **Baltic Sea** from 28 to 29 July 2021.

**Key Points**

INDRA NAVY exercise was undertaken as part of the visit of INS Tabar to St Petersburg, Russia to participate in the 325th Navy Day celebrations of the Russian Navy.

The Indian Navy was represented by the stealth Frigate INS Tabar whilst the Russian Federation Navy was represented by Corvettes RFS Zelyony Dol and RFS Odintsovo of the Baltic Fleet.

The exercise included various facets of fleet operations such as anti-air firings, underway replenishment drills, helicopter ops, boarding drills and seamanship evolutions.

**Background:**

Initiated in 2003, Ex INDRA NAVY epitomises the long-term strategic relationship between the two navies.

**Note:** The 12th Edition of **Indo-Russia joint military Exercise INDRA-2021** is being conducted at Volgograd, Russia from 01 to 13 August 2021.

**Source: PIB**

**Awards and Honours**

## Congressional Gold Medal

### Why in News

Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney from New York has reintroduced legislation in the US House of Representatives to posthumously award the **Congressional Gold Medal** to **Mahatma Gandhi** for his contributions made through his methods of non-violence.

If given the award, **Gandhi would become the first Indian to receive the Congressional Gold Medal.**

### Key Points

#### About Congressional Gold Medal:

It is the **highest civilian award in the United States.**

The first recipients of the medal were participants of the American Revolution, the War of 1812 and the Mexican War.

**Source: Indian Express**

## Rajiv Gandhi Award for excellence in IT

### Why in News

**The government of Maharashtra** announced the **Rajiv Gandhi Award for Excellence in Information Technology (IT).**

### Key Points

The award will be given to institutions and companies for outstanding performance in the information technology sector, the birth anniversary of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi.

This year, the award will be announced on August 20 and the award will be given before October 30.

From next year, the distribution of the award will be given on **August 20.**

**Maharashtra IT Corporation Limited (MAHA-IT)**, the state government enterprise, has been appointed the nodal agency to propose the award.

**Note:** Recently the central government has renamed the **Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award as the Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award.**

**Source: Indian Express**

## Skytrax World Airport Awards 2021

### Why in News

4 Indian airports — Delhi, Hyderabad, Mumbai and Bengaluru — found a place in the world's 100 best airports by **UK-based airline and airport review consultancy Skytrax.**

**Doha Hamad International Airport** has been ranked at 1st.  
**Key Points**

Rank	Airport
1	Doha Hamad
2	Tokyo Haneda
3	Singapore Changi
45	Delhi
64	Hyderabad
65	Mumbai
71	Bengaluru

**Delhi Airport (Indira Gandhi International Airport, Delhi)** has retained its title as the Best Airport in India for the past three years.

The Delhi airport increased its overall ranking, going from 50th place in 2020 to 45th place in the 'World's Top 50 Airports' league for 2021.

**The Skytrax World Airport Awards** are considered the quality benchmark for airport service providers across the globe. Under the survey, around 550 airports across the world are judged.

**Source: TOI**

## **Prof. C.R. Rao Centenary Gold Medal award winners announced\** **Why in News**

Renowned economist Jagdish Bhagwati and C Rangarajan have been conferred with the inaugural Prof C. R. Rao Centenary Gold Medal.

### **Key Points**

Bhagwati is professor of economics, law and international relations at Columbia University while C Rangarajan is the former chairman of the Economic Advisory Council of the Prime Minister and former governor of the Reserve Bank of India.

### **About Prof. C.R. Rao Centenary Gold Medal award:**

The Indian Econometric Society Trust has instituted the award to commemorate the contributions of its professor CR Rao.

The award will be presented once in two years to an Indian or Indian-origin scholar for her or his lifetime contributions to the fields of theoretical and applied aspects of quantitative economics, and official statistics.

**C R Rao** is an Indian-American mathematician and statistician. He received Padma Vibhushan (2001) by the Government of India.

**Source: ET**

## **SII chairman Cyrus Poonawalla named recipient of Lokmanya Tilak National Award 2021**

### **Why in News**

**Cyrus Poonawalla**, who is the founder-chairperson of the Pune-based **Serum Institute of India (SII)**, has been named as a recipient of the prestigious Lokmanya Tilak National Award for 2021.

### **Key Points**

Cyrus Poonawalla will be honoured for his work during the COVID-19 pandemic, wherein he helped in saving many lives by manufacturing the Covishield vaccine.

### **About Award:**

The award is annually given on August 1, the death anniversary of Lokmanya Tilak, but due to the COVID-19 situation, the date has been changed this year.

The award ceremony will take place on August 13 and the award comprises cash prize of Rs one lakh and a memento.

The award was started in 1983 and so far, several prominent personalities have been honoured with it.

Some of the recipients include former prime ministers Indira Gandhi, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Dr Manmohan Singh, former president Pranab Mukherjee and Infosys founder N R Narayana Murthy.

**Source: Indian Express**

## **Important Days**

**August 12, International Youth Day**

**Why in News**

Every year, International Youth Day is observed on August 12 to focus on youth issues and bring them to the attention of the international community.

**Key Points:**

The theme for 2021 is “**Transforming Food Systems: Youth Innovation for Human and Planetary Health**”.

In 1999, the United Nations decided to commemorate International Youth Day every year on August 12.

It was based on a recommendation made by the **World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth** in Lisbon.

**Note: National Youth Day**, also known as Vivekananda Jayanti, is celebrated on 12 January, being the birthday of Swami Vivekananda.

**Source: un.org**

**August 1, Muslim Women’s Rights Day**

**Why in News**

The **Union Ministry of Minority Affairs** announced that Muslim Women's Rights Day is observed across the nation on August 1 to celebrate the enactment of the law against **triple talaq**.

**Key Points**

The central government enacted the law on August 1, 2019, that has made the practice of instant triple talaq a criminal offence. The legislation, which outlaws instant triple talaq, sets forth three years jail for violations and also make the violator liable to pay a fine.

**History:**

The Supreme Court in August 2017 declared the practice of triple talaq or a form of divorce based on the husband pronouncing divorce thrice in quick succession as 'unconstitutional'.

In December 2017, citing the Supreme Court judgment and cases of triple talaq in India, the government introduced the **Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Bill** in Parliament.

The bill was passed by the Lok Sabha but was stalled by the opposition in the Rajya Sabha.

The bill was reintroduced and passed by both the Houses of Parliament in July 2019. Consequently, the bill received assent from President Ram Nath Kovind.

**Note: Egypt was the first country** to ban triple talaq back in 1929 followed by Pakistan, Sudan (1956), Malaysia (1969), Bangladesh

(1972), Iraq (1959), Syria (1953). UAE, Morocco, Cyprus, Iran, Jordan, Brunei, Algeria, Qatar had banned it several years ago.

**Source: HT**

## Ranks and Indices

### India emerges as second in Global Manufacturing Risk Index 2021: Cushman & Wakefield Report

#### Why in News

According to **Cushman & Wakefield's Global Manufacturing Risk Index 2021, India** has emerged as a global manufacturing hub and effectively surpassed the United States to become the **world's second most desired manufacturing destination.**

**China** remains at **number one position.**

The **US** is in **third position.**

#### Key Points:

##### About Global Manufacturing Risk Index:

Cushman & Wakefield's Global Manufacturing Risk Index 2021 assesses the most advantageous locations for global manufacturing among 47 countries in Europe, the Americas and Asia Pacific.

##### Parameters:

The rankings are determined based on 4 key parameters, including the country's capability to restart manufacturing, business environment (availability of talent/labour, access to markets), operating costs, and the risks (political, economic and environmental).

##### Factors Responsible for Improvement in India's Ranking:

In regards to manufacturing, often compared to its Asian rival, India has a huge population, which means a younger workforce with innovative capabilities that has the potential to fuel the country's manufacturing sector.

The government of India is actively bringing reforms to boost the Indian economy: Accounting as the lowest in Southeast Asia, Reduced corporate tax from 30% to 25%, Rules regarding land acquisition have been subsequently relaxed over the years, Income tax, GST, and other custom reliefs provided for favorable business conditions.

##### Recent Initiatives to Improve Manufacturing Sector in India:

Make in India

Skill India  
 National Infrastructure Pipeline  
 Credit Guarantee Scheme for Micro and Small Enterprises  
 A Scheme for Promoting Innovation, Rural Industry & Entrepreneurship (ASPIRE)  
 Industrial corridors  
 Prime Minister's Employment Generation programme

**Source: Indian Express**

## 12 Indian companies make it to 2021 Hurun Global 500 list; Wipro, HCL, Asian Paints new entrants

### Why in News

12 Indian companies made it to the list of the top-500 valued companies this year against 11 in the year-ago period, the 2021 Hurun Global 500 list shows.

### Key Points

Rank	Company Name
1	Apple
2	Microsoft
3	Amazon
57	Reliance Industries (India)

**Mukesh Ambani-led Reliance Industries Ltd** topped the list of Indian companies with a market capitalization of \$188 billion.

Reliance Industries Ltd, however, dropped two places to the **57th spot**, although its valuation rose by 11% during the period.

There were 3 new entrants from the country in the list, including **Wipro, HCL Technologies and Asian Paints.**

**Apple** is the **most valuable company** in the world.

India is 9<sup>th</sup> by the number of companies featured on the list, which is led by the US.

### About Hurun Global 500:

The **Hurun Research Institute** in association with Jiaying City in East China released the 2021 Hurun Global 500, a list of the 500 most valuable non-state-controlled companies in the world, ranked according to their value.

**Source: Indian Express**

## Quality of Life for Elderly Index

### Why in News

Dr Bibek Debroy, Chairman, **Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM)** released the Quality of Life for Elderly Index.

The Index has been created by the Institute for Competitiveness.

### **Key Points**

The report identifies the regional patterns of ageing across Indian States and assesses the overall ageing situation in India.

The index also promotes healthy competition among States through fair rankings and highlights the pillars and indicators they can improve.

### **Pillars & Sub-Pillars of the Index:**

**Four pillars:** Financial Well-being, Social Well-being, Health System and Income Security

**Eight sub-pillars:** Economic Empowerment, Educational Attainment & Employment, Social Status, Physical Security, Basic Health, Psychological Well being, Social Security and Enabling Environment

### **Key Highlights:**

The Health System pillar observes the highest national average, 66.97 at an all-India level, followed by 62.34 in Social Well-being.

Financial Well-being observes a score of 44.7, which is lowered by the low performance of 21 States across the Education Attainment & Employment pillar, which showcases scope for improvement

States have performed particularly worse in the Income Security pillar because over half of the States have a score below the national average, i.e., 33.03 in Income Security, which is the lowest across all pillars.

### **Major Findings:**

**Rajasthan** and **Himachal Pradesh** are top-scoring regions in Aged and Relatively Aged States, respectively.

**Chandigarh** and **Mizoram** are top-scoring regions in Union Territory and North-East States category.

The **Aged States** refer to States with an elderly population of more than 5 million, whereas **Relatively Aged States** refer to States with an Elderly population of less than 5 million.

### **India's Initiatives:**

Integrated Programme for Older Persons

Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana

SAGE (Seniorcare Aging Growth Engine)  
 Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme  
 Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007  
 The Pradhan Mantri Vaya Vandana Yojana  
 Vayoshreshtha Samman

**Source: PIB**

## India ranked 122nd in Global Youth Development Index 2020 Why in News

**India** is ranked 122nd in the Global Youth Development Index 2020, which measures the status of young people in 181 countries around the world.

**Singapore** got first rank.

The **Commonwealth Secretariat, London** released its triennial rankings of youth development of 181 countries, with 156 of them recording at least slight improvements in their scores.

### Key Points

Rank	Countries
1	Singapore
2	Slovenia
3	Norway
122	India

**Chad (181)**, the Central African Republic, South Sudan, Afghanistan and Niger finished at the bottom, respectively.

The 2020 Global Youth Development Index reveals that the conditions of young people have improved around the world by 3.1 percent between 2010 and 2018.

**Top five risers:** The triennial rankings of youth development found **India** among the top five risers on the index between 2010 and 2018, alongside **Afghanistan, Russia, Ethiopia and Burkina Faso** advancing their score on average by 15.74 percent across areas such as education and employment.

On the other hand, **Syria, Ukraine, Libya, Jordan and Lebanon** showed the **greatest decline** in youth development between 2010 and 2018.

The **index ranks countries between 0.00 (lowest) and 1.00 (highest)**, according to the developments in youth education, employment, health, equality and inclusion, peace and security, and political and civic participation.

It looks at **27 indicators, including literacy and voting**, to showcase the state of the world's 1.8 billion people between the ages of 15 and 29.

**Source: ET**

## **Department of Public Enterprises releases Public Enterprises Survey 2019-20**

### **Why in News**

The **Department of Public Enterprises (DPE), Ministry of Finance**, Government of India released the **Public Enterprises (PE) Survey 2019-20** on the performance of **Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs)**.

The Public Enterprises (PE) Survey 2019-20 is the 60<sup>th</sup> in the series.

### **Key Points**

Public Enterprises (PE) Survey which is a 100% enumeration of the CPSE universe, captures essential statistical data for all CPSEs on various financial and physical parameters.

PE Survey divides CPSEs into **five sectors** namely Agriculture, Mining & Exploration, Manufacturing, Processing & Generation, Services, and Enterprises Under Construction and further into 21 cognate groups.

The Survey covers those CPSE's wherein Government of India holds more than 50% equity.

### **About Department of Public Enterprises:**

It is the nodal department for all the Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs) and formulates policy pertaining to CPSEs. CPSEs are classified as Maharatna, Navratna and Miniratna.

According to latest data, there are **10 Maharatna, 14 Navratna and 74 Miniratna**.

**Note:** Recently, the central government has merged the Department of Public Enterprises (DPE) with the finance ministry from the ministry of heavy industries.

### **The Main Highlights of the performance of CPSEs, during 2019-20:**

**Gross Revenue from Operations** of 256 operating CPSEs during the Financial Year 2019-20 was Rs 24,61,712 crore.

**Profit** of 171 profit-making CPSEs stood at Rs 1,38,112 crore in Financial Year 2019-20.

**Loss** of 84 loss making CPSEs was Rs 44,817 crore in Financial Year 2019-20.

**Source: PIB**

## Indore becomes India's first "Water Plus" city

### Why in News

**Indore, Madhya Pradesh**, the country's cleanest city, has been declared the first **SBM "Water Plus" certified city of India under the Swachh Survekshan 2021.**

### Key Points

A **Water Plus city certificate** is provided to a city for maintaining cleanliness in rivers and drains under its administration.

**About Swachh Survekshan:** It was introduced by the **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs** in 2016 as a competitive framework to encourage cities to improve the status of urban sanitation while encouraging large scale citizen participation.

It is an annual survey of cleanliness and sanitation in cities and towns across India launched as part of the **Swachh Bharat Mission.**

### Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM):

It is a country-wide campaign initiated by the Government of India in 2014 to eliminate **open defecation** and improve **solid waste management.**

Phase 1 of the SBM lasted till October 2019. Phase 2 is being implemented between 2020-21 and 2024-25.

The mission was split into two: rural and urban.

**Source: TOI**

## 2021 Fortune Global 500

**7 Indian companies** have found a place in the **2021 Fortune Global 500 list.**

**Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Industries Ltd** is the highest-ranked Indian company on the list in terms of revenue. It is placed at 155th spot globally.

**Walmart** claimed the top spot for the 8<sup>th</sup> consecutive year, and for the 16th time since 1995.

Rank	Companies
1	Walmart (US)
2	State Grid (China)
3	Amazon (US)

155	Reliance Industries (India)
205	State Bank of India (India)
212	Indian Oil Corporation (India)
243	Oil & Natural Gas Corporation (India)
348	Rajesh Exports (India)
357	Tata Motors (India)
394	Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd. (India)

**Note:**

**Fortune Global 500 companies** generated revenues totaling more than one-third of the world's GDP.

The **Fortune Global 500**, also known as Global 500, is an annual ranking of the top 500 corporations worldwide as measured by revenue. The list is compiled and published annually by **Fortune magazine**.

**Source: Business Standard**

## Books and Authors

**K J Alphons's book 'Accelerating India: 7 Years of Modi Government'**  
**Former Union Minister, K J Alphons** has presented his book '**Accelerating India: 7 Years of Modi Government**' to the **Prime Minister Narendra Modi**.

The Prime Minister said that he has made a commendable effort to encapsulate facets of India's reform journey in his work, 'Accelerating India.'

**Note:**

Recently, Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu released this book at Upa-Rashtrapati Nivas.

**K J Alphons** was the **editor of this book**. 28 eminent authors contributed 25 essays in this book on various sectors of Indian governance.

**Source: PIB**

## Reports

**IPCC 6th Assessment Report - The Physical Science Basis**  
**Why in News**

The **Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)** released the first of three installments of the **Sixth Assessment Report (AR6)** titled "**Climate Change 2021: the Physical Science Basis**".

The first installment is from **Working Group I** and it discusses the physical science of climate change.

Reports from Working Groups II (Impacts, adaptation, and vulnerability) and III (Mitigation of climate change) will follow in 2022.

The report specifically warns that the 1.5-degree-Celsius threshold is likely to be exceeded before 2040.

### **Key Points**

The report provides the latest assessment of scientific knowledge about the warming of the planet and projections for future warming and assesses its impacts on the climate system.

The average surface temperature of the Earth will cross 1.5 °C over pre-industrial levels in the next 20 years (By 2040) and 2°C by the middle of the century without sharp reduction of emissions.

### **Carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) Concentrations:**

They are the highest in at least two million years. Humans have emitted 2,400 billion tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> since the late 1800s.

### **Impact of Global Warming:**

Sea-level rise has tripled compared with 1901-1971.

Coastal areas will see continued sea-level rise throughout the 21st century, resulting in coastal erosion and more frequent and severe flooding in low-lying areas.

Every additional 0.5 °C of warming will increase hot extremes, extreme precipitation and drought.

Global Warming will have a serious impact on mountain ranges across the world, including the Himalayas.

### **Indian Sub-continent Specific Findings:**

Heat waves and humid heat stress will be more intense and frequent during the 21st century over South Asia.

Changes in monsoon precipitation are also expected, with both annual and summer monsoon precipitation projected to increase.

The sea surface temperature over Indian Ocean is likely to increase by 1 to 2 °C when there is 1.5°C to 2°C global warming.

### **About Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC):**

It is an intergovernmental body of the United Nations.

It was established in 1988 by the **World Meteorological Organization (WMO)** and the **United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)**, and was later endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly.

#### **Assessment reports**

The IPCC has published 5 comprehensive assessment reports reviewing the latest climate science.

The IPCC published its First Assessment Report in 1990 and Fifth Assessment Report in 2014.

**Source: Indian Express**

## **New Appointments**

### **La Ganesan appointed as new Governor of Manipur**

President Ram Nath Kovind appointed Senior BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party) leader La Ganesan as the new Governor of Manipur.

Ganesan became the 17<sup>th</sup> Governor of the state.

The post of the governor had fallen vacant after the retirement of Najma Heptulla earlier August 2021.

#### **Facts about Manipur:**

**Chief Minister:** N. Biren Singh

**Capital:** Imphal

**Source: The Hindu**

### **Dhriti Banerjee becomes 1st woman director in 100 years of Zoological Survey of India history**

#### **Why in News**

The appointments committee of the Cabinet approved the proposal for appointment of Dr Dhriti Banerjee, Scientist E, Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) as director.

She has become the first woman to be appointed as director of the 105-year-old ZSI.

#### **Key Points**

She has been co-ordinator of ZSI's Digital Sequence Information Project since 2012.

#### **About Zoological Survey of India (ZSI):**

ZSI was founded on 1 July 1916. It works under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India.

It is headquartered in Kolkata, West Bengal.

**Source: TOI**

## **Chairperson of the NCW, Rekha Sharma gets nominated for another term of 3 years**

### **Why in News**

In pursuance of Section 3 of the **National Commission for Women Act, 1990 (20 of 1990)**, Central Government hereby nominated Smt. Rekha Sharma, as Chairperson of the **National Commission for Women (NCW)**, for another term of 3 years w.e.f. 07.08.2021.

### **Key Points**

Rekha Sharma assumed the charge of NCW chairperson on August 7, 2018.

She has been associated with the Commission as a member since August, 2015 and held the additional charge as the chairperson from September 29, 2017 before becoming its regular chief.

### **About National Commission for Women (NCW):**

It is the statutory body of the Government of India, generally concerned with advising the government on all policy matters affecting women.

It was established on 31 January 1992 under the provisions of the Indian Constitution, as defined in the 1990 National Commission for Women Act.

**Source: PIB**

## **A report on “Hunger Hotspots”: FAO-WEP**

### **Why in News**

Recently, the **Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)** and **World Food Program (WEP)** released a report on **“Hunger Hotspots”** between **August and November 2021**.

The **2021 Global Food Crises Report** released in May 2021 had already warned of acute food insecurity.

### **Key Points**

#### **Hunger Hotspots:**

The **five countries (Ethiopia, Madagascar, South Sudan, northern Nigeria and Yemen)** are among **23 countries** where

acute food insecurity will worsen from August through November, 2021.

Madagascar and Ethiopia are the world's newest top hunger hotspots.

**Food insecurity causing factors:**

**Pandemic shocks:**

In 2020, almost all low- and middle-income countries were affected by the pandemic-induced economic downturns.

**Violence:**

Population displacement, abandonment of agricultural land, loss of life and assets, disruption of trade and cropping and loss of access to markets caused by conflicts can worsen food insecurity.

Violence is predicted to intensify in Afghanistan, Central Sahel, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia etc.

Violence is also likely to disrupt access to humanitarian assistance.

**Natural hazards:**

Extreme weather conditions and climate variability are likely to affect several parts of the world during the outlook period.

**Poor humanitarian access:**

Humanitarian access is limited in various ways, including administrative / bureaucratic impediments, movement restrictions, security constraints and physical constraints related to the environment.

Countries currently facing the most significant obstacles, preventing aid from reaching those who need it most are Afghanistan, Ethiopia, the Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali etc.

**Suggestions:**

To protect rural livelihoods and increase agricultural production.

Short-term protective interventions be implemented before new humanitarian needs materialise and immediate actions be taken for addressing existing humanitarian requirements.

**India's Step in Ensuring Food Security:**

National Food Security Mission

Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi

The National Food Security Act, 2013

PM Garib Kalyan Ann Yojana

One Nation One Ration Card

### **About Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO):**

It is a specific agency of the United Nations that leads international efforts to defeat hunger and improve food security and nutrition.

**Formation:** 16 October 1945

**Headquarters:** Rome, Italy

### **About World Food Program (WFP):**

WFP is the food-assistance branch of the United Nations.

**Formation:** 19 December 1961

**Headquarters:** Rome, Italy

The World Food Programme was awarded the **Nobel Peace Prize in 2020.**

**Source: DTE**

### **Deepak Das takes charge as new Controller General of Accounts**

#### **Why in News**

Deepak Das took charge as the new **Controller General of Accounts (CGA).**

Mr. Das is the 25<sup>th</sup> officer to hold the position of CGA.

#### **Key Points**

Deepak Das is appointed by the Government of India as the Controller General of Accounts, Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance, with effect from August 1, 2021.

He is a 1986-batch **Indian Civil Accounts Service officer.**

Prior to assuming charge of CGA, he served as the Principal Chief Controller of Accounts in the Central Board of Direct Taxes.

**Source: PIB**

## **Obituaries**

### **Film Producer Pradeep Guha passes away**

Film Producer and well-known media personality Pradeep Guha passed away.

Pradeep Guha had produced Hrithik Roshan and Karisma Kapoor-starrer "Fiza" as well as 2008 film "Phir Kabhi".

He worked with the Times Group for almost 30 years and served as the president in the company. He also worked as Zee Entertainment's CEO.

**Source: Indian Express**

### **Legendary athletics coach O.M. Nambiar passes away**

**O.M. Nambiar**, the man who transformed a village girl **P.T. Usha** into Asia's golden girl, passed away.

He was one of the three recipients of the first Dronacharya Award in 1985.

Nambiar was honoured with the Padma Shri Award in 2021.

**Source: The Hindu**

### **Former Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Kalyan Singh passes away**

Former Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister and Rajasthan Governor Kalyan Singh passed away at 89.

Kalyan Singh, a BJP leader, was the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh when the Babri mosque demolition in Ayodhya took place in 1992.

**Source: TOI**

### **August 19, World Humanitarian Day**

#### **Why in News**

August 19 is observed as World Humanitarian Day (WHD) every year in honour of all humanitarians.

On this day, people also remember those who lost their lives working for humanitarian causes.

#### **Key Points**

WHD is a campaign by the **United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs** and humanitarian partners.

According to the United Nations official website, the **theme** for this year is, '**theHumanRace**',

#### **History:**

On 19 August 2003, a bomb attack on the Canal Hotel in Baghdad, Iraq, killed 22 humanitarian aid workers, including the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq, Sergio Vieira de Mello.

Five years later, the General Assembly adopted a resolution designating 19 August as World Humanitarian Day.

**Source: un.org**

### **Maki Kaji, creator of puzzle Sudoku passes away**

Japan's Maki Kaji, the creator of puzzle Sudoku passed away.

He was known as the "Godfather of Sudoku".

Kaji was chief executive at his puzzle company, Nikoli Co. Ltd.

**Source: Indian Express**

### **Veteran Actor Anupam Shyam passes away**

Veteran actor Anupam Shyam passed away at 63 due to multiple organ failure.

Anupam Shyam was popular for his role of Thakur Sajjan Singh in Mann Kee Awaaz Pratigya.

He also acted in films like Dil Se, Satya, Hazaaron Khwaishein Aisi, Zakhm, Dushman, and Slumdog Millionaire.

**Source: Indian Express**

### **Padma Shri awardee Dogri writer Padma Sachdev passes away**

Noted author and Padma Shri awardee **Padma Sachdev**, the **first modern woman poet of Dogri language**, passed away.

She authored many books in Dogri and Hindi, and her poetry collections, including 'Meri Kavita Mere Geet', won her the **Sahitya Akademi Award** in 1971.

She received the **Padma Shri** award in 2001 and was awarded the **Kabir Samman** for poetry for 2007-08 by the Madhya Pradesh government.

**Source: Indian Express**

## **Sports**

### **Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award renamed after Major Dhyan Chand** **Why in News**

The **Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award**, the highest sporting honour of India, has been renamed **Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award**.

The renaming recognises the ultimate hockey hero and legend of the sport, Dhyan Chand.

#### **Key Points**

#### **About Khel Ratna Award:**

The Khel Ratna award is the highest sporting honour in the nation.

Launched in 1991-92, the award comprises a medallion, a certificate, and a cash prize of ₹ 25 lakh.

The first recipient of the Khel Ratna was chess legend Viswanathan Anand.

**About Dhyan Chand:**

Dhyan Chand, whose birthday is celebrated as National Sports Day, won 3 Olympic golds (1928, 1932 and 1936) for the country.

**List of other Awards**

**Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Trophy:**

It was instituted in the year 1956–1957.

It is given to the University for "Top Performance in the inter-university tournaments" over the period of last one year.

**Arjuna Award:**

It was instituted in 1961.

It is given to sportspersons for "consistent outstanding performance" over the period of the last four years.

**Dronacharya Award:**

Dronacharya Award instituted in the year 1985.

It is given to coaches for "producing medal winners at prestigious international events".

**Dhyan Chand Award:**

It was instituted in the year 2002.

It is given to individuals for "lifetime contribution to sports development".

**Rashtriya Khel Protsahan Puruskar:**

It was instituted in the year 2009.

It is given to organizations (both private and public) and individuals for "playing a visible role in the area of sports promotion and development" over the period of the last three years.

**Note:** Since 2004, **Tenzing Norgay National Adventure Award** is also given alongside the other sports awards.

**Source: Indian Express**

**Tokyo Olympics 2020**

**Place:** Tokyo, Japan (23 July to 8 August 2021)

**32<sup>nd</sup> Summer Olympic Mascot:** MIRAITOWA

**Olympic Laurel award 2020-** Bangladesh's Muhammad Yunus

**Note:**

Olympic debuts in 2020- karate, sport climbing, surfing, and skateboarding

The 2020 Games are the fourth Olympic Games to be held in Japan, following the Tokyo 1964 (Summer), Sapporo 1972 (Winter), and Nagano 1998 (Winter) games.

### India at Tokyo Olympic:

India's flag bearers in the Opening Ceremony- Mary Kom (Boxing) and Manpreet Singh (Hockey)

India's flag bearers in the Closing Ceremony- Bajrang Punia (Wrestling)

### Medals

Rank	Countries	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
1	US	39	41	33	113
2	China	38	32	18	88
3	Japan	27	14	17	58
48	India	1	2	4	7

### India's Performance:

**Neeraj Chopra** (Javelin Throw) won the **Gold Medal**.

He created history by becoming the second Indian to win an individual gold medal in Olympics after shooter Abhinav Bindra.

He is the first Indian in over 120 years, and the first athlete from independent India, to win an Olympic medal in a track-and-field discipline.

**Saikhom Mirabai Chanu** (Indian Weightlifter) won the **Silver Medal** in Women's 49 kg.

**Ravi Kumar Dahiya** (Wrestler) won the **Silver Medal** in men's freestyle 57 kg category.

**PV Sindhu** (Badminton) won the **Bronze Medal**.

PV Sindhu becomes the first Indian woman to win two individual medals at the Olympics. She won silver at the Rio Olympics in 2016.

**Lovlina Borgohain** (Boxer) won the **Bronze Medal** in the welterweight 69 kilogram category.

**Bajrang Punia** (Wrestler) won the **Bronze Medal** in men's freestyle 65 kg category.

**Indian Men's Hockey Team** won the **Bronze Medal**.

India men's hockey team created history to win their first Olympic medal since 1980.

### Facts about the International Olympic Committee (IOC):

**Headquarters:** Lausanne, Switzerland

**President:** Thomas Bach

**Founded:** 23 June 1894

**Source:** olympics.com

## Kolkata to host 130th edition of Durand Cup

### Why in News

The **130th Edition of Durand Cup Football Tournament** is scheduled to be held at Kolkata from 5th of September to 3rd of October this year.

It is being organised with the support of the All India Football Federation, IFA (West Bengal) and the Government of West Bengal.

### Key Points

16 teams from across the country will participate in the tournament.

### About Durand Cup:

It is the world's third oldest and Asia's oldest football tournament.

It was first held in 1888, at Dagshai, Himachal Pradesh.

**Source:** TOI

## AFI to celebrate August 7 as National Javelin Throw Day

The **Athletics Federation of India (AFI)** has announced that August 7 each year would be celebrated as National Javelin Throw Day.

The day will commemorate **Indian athlete (Javelin Throw) Neeraj Chopra's** feat of winning the country's first athletics gold medal in the **Olympic Games in Tokyo 2020**.

**Note:** The AFI started **National Open Javelin Throw Championships** in 2018 and its third edition is scheduled in October this year.

**Source:** The Hindu

## Monthly Current Affairs July 2021

मासिक सम सामयिकी जुलाई 2021

### Important News: State

#### UNESCO's 'Historic Urban Landscape' Project for Gwalior, Orchha launched

##### Why in News

In Madhya Pradesh, **Gwalior and Orchha** cities have been selected by **UNESCO** under its '**Historic Urban Landscape' Project**.

##### Key Points

**6 cities of South Asia**, including **Ajmer** and **Varanasi** in India are already involved in this project. **Gwalior and Orchha** have been included as the **7th and 8th cities**.

The cities will be jointly developed by UNESCO, Government of India and Madhya Pradesh by focusing on their historical and cultural improvement.

##### Note:

**Gwalior** was established in the 9th century and ruled by Gurjar Pratihara Rajvansh, Tomar, Baghel Kachvaha and Scindias. Gwalior is known for its temples and palaces.

**Orchha** is popular for its palaces and temples and was the capital of the Bundela kingdom in the 16th century.

##### About Historic Urban Landscape (HUL) Project:

HUL Project was started in the year 2011, for the inclusive and well-planned development of fast-growing historical cities while preserving the culture and heritage.

**Source: newsonair**

#### Karnataka's new Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai

##### Why in News

Lingayat leader Basavaraj Bommai took oath as the new Chief Minister of Karnataka.

### **Key Points**

In the ceremony at the Glass House of the Karnataka Raj Bhavan in Bengaluru, Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot administered the oath of office and secrecy to Basavaraj Bommai.

### **About Basavaraj Bommai:**

Bommai is the son of former chief minister S R Bommai. He is a two-time MLC and three-time MLA from Shiggaon in Haveri district in North Karnataka.

**Note: BS Yediyurappa** resigned as the Chief Minister of Karnataka on 26 July, 2021.

**Source: Indian Express**

## **First Central University and first 'Integrated Multi-Purpose Infrastructure Development Corporation' for Ladakh**

### **Why in News**

The Union Cabinet has approved the establishment of the **first Central University** and the **first 'Integrated Multi-Purpose Infrastructure Development Corporation'** for **Union Territory (UT) of Ladakh**.

### **Key Points**

#### **About Central University:**

It will be set up with a total outlay of Rs 750 crore and will cater to all areas of the UT of Ladakh that include Leh and Kargil.

**Note:** The Bill in this regard will be introduced for amending the Central Universities Act, 2009.

#### **About Integrated Multi-Purpose Infrastructure Development Corporation:**

The authorised share capital of the corporation will be Rs 25 crore. The establishment of the corporation will result in inclusive and integrated development of the UT of Ladakh.

**Note:** When the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act was enacted in 2019, there was a Jammu central university and a Kashmir central university, but there was no central university in Ladakh.

**Source: newsonair**

## **Rudreswara Temple at Palampet, Warangal, Telangana inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List**

## Why in News

**Rudreswara Temple**, (also known as the **Ramappa Temple**) at Palampet, Mulugu district, near Warangal in the state of Telangana has been inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage list.

It is India's **39th World Heritage Site**.

The decision was taken at the 44th session of the World Heritage Committee of UNESCO.

## Key Points

Rudreswara temple was proposed by the government as its only nomination for the UNESCO World Heritage site tag for the year 2019.

## About the Rudreswara (Ramappa) Temple

The Rudreswara temple was constructed in 1213 AD during the reign of the **Kakatiya Empire** by **Recharla Rudra**, a general of Kakatiya king Ganapati Deva.

The presiding deity here is Ramalingeswara Swamy.

The temple is also known as the Ramappa temple, after the sculptor who executed the work in the temple for 40 years.

The temple stands on a 6 feet high star-shaped platform with walls, pillars and ceilings adorned with intricate carvings that attest to the unique skill of the Kakatiyan sculptors.

## World Heritage Site in India:

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.

Presently, there are **39 World Heritage Sites located in India**. Out of these, **31 are cultural, 7 are natural, and 1 is mixed**.

India has the 6<sup>th</sup> largest number of sites in the world.

## About World Heritage Site:

A World Heritage Site is a landmark or area with legal protection by an international convention administered by the **United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)**.

The World Heritage Sites list is maintained by the international **World Heritage Program** administered by the **UNESCO World Heritage Committee**.

The programme began with the "**Convention Concerning the Protection of the World's Cultural and Natural Heritage**",

which was adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO on 16 November 1972.

**Types:**

Cultural heritage sites

Natural heritage sites

Mixed heritage sites (contain elements of both natural and cultural significance)

**Note:** Recently, the **England's city Liverpool** has been removed from UNESCO's list of world heritage sites.

**Source: PIB**

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

**Why in News**

Maharashtra will be the first state in the country to issue educational documents using blockchain technology.

**India became the 4<sup>th</sup> Country** to roll out blockchain-powered educational documents after **Singapore, Malta and Bahrain.**

**Key Points**

Maharashtra's Skill Development Minister informed that one million diploma certificates will be issued using this technology.

This technology will be provided by **LegitDoc.**

**About LegitDoc:**

LegitDoc is the flagship product of Crossforge Solutions, a Bangalore-based technology company specializing in blockchain DApp development.

LegitDoc is an Ethereum-based software application for issuing and verifying tamper-proof digital documents.

**About Blockchain:**

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

**Source: Business Standard**

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

**Why in News**

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

### **Key Points**

**Chief Justice of India NV Ramana** inaugurated the live streaming of the Gujarat High Court proceedings.

The chief justice also released **“The High Court of Gujarat (Live Streaming of Court Proceedings) Rules, 2021”**.

### **About High Court of Gujarat:**

It was established on 1 May 1960 under the Bombay Re-organisation Act, 1960 after the state of Gujarat split from Bombay State.

**Chief Justice of Gujarat High Court:** Vikram Nath

**Source: TOI**

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

Long-winding and cumbersome' nomenclature **'Common High Court of UT of Jammu and Kashmir and UT of Ladakh'** has been changed to **'High Court of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh'**.

The order was notified by the Department of Justice in the Ministry of Law and Justice.

**President Ram Nath Kovind** has signed the **Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Removal of Difficulties) Order, 2021**, to effect the change.

**Source: Indian Express**

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

#### **Why in News**

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

#### **Key Points**

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

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

**Source: TOI**

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

### Why in News

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

### Key Points

The airlines SpiceJet will commence operations on these 8 new routes: Gwalior-Mumbai-Gwalior, Gwalior-Pune-Gwalior, Jabalpur-Surat-Jabalpur, and Ahmedabad-Gwalior-Ahmedabad route.

Gwalior is one of the first airports of Madhya Pradesh to be connected with the UDAN route.

Inauguration of these routes achieves the aim of the **Sab Uden Sab Juden initiative under the UDAN scheme** to strengthen the established aerial network of the country.

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

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

**RCS (Regional Connectivity Scheme)** offers a unique opportunity to a common man to fly at an affordable price.

The UDAN Scheme is a key component of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's **National Civil Aviation Policy (NCAP)** which was released by the Ministry of Civil Aviation (India) on 15 June 2016.

**Note:** Earlier this month, under the UDAN scheme, Indigo airlines started another flight to connect Kolkata, West Bengal & Imphal, Manipur with Dibrugarh, Assam.

To date, 359 routes and 59 airports including 5 heliports and 2 Water Aerodromes have been operationalized under the UDAN scheme.

**Source: PIB**

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

#### Why in News

Haryana Government has recently set up its first **ATM machine 'Annapurta'** for dispensing **food grains** at Farrukhnagar in Gurugram, which will provide three types of grains — wheat, rice, and millet.

This machine is installed under the "**World Food Programme**" of the **United Nations**, and is called Automated, Multi Commodity, Grain Dispensing Machine.

### **Key Points**

The purpose of this ATM is to make the distributions of grains at government-run ration shops easy and hassle-free.

Each machine can dispense up to 70 kg of grains within five to seven minutes, at a time.

It's an automatic machine; hence the scope of error in the measurement of grains is negligible.

The machine has a biometric system with a touch-screen, where the beneficiaries have to enter their Aadhaar or ration card number to get their grains.

**Source: TOI**

## **Gujarat International Maritime Arbitration Centre (GIMAC)**

### **Why in the News?**

The Gujarat Maritime University signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the International Financial Services Centres Authority in GIFT City to promote the Gujarat International Maritime Arbitration Centre (GIMAC).

### **Key Points**

This will be the first centre of its kind in the country that will manage arbitration and mediation proceedings with disputes related to the maritime and shipping sector.

The GIMAC will be part of a maritime cluster that the Gujarat Maritime Board (GMB) is setting up in GIFT City at Gandhinagar.

### **Need of GIMAC:**

There are over 35 arbitration centres in India. However, none of them exclusively deals with the maritime sector.

The arbitration involving Indian players is now heard at the Singapore Arbitration Centre.

Globally, London is the preferred centre for arbitration for the maritime and shipping sector.

**Source: Indian Express**

## **Zen Garden and Kaizen Academy at AMA, Ahmedabad**

### **Why in the News?**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated a **Japanese Zen Garden and Kaizen Academy** at the **Ahmedabad Management Association (AMA), Ahmedabad.**

### Key Points

#### About Zen Garden and Kaizen Academy:

It is a joint endeavour of the Japan Information & Study Centre at the AMA and the Indo-Japan Friendship Association, Gujarat, supported by the Hyogo International Association Japan.

It has traditional Japanese elements such as Shoji Interior, Red Bridge Guzei, Glory of Tori, fusion Chabutaro, Taki waterfall, Kimono scroll and Tsukubai basin.

The **Kaizen Academy** will promote the work-culture of Japan in India, and increase business interactions between the two countries.

**Kaizen** translates to 'change for the better' or 'continuous improvement'. Kaizen is a Japanese business philosophy that focuses on gradually improving productivity by involving all employees and by making the work environment more efficient.

**Zen** is a Japanese school of Mahayana Buddhism emphasizing the value of meditation and intuition.

#### India-Japan Relations:

Japan-India bilateral and multilateral cooperation, including Japan-Australia-India-US quadrilateral cooperation, towards realising a free and open Indo-Pacific

Possible Cooperation between India and Japan in areas like 5G, strengthening of industrial competitiveness and development projects in the northeastern state.

#### Recent Developments between India and Japan:

Supply Chain Resilience Initiative

In 2020, India and Japan signed a logistics agreement that will allow armed forces of both sides to coordinate closely in services and supplies. The agreement is known as the Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement.

'Special Strategic and Global Partnership' in 2014

The India-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement 2011

**Defence Exercises:** Bilateral exercises: SHINYUU Maitri (Air Force), JIMEX (Naval) and Dharma Guardian (Army). Malabar exercise (Naval Exercise) with the USA.

## Important News: India

### PMFME Scheme under Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan

## Why in the News?

**Pradhan Mantri Formalisation of Micro Food Processing Enterprises (PMFME)** Scheme launched under the Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan marks the **completion of its one year.**

**Launched on 29th June 2020**, the PMFME Scheme is currently being implemented in **35 States and Union Territories.**

## Key Points

### Milestones achieved under the PMFME Scheme

#### One District One Product:

Under the **One District One Product (ODOP)** component of the PMFME Scheme, the Ministry of Food Processing Industries approved ODOP for 707 districts for 35 States and UTs, including 137 unique products as per the recommendations received by States/UTs.

**Capacity Building and Incubation Centres:** Under the Capacity Building component of the PMFME Scheme, the **National Institute of Food Technology Entrepreneurship and Management** and the **Indian Institute of Food Processing Technology** have been performing a key role in providing training and research support to selected enterprises/groups/clusters in partnership with the State Level Technical Institutions.

**Seed Capital:** Seed Capital worth Rs. 25.25 Crore has been disbursed to State Rural Livelihood Mission.

The PMFME Scheme envisages financial support of Rs. 40,000 for working capital and purchase of small tools for each member of SHGs engaged in food processing activities.

**Implementation and Funding:** With an outlay of Rs. 10,000 crore over a period of five years from **2020-21 to 2024-25**, the scheme envisions to directly assist the 2,00,000 micro food processing units for providing financial, technical, and business support for upgradation of existing micro food processing enterprises.

### About the Pradhan Mantri Formalisation of Micro food processing Enterprises (PMFME) Scheme:

Launched under the Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan, PMFME Scheme is a centrally sponsored scheme.

It aims to enhance the competitiveness of existing individual micro-enterprises in the unorganized segment of the food processing industry and to promote formalization of the sector and provide support to Farmer Producer Organizations, Self Help Groups, and Producers Cooperatives along their entire value chain.

#### Note:

The Indian food and grocery market is the world's 6 largest, with retail contributing 70 percent of the sales.

The Indian food processing industry accounts for 32 percent of the country's total food market, one of the largest industries in India and

is ranked fifth in terms of production, consumption, export and expected growth.

### **Other Schemes Related to Food Processing:**

Mega Food Park Scheme

Production Linked Incentive Scheme for Food Processing Industry

## **6 years of Digital India programme**

### **Why in the News?**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi interacted with the beneficiaries of 'Digital India' on the occasion of 'Digital India' completing 6 years since its launch.

### **Key Points**

#### **Prime Minister' Address:**

Digital India is a manifestation of a strong Indian that is emerging in the 21st Century.

The youth will continue to take you to new heights due to Digital Empowerment. These will help in making this decade as '**India's Techade**'.

#### **Various Schemes of Digital India programme:**

Digilocker

e Common Service Centres

PM Svanidhi Scheme

e-Sanjivini scheme

Aarogya Setu

COWIN app for vaccination.

DIKSHA App

e-NAM App

#### **Note:**

Under **Bharat Net scheme**, work is underway on a mission mode to bring broadband internet to the villages.

Through **PM WANI**, access points are being created so that rural youth can connect with high-speed internet for better services and education.

### **About Digital India:**

**Launched on 1 July 2015**, by **Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi**,

Digital India is both enabler and beneficiary of other key Government of India schemes.

It ensures the Government's services are made available to citizens electronically by improved online infrastructure and by increasing Internet connectivity or making the country digitally empowered in the field of technology.

**Source: PIB**

## NIPUN Bharat Programme

### Why in the News?

Education Minister, Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' launched a **National Initiative for Proficiency in Reading with Understanding and Numeracy (NIPUN Bharat)**.

NIPUN Bharat ensures that every child in the country necessarily attains foundational literacy and numeracy by the end of Grade 3, by 2026-27.

### Key Points

This Mission has been launched under the aegis of the centrally sponsored scheme of **Samagra Shiksha**.

This Mission will focus on providing access and retaining children in foundational years of schooling; teacher capacity building; development of high quality and diversified Student and Teacher Resources/Learning Materials; and tracking the progress of each child in achieving learning outcomes.

NIPUN Bharat aims to cover the learning needs of children in the age group of 3 to 9 years.

The success of NIPUN Bharat will primarily depend on teachers, so, there will be a special emphasis on capacity building of teachers.

A special package for foundational literacy and Numeracy under **NISHTHA (National Initiative for School Heads' and Teachers' Holistic Advancement)** is being developed by NCERT and around 25 lakh teachers teaching at pre-primary to primary grade will be trained this year on FLN.

**Note:** An approval of Rs 2688.18 crore has already been given under Samagra Shiksha scheme to the States and UTs for implementation of the various interventions for the Foundational Stage in 2021-22.

### About Samagra Shiksha:

It is a sector-wide development programme which subsumes the then existing Centrally Sponsored Schemes of **Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) and Teacher Education (TE)**.

The Integrated Scheme envisages the 'school' as a continuum from pre-school, primary, upper primary, secondary to senior secondary levels.

The Samagra Shiksha is implemented as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme by the Department through a single State Implementation Society (SIS) at the State/UT level.

### **Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) for Education:**

The vision of the Scheme is to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education from pre-school to senior secondary stage in accordance with the **Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) for Education**.

The Goal **SDG-4.1** states that 'By 2030, ensure that all boys and girls complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes'.

The **SDG 4.5** states that 'By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of Education'.

**Source: PIB**

### **Gender Samvaad**

#### **Why in the News?**

The Second Gender Samvaad was organised by the Ministry of Rural Development's **Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM)** and the '**Initiative for What Works to Advance Women and Girls in the Economy (IWWAGE)**'.

Gender Samvaad showcases the work undertaken by states and women's self-help groups in addressing the impact of COVID-19.

Gender Samvaad released **two compendiums** highlighting DAY-NRLM's efforts towards strengthening food, nutrition & health and stories of resilience from rural India during the COVID pandemic in 2021.

#### **Key Points**

##### **About Gender Samvaad:**

Gender Samvaad, a joint attempt between **DAY-NRLM** and the **Initiative for What Works to Advance Women and Girls in the Economy (IWWAGE)**, was launched by the Ministry of Rural Development.

**Note:** With over 60 million women mobilised to be part of one of India's largest livelihoods programme, DAY-NRLM holds great promise for advancing women's socio-economic empowerment by organising them into self-help groups (SHGs) and federations of the rural poor.

**About DAY-NRLM (Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Rural Livelihoods Mission):** The DAY-NRLM is the flagship program of Govt. of India for promoting poverty reduction through building strong institutions of the poor, particularly women, and enabling these institutions to access a range of financial services and livelihoods.

**Aajeevika - NRLM** was launched by the Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India in June 2011.

In November 2015, the program was renamed DAY-NRLM (Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Rural Livelihoods Mission).

### **Compendiums:**

**First compendiums:** This included a compendium on the DAY-NRLM's efforts towards strengthening Food, Nutrition, Health and WASH through State Missions and community institutions.

**Second compendium:** The second compendium captures stories of resilience from rural India during the COVID related pandemic in 2021, and how SHGs responded to the needs of women during and after the second wave.

**Source: PIB**

## **Central government extends superannuation age of LIC chairman to up to 62 years**

### **Why in the News?**

The Central government has extended the superannuation age of IPO-bound LIC Chairman to up to 62 years by amending the **Life Insurance Corporation of India (Staff) Regulations, 1960**.

The changes made in the rules will be called the **Life Insurance Corporation of India (Staff) Amendment Rules, 2021**.

### **Key Points**

Last month, the government approved a nine-month extension to LIC Chairman M R Kumar till March 2022 in view of the insurer's proposed initial public offer towards the end of the current fiscal.

### **Note:**

The retirement age for the top executives of most PSUs is 60 years, barring a few exceptions, including the State Bank of India.

**About Life Insurance Corporation of India: Headquarters:** Mumbai

**Chairman:** M R Kumar

**Founder:** Government of India

**Founded:** 1 September 1956

**Source: Economics Times**

## **Central Government creates a new 'Ministry of Co-operation'**

### **Why in the News?**

A separate **'Ministry of Co-operation'** has been created by the Central Government for realizing the vision of **'Sahkar se Samridhi'** or prosperity through cooperation.

The creation of a separate Ministry for Co-operation also fulfils the budget announcement made by the Finance Minister.

### Key Points

This Ministry will provide a separate administrative, legal and policy framework for strengthening the cooperative movement in the country.

In our country, a cooperative-based economic development model is very relevant where each member works with a spirit of responsibility.

The Ministry will work to streamline processes for **'Ease of doing business'** for cooperatives and enable the development of **Multi-State Cooperatives (MSCS)**.

Source: PIB

### 'Matsya Setu' for Fish Farmers

#### Why in the News?

The Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying launched the **Online Course Mobile App 'Matsya Setu'**.

The 'Matsya Setu' app was developed by **the ICAR-Central Institute of Freshwater Aquaculture (ICAR-CIFA), Bhubaneswar**, with the funding support of the **National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB), Hyderabad**.

#### Key Points

**Matsya Setu** app aims to disseminate the latest freshwater aquaculture technologies to the aqua farmers of the country.

**The** app has species-wise/ subject-wise self-learning online course modules, where renowned aquaculture experts explain the basic concepts and practical demonstrations on breeding, seed production and grow-out culture of commercially important fishes like carp, catfish, scampi, murrel, ornamental fish, pearl farming etc.

#### Related Initiatives:

##### **Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY):**

On September 10, 2020, Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the PMMSY at an estimated investment of Rs. 20,050 crores for five years, i.e., from 2020-21 to 2024-25.

PMMSY aims to achieve fish production to 22 million metric tons by 2024-25 and create an additional employment opportunity for about 55 lakh people.

##### **Fisheries and Aquaculture Infrastructure Development Fund (FIDF):**

FIDF, which was started in 2018-19, Rs.7,522.48 crores, will also cater to the creation of fisheries infrastructure facilities both in the marine and inland fisheries sectors.

#### **Blue Revolution:**

The Centrally Sponsored Scheme “**Blue Revolution**”, which was launched in December 2015, had made vital contributions towards the sector's development.

### **Kissan Credit Cards (KCC):**

The Government has also extended the facilities of KCC to fishers and fish farmers to help them meet their working capital needs.

### **Note:**

India is a leading fish producing country and the second major producer of fish through aquaculture.

India contributes about 7.7% to global fish production, and the country ranks 4th in global exports of fish products.

**November 21, World Fisheries Day July 10, National Fish Farmers Day**

**Source: PIB**

## **PM Narendra Modi Cabinet Reshuffle & Portfolio of New Ministers**

The **Union Council of Ministers** consists of Cabinet Ministers, Ministers of state and Ministers of State (Independent Charge).

The Prime Minister of India leads the council.

The Union Cabinet is the supreme decision-making body in India.

Only the prime minister and ministers of the rank of cabinet minister are members of the Union Cabinet in accordance with Article 75.

### **List of Latest Cabinet Ministers and their portfolios:**

<b>Portfolio</b>	<b>Minister</b>
Prime Minister of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions Department of Atomic Energy Department of Space All important policy issues and all other portfolios not allocated to any minister.	Narendra Modi
Minister of Defence	Rajnath Singh
Minister of External Affairs	Subrahmanyam Jaishankar
Minister of Home Affairs Minister of Co-operation	Amit Shah
Minister of Finance Minister of Corporate Affairs	Nirmala Sitharaman

Minister of Road Transport and Highways	Nitin Gadkari
Minister of Commerce and Industry Minister of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution Minister of Textiles	Piyush Goyal
Minister of Women and Child Development	Smriti Zubin Irani
Minister of Law and Justice	Kiren Rijju
Minister of Tribal Affairs	Arjun Munda
Minister of Education Minister of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship	Dharmendra Pradhan
Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare	Narendra Singh Tomar
Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment	Virendra Kumar
Minister of Health and Family Welfare Minister of Chemicals and Fertilizers	Mansukh L. Mandaviya
Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change Ministry of Labour and Employment	Bhupender Yadav
Minister of Minority Affairs	Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi
Minister of Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises	Mahendra Nath Pandey
Minister of Parliamentary Affairs Ministry of Coal Ministry of Mines	Pralhad Joshi
Minister of Jal Shakti	Gajendra Singh Shekhawat
Minister of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises	Narayan Tatu Rane
Minister of Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries	Parshottam Rupala
Minister of Railways Minister of Communication Minister of Electronics and Information Technology	Ashwini Vaishnav
Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways Ministry of AYUSH	Sarbananda Sonowal
Minister of Rural Development Minister of Panchayati Raj	Giriraj Singh
Minister of Civil Aviation	Jyotiraditya Scindia

Minister of Steel	Ramchandra Prasad Singh
Minister of Food Processing Industries	Pashupati Kumar Paras
Minister of Power Minister of New and Renewable Energy	Raj Kumar Singh
Minister of Culture Minister of Tourism Minister of Development of North Eastern Region	Kishan Reddy
Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs	Hardeep Singh Puri
Minister of Information and Broadcasting Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports	Anurag Thakur

**Note:**

The government has issued a notification to bring the **Department of Public Enterprises (which was the part of the Ministry of Heavy Industries & Public Enterprises)** under the **finance ministry**.

The finance ministry now has 6 departments under it.

The other 5 are the Department of Economic Affairs, Expenditure, Revenue, Investment and Public Asset Management, and Financial Services.

**Source: pmindia.gov.in**

## Capacity Building Initiative on 'Making Water Sensitive Cities in Ganga Basin' Launched

### Why in News

A new capacity building initiative on **'Making Water Sensitive Cities in Ganga Basin'** aimed at improving river health/flows was launched by **National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG)** in association with **Centre for Science and Environment (CSE)**.

### Key Points

#### About Capacity Building Initiative:

**Key focus areas of the programme:** Water Sensitive Urban Design and Planning, Decentralized Wastewater Treatment and Local Reuse, Urban Water Efficiency and Conservation, Urban Groundwater Management and Urban Water bodies / Lake Management.

The program will engage all the **stakeholders** which includes, SPMGs (State Program Management Group, Namami Gange), Municipal corporations, Technical & research constants, international organizations and local grassroot communities.

This initiative is part of the series of ongoing efforts by NMCG aimed to ensuring convergence of the Namami Gange Mission with national flagship urban missions (AMRUT, Smart Cities, Swachh Bharat Mission, NULM, HRIDAY) and other missions (Atal Bhujal Yojana, Jal Shakti Abhiyan, Jal Jeevan Mission) at state /city level across Ganga basin states.

### **Water Sensitive Urban Design and Planning:**

It is an emerging urban development paradigm aimed to minimize hydrological impacts of urban development on the environment.

It includes the method of planning and designing urban areas for optimum utilization of water.

### **Other Related Initiatives:**

'Catch the Rain' initiative for rain water harvesting

"River Cities Alliance" which will provide a unique platform for river cities to collaborate for collectively achieving river rejuvenation

**Source: PIB**

## **India gets its 40th UNESCO World Heritage Site- Dholavira: A Harappan City**

### **Why in News**

India's nomination of Dholavira, the Harappan City in the Rann of Kutch, Gujarat has been inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage list.

### **Key Points**

Dholavira site was on UNESCO's tentative list since 2014.

India now enters the **Super-40** club for World Heritage Site inscriptions.

With this successful nomination, India has **40 world heritage** properties overall, which includes **32 cultural, 7 natural and one mixed property.**

**Note:** This follows a few days after the **Rudreswara Temple**, (also known as the Ramappa Temple) at Palampet, Mulugu district, Telangana State becoming the **39th World Heritage Centre** in India.

### **About the Harappan city of Dholavira:**

Dholavira: a Harappan city is one of the very few well preserved urban settlements in South Asia dating from the 3rd to mid-2nd millennium BCE.

Being the 6th largest of more than 1,000 Harappan sites discovered so far, and occupied for over 1,500 years, Dholavira not only witnesses the entire trajectory of the rise and fall of this early civilization of humankind, but also demonstrates its multifaceted achievements in terms of urban planning, water management, construction techniques, social governance and development, trading, art and manufacturing.

Unlike other Harappan antecedent towns normally located near to rivers and perennial sources of water, the location of Dholavira in the island of Khadir was strategic to harness different mineral and raw material sources and to facilitate internal as well as external trade to the Magan (modern Oman peninsula) and Mesopotamian regions.

Dholavira is an exceptional example of a proto-historic Bronze Age urban settlement pertaining to the Harappan Civilization.

### **World Heritage Sites in Gujarat:**

Gujarat now has **four world heritage sites** — Dholavira, Champaner-Pavagadh Archaeological Park, Rani ki Vav in Patan and the Historic City of Ahmedabad.

**Source: PIB**

## **I-STEM Phase-II**

### **Why in News**

**The Indian Science Technology and Engineering facilities Map (I-STEM)** project has been accorded extension for five years, until 2026 and enters its **second phase** with added features.

### **Key Points**

#### **About I-STEM:**

I-STEM, the national web portal for sharing Research and Development (R&D) facilities was formally launched in January 2020.

It is an initiative of **Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser** to the Government of India (GoI) under the aegis of **Prime Minister Science, Technology and Innovation Advisory Council (PM-STIAC)** mission.

#### **Objective:**

The objective of I-STEM is to strengthen the R&D ecosystem of the country by connecting researchers with resources, in part by promoting technologies and scientific equipment development indigenously.

**Phase-I:**

In the first phase, the portal is listed with more than 20,000 pieces of equipment from 1050 institutions across the country and has more than 20,000 Indian researchers.

I-STEM portal facilitates researchers to access slots for the use of equipment, as well as to share the details of the outcomes, such as, patents, publications and technologies.

**Phase-II:**

Under Phase II, the portal will host indigenous technology products listed through a digital catalogue.

The portal will also provide a platform for the various City Knowledge and Innovation Clusters supported by the Office of PSA to enhance effective use of R&D infrastructure through leveraging collaboration and partnership built on a shared STI ecosystem.

It will be designed as a dynamic digital platform that will provide a boost to research and innovation especially for 2 tier and 3 tier cities and also for the emerging start-up ecosystem.

**Source: PIB**

**Government formalises registration process of Vintage Motor Vehicles**

**Why in News**

The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has amended **Central Motor Vehicles Rules (CMVR) 1989**, formalising the registration process of vintage motor vehicles.

This is aimed at preserving and promoting the heritage of old vehicles in India.

**Key Points**

**About Vintage Motor Vehicles:**

The draft rules define vintage motor vehicles as all those vehicles that are two-wheelers and four-wheelers and are more than 50 years old from the date of their first registration (including imported vehicle).

Vintage motor vehicles shall not be driven on roads for regular/commercial purposes.

**Source: Economictimes**

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

### **Why in News**

**Rajeev Ranjan Mishra, Director General, National Mission for Clean Ganga** released a detailed report on the opportunities created by the use of geospatial technology in the water sector.

**The Association of Geospatial Industries** – a geospatial technology industry body, has prepared this report titled, **“Potential of Geospatial Technologies for the Water Sector in India”**.

Given the population density and requirement of water for agriculture, India is heavily dependent on groundwater and is one of the worst hit countries as far as the water crisis is concerned.

### **Key Points**

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

Outlining key water sector programmes and projects in the country, the report provides an overview of how each of these programmes is currently using geospatial technologies, and how to improve technology adoption in the future.

As per the report a plethora of Geospatial and Digital technologies, like Satellite based Remote Sensing, Surveying and Mapping, GPS based equipment and sensors, GIS and Spatial Analytics, Artificial Intelligence, Big Data Analytics, Internet of Things, 5G, Robotics and Digital Twin, can be effectively used to combat the water crisis.

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

National River Linking Project

Jal Jeevan Mission

Dam Rehabilitation and Improvement Project

Namami Gange Mission

National Hydrology Programme

Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayi Yojana

Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT)

National Aquifer Mapping and Management Programme

River Basin Management

National Water Mission

Atal Bhujal Yojana

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

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

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

**Most common geospatial technologies:**

Remote Sensing

Geographic Information Systems (GIS)

Global Positioning System (GPS)

Internet Mapping Technologies

**Source: PIB**

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

**Why in News**

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

**Key Points**

**Benefit**

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

**Commission (Rohini Commission):**

The Commission was constituted under article 340 of the Constitution with the approval of the President on 2nd October, 2017.

The commission is headed by retired Delhi High Court Chief Justice Smt. G Rohini.

It was set up to examine the possibility of creating categories within OBCs for the reservation to ensure “equitable distribution” of representation among all OBC communities.

**Note:**

Currently, OBCs are granted 27% reservation in government jobs and educational institutes.

There are 2,633 Other Backward Castes in the Central List and earlier this year the commission proposed to divide them into four subcategories numbered 1, 2, 3 and 4 and split the 27% into 2, 6, 9 and 10%, respectively.

The commission had also recommended complete digitisation of all OBC records and a standardised system of issuing OBC certificates.

### **Article 340 of the Indian Constitution:**

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

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

**Source:** PIB

## **Indian Labour Conference**

### **Why in News**

Recently, the **Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh (Labour Union)** wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi asking him to convene the **Indian Labour Conference (ILC)**.

India also has a legal obligation to hold the ILC since the Indian Parliament has ratified **Convention No. 144 of the International Labour Organization (ILO)** related to strengthening the tripartite mechanism.

### **Key Points**

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

It is the apex level tripartite consultative committee in the Ministry of Labour & Employment.

It suggests the Government on the issues concerning the working class of the country.

**Members:** Central Trade Union Organisations, Central Organisations of employers, all State Governments and Union Territories and Central Ministries/Departments concerned with the agenda, are the members of the ILC.

The **first meeting** of the ILC (then called Tripartite National Labour Conference) was held in 1942 and so far a total of 46 Sessions have been held.

The most recent session of Indian Labour Conference was held in 2015.

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

Pradhan Mantri Rojgar Protsahan Yojana

New Labour Codes, 2020

Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-dhan Yojana

National Pension Scheme for Traders, Shopkeepers and Self-Employed Persons

**About ILO Convention No. 144:**

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

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

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

**Headquarters:** Geneva, Switzerland

**Director-General;** Guy Ryder

**Formation:** 11 April 1919

The ILO has **187 state members.**

**India** is a founder member of the ILO.

**Source: The Hindu**

**Indian Institute of Heritage**

**Why in News**

The central government has decided to set up the 'Indian Institute of Heritage' at Noida, Gautam Buddha Nagar (Uttar Pradesh).

Indian Institute of Heritage will be a world-class university that would focus on the conservation and research in India's rich tangible heritage.

**Key Points**

**About 'Indian Institute of Heritage':**

The Institute is being set up as Deemed to be University.

**Note:** Presently, there are **38 World Heritage Sites located in India.** India has the 6<sup>th</sup> largest number of sites in the world.

Among these 38 UNESCO Heritage sites of India, the list includes **30 cultural sites, 7 natural sites, and 1 mixed site**. Presently, a total of **1,121 World Heritage Sites (869 cultural, 213 natural, and 39 mixed)** exist across 167 countries. With 55 selected areas, China and Italy are the countries with the most sites on the list.

**Source: PIB**

## **AI-powered Grievance Management Application**

### **Why in News**

**Rajnath Singh, Defence Minister** launched an **Artificial Intelligence (AI)-powered Grievance Management Application**.

The web-based application has been jointly developed by the **Ministry of Defence, DARPG (Department of Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances) and IIT Kanpur**.

### **Key Points**

This project is the first of its kind initiative of the Government for using AI, data science and Machine Learning techniques in grievance redressal.

This AI-powered application will automatically handle and analyse the complaints of the people and would reduce human intervention, save time and bring more transparency in their disposal.

It enables geographical analysis of complaints in a category including analysis of whether the complaint was adequately addressed or not by the concerned office.

### **Note:**

Recently, the Chief Justice of India launched the **Artificial Intelligence (AI) portal, Supreme Court Portal for Assistance in Court's Efficiency (SUPACE)**. SUPACE, designed to make research easier for judges, thereby easing their workload.

**AI (Artificial intelligence)** means the simulation of human intelligence in machines that are programmed to think like humans and mimic their actions.

**Source: PIB**

## **Digital Platform 'Kisan Sarathi'**

### **Why in News**

**'Kisan Sarathi', a digital platform,** was launched jointly by the **Minister for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare** with the **Minister for Electronics and Information Technology.**

It was launched on the occasion of 93<sup>rd</sup> **Indian Council of Agriculture Research (ICAR)** Foundation Day.

### **Key Points**

**Digital Platform Kisan Sarathi** facilitates farmers to get **'right information at right time'** in their desired language.

This digital platform will empower farmers with the technological interventions to reach farmers in remote areas.

It will help the farmers to interact and avail personalised advisories on agriculture and allied areas directly from the respective scientists of **Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVKs).**

It will be highly valuable in Agricultural Extension, Education and Research activities of ICAR.

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

ICAR is an autonomous organisation under the Department of Agricultural Research and Education, Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare.

It was established on 16 July 1929.

The ICAR has its headquarters at New Delhi.

It is the apex body for co-ordinating, guiding and managing research and education in agriculture including horticulture, fisheries and animal sciences.

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

Krishi Vigyan Kendra is an agricultural extension center in India.

Usually associated with a local agricultural university, these centers serve as the ultimate link between the Indian Council of Agricultural Research and farmers, and aim to apply agricultural research in a practical, localized setting.

As of May 2021, there were approximately 722 KVKs throughout India.

The **first Krishi Vigyan Kendra** was established in 1974 in Pondicherry.

### **Other Related Initiatives:**

Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana

Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana

Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana

Pradhan Mantri Kisan Sampada Yojana

National Agriculture Market (eNAM)

Soil health card

**Source: PIB**

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

### **Why in News**

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

### **Key Points**

Citizens will be able to find government facilities nearest to their location, such as mandis, blood banks and much more, at the click of a button.

They will also be able to see these on the most detailed and interactive street and village level maps of India, built by MapmyIndia.

Citizens will also be able to view the driving distance, get directions and turn by turn voice and visual guidance to locations, including traffic and road safety alerts during navigation, through the linkage between UMANG App and MapmyIndia.

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

The **UMANG** is a Government of India single, unified, secure, multi-channel, multi-platform, multi-lingual, multi-service mobile app, providing access to high impact services of various organizations (Central and State).

**Prime Minister Narendra Modi** had launched the **UMANG App in 2017**.

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

### **About mapMyIndia:**

MapmyIndia, is a product of an indigenous, company founded and headquartered in New Delhi, India, in 1995, which has digitally mapped the entire country.

It helps users find relevant places nearby and see them on detailed building level maps.

**Source: PIB**

## School Innovation Ambassador Training Program

### Why in News

The **Union Education Minister** and **Tribal Affairs Minister** jointly launched the '**School Innovation Ambassador Training Program**' (SIATP).

The Ministry of Tribal Affairs has launched an **Adi-Prashikshan portal** which is also a repository of training inputs.

### Key Points

#### About Training Program:

The innovative and one-of-its-kind training program for school teachers, it aims at training 50,000 School Teachers on Innovation, Entrepreneurship, IPR, Design Thinking, Product development, Idea generation, among others.

The training will be delivered in online mode only.

The program has been **designed** by the **Innovation Cell of the Ministry of Education and AICTE** for school Teachers based on its "Innovation Ambassador Training Program for Higher Educational Institution's faculty members".

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

#### Benefits:

'SIATP' will nurture lakhs of students with innovation capabilities, develop a culture of innovation and lay the foundation of a new and vibrant India.

The students of **Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS)** will greatly benefit from SIATP since it is also the endeavour of the Tribal Affairs Ministry to give the best possible education to the tribal children.

**EMRS** for tribal children is another ambitious programme of the Prime Minister under which 740 EMRS will be established in tribal dominated areas over the next three years.

#### Other Important Related Initiatives:

New Education Policy, 2020

Digital Infrastructure for Knowledge Sharing (DIKSHA)

Samagra Siksha

National Initiative for School Heads' and Teachers' Holistic Advancement (NISHTHA)

**About All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE):** It is a statutory body, and a national-level council for technical education, under the Department of Higher Education.

**Founded:** November 1945

**Headquarters:** New Delhi

**Chairperson:** Anil Sahasrabudhe

**Source:** PIB

## 6th Anniversary to commemorate launch of PMAY-U, AMRUT & Smart Cities Mission celebrated by MoHUA

### Why in the News?

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) organised an online event to commemorate 6 years of the three transformative Urban Missions vis. **Smart Cities Mission (SCM)**, **Atal Mission for Urban Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT)** and **Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Urban (PMAY-U)**.

The date also marked the 45 years of establishment of National Institute of Urban Affairs, an autonomous body of MoHUA, tasked to bridge the gap between research and practice on issues related to urbanization.

### Key Points

#### Progress:

#### Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Urban (PMAY-U):

1.12 crore houses sanctioned and over 83 lakh houses grounded under PMAY-U.

16 lakh families benefited from PMAY-U's Credit Linked Subsidy Scheme (CLSS).

Government investment under PMAY-U created around 689 crore person days of employment translating into around 246 lakh jobs.

Affordable Rental Housing Complexes scheme under PMAY-U for urban migrants/ poor has elicited remarkable response on ground.

#### Atal Mission for Rejuvenation & Urban Transformation (AMRUT):

So far, 105 lakh household water tap connections and 78 lakh sewer/ seepage connections are provided under AMRUT Mission.

88 lakh street lights replaced with energy efficient LED lights leading to energy savings of 193 crore units.

84.6 lakh tons carbon footprint was reduced through various initiatives under AMRUT, as per TERI (The Energy and Resources Institute).

#### Smart Cities Mission (SCM):

70 cities have developed and operationalised **Integrated Command and Control Centres (ICCCs)** under Smart Cities Mission.

310 Smart Road projects, 57 Smart Solar Projects and 101 Smart Water Projects completed.

### **Important Launches during the event:**

#### **India Smart Cities Awards 2020:**

These awards were given across the themes of Governance, Social Aspects, Culture, Urban Environment, Economy, Sanitation, Built Environment, Water, Urban Mobility.

Some interesting themes were added this year for the **Sustainable Business model of ICCC** and **Innovation award** specially in COVID Management.

**Indore & Surat** won the **City Award** jointly this year for their overall development and **Uttar Pradesh** won the **State award**.

#### **Climate Smart Cities Assessment Framework (CSCAF) 2.0**

CSCAF 2.0 was launched in September 2020 with an aim to provide an overarching roadmap to formulate, implement and monitor urban climate actions in India.

The **top 9 performing cities** which have been awarded 4 star rating are Ahmedabad, Surat, Indore, Pune, Rajkot, Vijayawada, Visakhapatnam, Pimpri-Chinchwad and Vadodara.

### **ICT initiatives under Smart Cities:**

#### **ICCC Maturity Assessment framework (IMAF):**

It is a self-assessment tool kit developed to assess the maturity of **Integrated Command and Control Centres (ICCC)** across key aspects of functionality, technology, governance and citizen/stakeholders engagement.

#### **Smart Cities ICT standards**

Standardization journey under Smart Cities Mission began in Dec 2018 at Varanasi with an International Conference organised by **Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS)**.

### **TULIP Report:**

**TULIP-The Urban Learning Internship Program'** was launched last year on 4<sup>th</sup> June 2020 in partnership with AICTE.

TULIP is a platform to connect graduates to Urban Local Bodies and Smart Cities to co-create new solutions for our cities.

### **About Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana – Urban (PMAY-U):**

PMAY-U was launched on 25th June 2015.

The Mission addresses urban housing shortage among the EWS/LIG and MIG categories including the slum dwellers by ensuring a pucca house to all eligible urban households by the year 2022.

### **About Atal Mission for Rejuvenation & Urban Transformation (AMRUT):**

AMRUT was launched by the Prime Minister in June 2015 with the focus to establish infrastructure that could ensure adequate robust

sewage networks and water supply for urban transformation by implementing urban revival projects.

### **About Smart Cities Mission (SCM):**

SCM was launched by the Prime Minister on 25 June, 2015.

The main objective of the Mission is to promote cities that provide core infrastructure, clean and sustainable environment and give a decent quality of life to their citizens through the application of 'smart solutions'.

**Source: PIB**

## **“The India Story” booklet on Indian initiatives shaping energy transition**

### **Why in the News?**

Minister of State (I/C) for Power and New & Renewable Energy, R.K. Singh launched “The India Story” booklet on Indian initiatives shaping energy transition.

The booklet was launched at the event on **“Accelerating Citizen Centric Energy Transition”**, organized by **The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE)**, in collaboration with the **Permanent Mission of India (PMI)** to the **United Nations** and the **Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW)**.

The Minister also launched a website which will act as a repository of energy transition related knowledge resources from around the world.

### **Key Points**

#### **Main Points of the booklet:**

In the last 6 years, India's installed renewable energy capacity has increased by over two and a half times and stands at more than **141 Giga Watts** (including large Hydro), which is about **37 percent** of the country's total capacity (as on 16<sup>th</sup> June 2021).

During the same period, the installed solar energy capacity has increased by over 15 times and stands at 41.09 GW.

**India's renewable energy capacity is the 4<sup>th</sup> largest in the world.**

### **Investment opportunities in India's RE sector:**

India has a very liberal foreign investment policy for renewable allowing 100% FDI through the automatic route in the sector.

During the last 7 years, over US\$ 70 billion investment has been made in renewable energy in India.

A **Renewable Energy Investment Promotion and Facilitation Board**

Portal has also been developed to provide one-stop assistance and facilitation to the Industry and Investors for development of projects

and bringing new investment to the Renewable Energy sector in India.

**Recent initiatives in renewable energy sector:**

Green Term Ahead Market and Green Day Ahead Market  
Viability Gap Funding options for Offshore Wind Energy

**Initiatives shaping India's Energy Transition:**

**Electrification**

Green Energy Corridor  
Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana (SAUBHAGYA)  
National Smart Grid Mission and Smart Meter National Programme

**Renewable Energy**

The Wind Energy Revolution  
National Solar Mission  
National Biofuels Policy and SATAT  
Small Hydro Power  
National Hydrogen Energy Mission  
Production-Linked Incentive Scheme

**Energy Efficiency**

Unnat Jyoti by Affordable LEDs for All (UJALA)

**Clean Cooking**

Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana

**Global Initiatives**

International Solar Alliance  
Clean Energy Ministerial  
Mission Innovation

**Source: PIB**

**“Enforcing Contracts Portal”**

**Why in the News?**

**The Department of Justice, New Delhi** launched “Enforcing Contracts Portal”.

**The Department of Justice, Ministry of Law and Justice**, as the nodal department, has been monitoring an array of legislative and policy reforms to strengthen the “Enforcing Contracts” regime for Ease of Doing Business in India.

**Key Points**

The portal aims to promote ease of doing business and improve the ‘Contract Enforcement Regime’ in the country.

The portal provides easy access to latest information on commercial cases in Dedicated Commercial Courts of Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru and Kolkata.

**Need:**

The Doing Business Report of World Bank Group benchmarks business regulations across 191 economies of the world.

Within this, the **Ease of Doing Business index** is a ranking system which is an indication of an economy's position relative to that of other economies across 11 areas of business regulation.

Currently, only the cities of Delhi and Mumbai are under the purview of the Ease of Doing Business survey by World Bank.

Kolkata and Bengaluru are likely to be included in the Doing Business Report in future.

**Note: India** ranked 63rd out of 190 countries in **Ease of Doing Business 2020**: World Bank Report.

**Source: PIB**

## Important News: World

### SCO Defence Ministers' meeting 2021 in Tajikistan

#### Why in News

The **Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Defence Ministers' meeting 2021** took place in **Dushanbe, Tajikistan**.

**Defence Minister of India Rajnath Singh** addressed the meeting.

#### Key Points

Rajnath Singh said that India accords "high priority to the consolidation of trust in the security domain within SCO as well as strengthening ties with SCO partners bilaterally on the basis of equality, mutual respect and understanding".

India reiterates its resolve to work within the SCO framework for helping create and maintain a peaceful, secure and stable region.

#### India and SCO:

Regional Security: security-related cooperation with the SCO and its **Regional Anti-Terrorism Structure (RATS)**

SCO is also a platform to advance **India's Connect Central Asia policy**.

SCO provides India with a forum where it can constructively engage both China and Pakistan in a regional context and project India's security interests.

**Bringing Stability in Afghanistan:** So far India completed 500 projects in Afghanistan and is continuing with some more, with a total development aid of \$3 billion.

Strategic Importance

**Note: Tajikistan** is chairing the SCO meeting this year and hosting a series of Ministerial and official-level meetings.

**Facts about Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO):**

SCO or Shanghai Pact is a Eurasian political, economic and security alliance.

**Formed:** 15 June 2001

**Members:** China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, India & Pakistan.

**Headquarter:** Beijing, China

India became a full member of the SCO in 2017. Prior to that, India had an observer status, which was granted to it in 2005.

**Source: Indian Express**

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

**Why in News**

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

**Key Points**

The parties consider long-term peace and stability in Afghanistan critical to regional connectivity and agree that peace and regional connectivity are mutually reinforcing.

The parties intend to cooperate to expand trade, build transit links, and strengthen business-to-business ties to recognise the historic opportunity to open interregional trade routes.

**Note:**

Afghanistan, which is in the centre of the historic Silk Road, has long served as a crossroads for trade between Asian countries, linking them to Europe and establishing religious, cultural, and commercial ties.

The establishment of the new quad group is critical given **China's** intention to expand its **Belt Road Initiative (BRI)** to Afghanistan.

The **Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)** intends to create a network of land and maritime connections connecting Southeast Asia, Central Asia, the Gulf area, Africa, and Europe.

Afghanistan can serve as a strategic platform for China to spread its influence over the world due to its geographic location.

**Source: Economictimes**

## 7th edition of Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS)

### Why in the News?

Recently, the 7<sup>th</sup> edition of Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS), a biennial event, was hosted by the **French Navy at La Reunion**.

### Key Points

The Symposium held panel discussions themed on the three IONS working Groups viz., Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR), Maritime Security and Information Sharing & Interoperability. The Naval Maritime Foundation (NMF) also participated in the Panel Discussion on HADR.

### About Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS):

It is a series of biennial meetings between the littoral states of the Indian Ocean region.

It provides a forum to increase maritime security cooperation, discuss regional maritime issues, and promote friendly relationships among the member states.

### Members:

The **24 member** nations of the IONS are grouped into four sub-regions: South Asian, West Asian, East African and South East Asian and Australian.

**Observers:** There are 8 states with observer status.

The symposium was first held in **2008 with India** as host.

France has assumed the Chairmanship in June 2021 for two-year tenure.

### Important Groupings/Initiatives Associated with Indian Ocean Region (IOR):

Indian Ocean Commission

Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA)

Asia Africa Growth Corridor (AAGC)

Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR)

**Source: PIB**

## India joins OECD/G20 Inclusive Framework tax deal

### Why in the News?

India has joined the **Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)** and **G20 Inclusive Framework tax deal**.

**India and the majority of the members of OECD/G20 Inclusive Framework on Base Erosion and Profit Shifting adopted a high-level**

**statement containing an outline of a consensus solution to address the tax challenges arising from the digitalisation of the economy.**

The proposed solution consists of **two components- Pillar One**, which is about reallocating an additional share of profit to the market jurisdictions and **Pillar Two** consisting of minimum tax and subject to tax rules.

### **Key Points**

#### **Pillar One:**

It will ensure a fairer distribution of profits and taxing rights among countries concerning the largest MNEs, including digital companies.

It would re-allocate some taxing rights over MNEs from their home countries to the markets where they have business activities and earn profits, regardless of whether they have a physical presence.

#### **Pillar Two:**

It is about minimum tax and subject-to-tax rules (All sources of income liable to tax without taking account of tax allowances).

It seeks to put a minimum standard tax rate among countries through a global minimum corporate tax rate, currently proposed at 15%.

**India** will have to roll back the equalisation levy imposed on companies such as Google, Amazon and Facebook when the global tax regime is implemented.

The levy at 6% has been in force since 2016 on payment exceeding Rs 1 lakh a year to a non-resident service provider for online advertisements.

#### **The OECD/G20 Base Erosion and Profit Shifting Project:**

Base Erosion and Profit Shifting is an OECD/G20 project to set up an international framework to combat tax avoidance by multinational enterprises using base erosion and profit shifting tools.

#### **About Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD):**

It is an intergovernmental economic organisation with 38 member countries, founded in 1961 to stimulate economic progress and world trade.

**Headquarters:** Paris, France

**Source:** PIB

## **China declared malaria-free by WHO**

### **Why in the News?**

**China** was certified as **malaria-free** by the **World Health Organization (WHO)**, following a 70-year effort to eradicate the mosquito-borne disease.

**China is the first country in the Western Pacific region** to be declared malaria-free in **more than 30 years**, following Australia in 1981, Singapore in 1982 and Brunei in 1987.

### Key Points

**China** has now maintained zero indigenous malaria cases for four consecutive years, down from an estimated 30 million cases and 300,000 deaths per year in the 1940s.

### Global Status:

China becomes the 40th territory certified malaria-free by the WHO. The last countries to gain the status were El Salvador (2021), Algeria and Argentina (2019), and Paraguay and Uzbekistan (2018).

### About Malaria:

Malaria is a life-threatening disease caused by parasites transmitted to people through the bites of infected female *Anopheles* mosquitoes. According to the **WHO's World Malaria Report 2020**, there were an estimated 229 million malaria cases worldwide in 2019. The estimated number of malaria deaths stood at 409000 in 2019.

**Note:** The WHO has also identified 25 countries with the potential to eradicate malaria by 2025 under its 'E-2025 Initiative'.

### Initiatives in India:

National Framework for Malaria Elimination (NFME) in 2016 by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. NFME is in line with WHO's Global Technical Strategy for Malaria, 2016-2030.

The National Strategic Plan for Malaria Elimination, 2017-22

The High Burden to High Impact initiative in four states (West Bengal, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh)

Distribution of Long Lasting Insecticidal Nets to high burden areas

Malaria Elimination Research Alliance-India (MERA-India) by the ICMR

**Source: Indian Express**

## Bhutan's Tax Inspectors Without Borders programme

### Why in the News?

**Tax Inspectors Without Borders (TIWB)**, a joint initiative of the **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)** and the **Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)**, launched its programme in Bhutan.

**India** was chosen as the Partner Jurisdiction and has provided the Tax Expert for this programme.

### Key Points

This programme is expected to be of about 24 months' duration through which India in collaboration with the UNDP and the TIWB

Secretariat aims to aid Bhutan in strengthening its tax administration by transferring technical know-how and skills to its tax auditors, and through sharing of best audit practices. The focus of the programme will be in the area of International Taxation and Transfer Pricing. This programme is another milestone in the continued cooperation between India and Bhutan and India's continued and active support for South-South cooperation.

**About Tax Inspectors Without Borders (TIWB):**

TIWB, a joint OECD/UNDP initiative launched in July 2015 to strengthen developing countries' auditing capacity and multinationals' compliance worldwide. TIWB deploys qualified experts in developing countries across Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean to help build tax capacity in the areas of audit, criminal tax investigations and the effective use of automatically exchanged information.

**Source: PIB**

**Important News: Health**

**National Health Mission (NHM)**

**Why in News**

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

**Key Points**

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

NHM was launched by the Government of India in 2013 subsuming the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) (launched in 2005) and National Urban Health Mission (NUHM) (launched in 2013).

**NHM support** is provided to States/ UTs for setting up of new facilities as per norms and upgradation of existing facilities for bridging the infrastructure gaps based on the requirement posed by them.

**NHM support** is also provided for provision of a range of free services related to maternal health, child health, family planning, adolescent health, universal immunization

programme, and for major diseases such as Tuberculosis, vector borne diseases like Dengue, Malaria and Leprosy etc.

**Other major initiatives supported under NHM:**

Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram

Janani Shishu Suraksha Karyakram

Implementation of Free Drugs and Free Diagnostics Service Initiatives

PM National Dialysis Programme

Implementation of National Quality Assurance Framework (in all public health facilities)

Mobile Medical Units & Tele-consultation services (implemented to improve access to healthcare particularly in rural areas)

Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana

Ayushman Bharat

**Achievements of NHM**

In the 15 years of implementation, the NHM has enabled achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for health.

It has also led to significant improvements in maternal, new-born, and child health indicators.

**Equitable development:** There was also a sustained focus on the health of tribal populations, those in Left Wing Extremism areas, and the urban poor.

**Growth in Public Health Facilities:** NHM adopts a health system approach and targets to build a network for public health facilities with Health & Wellness Centers.

**National Ambulance Services**

**Human Resource Augmentation:** NHM supports states for engaging of service delivery HR such as doctors, nurses and health workers and also implements the world's largest community health volunteer programme through the ASHAs.

**High Out-of-Pocket Expenditure (OOPE):** Recognising the need for reducing the current high levels OOPE, and that, almost 70% of the OOPE is on account of drugs and diagnostics, the Free Drugs and Free Diagnostics Services Initiatives have been implemented under the NHM.

**Source: PIB**

**Punjab becomes first state in country to introduce SOHUM (AABR)  
Why in News**

Punjab Government introduced **SOHUM-Automated Auditory Brainstem Response system (AABR)** under **Universal Newborn Hearing Screening Programme**.

Punjab is the first state in the country to introduce SOHUM (AABR).

### **Key Points**

This initiative will effectively screen hearing loss in newborn and young children.

This device will certainly help in effective assessment and further management of hearing loss in a timely manner.

### **Note:**

In a developing country like India 5-6 per thousand children are born with this defect.

Around 63 million people are suffering from hearing impairment and related diseases in India.

### **About SOHUM:**

It is an indigenously developed newborn hearing screening device developed by the **School of International Biodesign start-up SOHUM Innovation Labs India Pvt. Ltd.**

It was developed under the **Department of Biotechnology, Ministry of Science and Technology**.

**Source: TOI**

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

### **Why in News**

According to a new study, the school children of beneficiaries are benefiting from the national school meal programme in India.

The study, which was recently published in **journal Nature Communications**, is titled '**Intergenerational nutrition benefits of India's national school feeding program**'.

It has been co-authored by **University of Washington's** Suman Chakrabarti and **International Food Policy Research Institute's** Samuel Scott, Harold Alderman, Purnima Menon and Daniel Gilligan.

### **Key Points**

#### **Findings of the study:**

The study used nationally representative data on mothers and their children from 1993 to 2016 to assess whether mid-day

meals support intergenerational improvements in a child's linear growth.

Women who received free meals in primary school have children with improved linear growth.

The study found that the 14 states which rolled out mid-day meals in the late 1990s experienced improvements in child height earlier than the rest of the nation.

School meals may contribute to education, later fertility decisions, and access to health care, reducing the risk of undernutrition in the next generation.

### **About Midday Meal Scheme:**

The Midday Meal Scheme was launched as a **Centrally Sponsored Scheme** in **1995** to provide free cooked meals to children in government and government-aided primary schools (classes I–V; ages 6–10 years).

Again, the scheme was extended to children studying in upper primary classes.

The Midday Meal Scheme is a school meal programme in India designed to better the nutritional standing of school-age children nationwide.

The State Steering-cum Monitoring Committee oversees the implementation of the scheme.

The Midday Meal Scheme is covered by the **National Food Security Act, 2013**.

Tamil Nadu was the first state to introduce this scheme.

### **Global Hunger Index 2020:**

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

### **Global Nutrition Report-2020:**

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

**Source: The Hindu**

## **Important News: Economy**

### **Marine Aids to Navigation Bill 2021**

#### **Why in News**

Parliament passed the **Marine Aids to Navigation Bill 2021**, which aims to replace the over **90-year-old Lighthouse Act 1927**.

## Key Points

### About the Bill:

The Bill incorporates the global best practices, technological developments and India's International obligations in the field of Marine Aids to Navigation to make the legislative framework user-friendly and to promote ease of doing business.

The bill aims to adopt state-of-the-art technologies of marine navigation which were not covered under the statutory provisions of the old Lighthouse Act 1927.

### Background:

The administration and management of Lighthouse and Lightships in India is governed by Lighthouse Act 1927 for safe navigation.

**At the time of enactment of Lighthouse Act 1927, there were only 32 Lighthouses** in the then British India spread across six regions viz. Aden, Karachi, Madras, Bombay, Calcutta and Rangoon.

**Presently**, there are **195 Lighthouses** and a number of advanced radio and digital aids to navigation administered under the said Act.

As the technology evolved, systems were put in place where with the help of Radar and other sensors, vessels were advised from shore about the position and thus **Vessel Traffic Services (VTS)** came into existence and found wide acceptability.

These modern, technologically improved aids to marine navigation systems have changed their profile from a **'passive' service** to that of **'passive as well as interactive' service**.

**Note:** Recently, Parliament has passed the **National Institutes of Food Technology, Entrepreneurship and Management Bill, 2021**.

Source: PIB

## Kandla becomes first Green SEZ

### Why in News

**Kandla SEZ (KASEZ)** was awarded **IGBC Platinum Rating**.

**KASEZ** is the **first Green SEZ** to achieve the **IGBC Green Cities Platinum Rating** for Existing Cities.

### Key Points

The efforts of KASEZ were appreciable for water conservation and afforestation in Bhuj region of Gujarat.

**IGBC Platinum rating** has been awarded for 'Green master planning, policy initiatives and implementation of green infrastructure' by **CII's Indian Green Building Council (IGBC)**.

**About Kandla SEZ (KASEZ):**

It was Asia's first Export Processing Zone (EPZ).

It was set up in Kandla, Gujarat in 1965.

**About Special Economic Zones (SEZs):**

A Special Economic Zone is an area in which the trade and business laws are different from the rest of the country.

SEZs are located within a country's national borders, and their aims include increasing trade balance, employment, increased investment, job creation and effective administration.

The **Special Economic Zone (SEZ) policy in India** first came into inception on April 1, 2000. The prime objective was to enhance foreign investment and provide an internationally competitive and hassle free environment for exports.

The **Special Economic Zones Act, 2005**, was passed by Parliament in May, 2005 which received Presidential assent on the 23rd of June, 2005.

**Source: PIB**

**SMILE Scheme**

**Why in News**

The **Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment** has formulated a scheme "**SMILE - Support for Marginalized Individuals for Livelihood and Enterprise**".

SMILE also includes a subscheme - '**Central Sector Scheme for Comprehensive Rehabilitation of persons engaged in the act of Begging**'.

**Key Points**

**About the scheme:**

This scheme covers several comprehensive measures including welfare measures for persons who are engaged in the act of begging.

It focuses extensively on rehabilitation, provision of medical facilities, counselling, basic documentation, education, skill development, economic linkages and so on.

It provides for the use of the existing shelter homes for rehabilitation of the persons engaged in the act of begging.

### **Implementation:**

The scheme would be implemented with the support of State/UT Governments/Local Urban Bodies, Voluntary Organizations, Community Based Organizations (CBOs), institutions and others.

The **Ministry initiated pilot projects** on Comprehensive Rehabilitation of Persons engaged in the act of Begging in **10 cities** namely Bangalore, Delhi, Chennai, Hyderabad, Lucknow, Indore, Mumbai, Nagpur, Ahmedabad and Patna.

### **Fund Allocation:**

Under this Scheme, funds allocated for the next 5 years are given: Rs. 50 Crore in 2021-22, Rs. 33 Crore in 2022-23, Rs. 33 Crore in 2023-24, Rs. 33 Crore in 2024-25, and Rs. 33 Crore in 2025-26.

### **Beggars in India:**

According to Census 2011, the total number of beggars in India is 4,13,670 (2,21,673 males and 1,91,997 females). State-wise, West Bengal leads by a considerable margin, followed by Uttar Pradesh.

### **Note:**

The Ministry had released an amount of Rs.70 Lakh in 2019-20 to **National Backward Classes Finance & Development Corporation (NBCFDC)** for skill development programmes for beggars.

The Ministry had also released an amount of Rs. 1 Crore in 2019-20 to **National Institute of Social Defence (NISD)** for beggars.

**Source: PIB**

## **Special Economic Zones (SEZs)**

### **Why in News**

**Special Economic Zones (SEZs)** have touched new heights in terms of performance in Exports, Investment and Employment in the last 3 years.

### **Key Points**

#### **Performance:**

**Exports** of Rs. 22,840 Crore in 2005-06 has increased to Rs. 7,59,524 Crore in 2020-21.

**Investment** of Rs. 4,035.51 Crore in 2005-06 has increased to Rs. 6,17,499 Crore (cumulative basis) by 2020-21.

**Employment** provided to 1,34,704 persons in 2005-06 has increased to 23,58,136 persons (cumulative basis) in 2020-21.

**Note:** In various Special Economic Zones (SEZs) across the country, 1096 Nos. of units have been registered during the last three years.

**About Special Economic Zones (SEZs):**

A Special Economic Zone is an area in which the trade and business laws are different from the rest of the country. SEZs are located within a country's national borders, and their aims include increasing trade balance, employment, increased investment, job creation and effective administration.

**Special Economic Zones (SEZs) in India:**

India was one of the first in Asia to recognize the effectiveness of the **Export Processing Zone (EPZ)** model in promoting exports, with **Asia's first EPZ set up in Kandla, Gujarat in 1965.** The **Special Economic Zones Act, 2005**, was passed by Parliament in May, 2005 which received Presidential assent on the 23rd of June, 2005.

**The main objectives of the SEZ Act are:**

- To generate additional economic activity
- To create employment opportunities
- To promote exports of goods and services
- To develop infrastructure facilities
- To promote investment from domestic and foreign sources

**Source: PIB**

**Laws for surveillance in India, and the concerns over privacy**

**Why in News**

In response to the finding by a global collaborative investigative project that Israeli spyware Pegasus was used to target at least 300 individuals in India, the government has claimed that all interception in India takes place lawfully.

**Key Points**

**About Pegasus:**

Pegasus is a spyware developed by the Israeli cyberarms firm NSO Group that can be covertly installed on mobile phones running most versions of iOS and Android.

It is any malicious software designed to enter your computer device, gather your data, and forward it to a third-party without your consent.

**The laws covering surveillance in India:**

Communication surveillance in India takes place primarily under two laws — **the Telegraph Act, 1885** and the **Information Technology Act, 2000**.

While the Telegraph Act deals with interception of calls, the IT Act was enacted to deal with surveillance of all electronic communication.

A comprehensive data protection law to address the gaps in existing frameworks for surveillance is yet to be enacted.

Under the IT Act, all electronic transmission of data can be intercepted.

So, for a Pegasus-like spyware to be used lawfully, the government would have to invoke both the IT Act and the Telegraph Act.

**Associated Issues with the Surveillance:**

Affects Fundamental Rights

Legal Loopholes

Authoritarian Regime

Threat to Freedom of Press

**Recent Steps Taken in India:**

Cyber Surakshit Bharat Initiative

National Cyber security Coordination Centre

Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C)

Computer Emergency Response Team - India (CERT-IN)

Cyber Swachhta Kendra

**International Mechanisms:**

Budapest Convention on Cybercrime

International Telecommunication Union (ITU)

**Source: Indian Express**

**India's first green hydrogen plant at Mathura refinery**

**Why in News**

India's largest oil firm **Indian Oil Corporation (IOC)** will build the nation's **first 'green hydrogen' plant at its Mathura refinery**.

It aims to prepare for a future catering to the growing demand for both oil and cleaner forms of energy.

**Key Points**

This will be the nation's first green hydrogen unit.

Hydrogen, in itself, is a clean fuel but manufacturing it is energy-intensive and has carbon byproducts.

**Green hydrogen** production - the ultimate clean hydrogen resource - uses renewable energy to create hydrogen fuel.

**Note:**

Forecasts state that Indian fuel demand climbing to 400-450 million tonnes by 2040 as against 250 million tonnes now. The demand growth makes it imperative to pursue refining expansion as well as expand in CNG, LNG, biodiesel and ethanol.

**Source: Business Standard**

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

#### **Why in News**

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

#### **Key Points**

##### **About Stand Up India Scheme:**

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

##### **Objective and Nature of Loan:**

The objective of this Scheme is to facilitate loans from Scheduled Commercial Banks of value between Rs. 10 lakh and Rs. 1 Crore to at least one Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribe borrower and at least one woman borrower per bank branch for setting up a green field enterprise.

This enterprise may be in manufacturing, services, agri-allied activities or the trading sector.

In case of non-individual enterprises, 51% of the shareholding and controlling stake should be held by either an SC/ST or Woman Entrepreneur.

The offices of SIDBI and NABARD are designated Stand-Up Connect Centres (SUCC).

##### **Recent Changes:**

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

##### **Performance:**

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

**Source: PIB**

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

### **Why in News**

**India** has emerged as **5th largest forex reserves holder** in the world with **\$608.99 billion** as on June 25, 2021 after **China, Japan, Switzerland and Russia.**

This was stated by Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary in the Lok Sabha on 20<sup>th</sup> July, 2021.

### **Key Points**

Government and RBI are closely monitoring the emerging external position calibrating policies or regulations to support robust macroeconomic growth.

RBI takes regular steps for diversification of forex reserves by scaling up operations in forex swap and repo markets, acquisition of gold and exploring new markets/products, while adhering to safety and liquidity standards.

**Note:** In 2020-21, India's balance of payments recorded surplus in both current account and capital account which contributed to the increase in foreign exchange reserves during the year.

**Foreign-exchange reserves (Forex reserves):** Foreign exchange reserves are cash and other reserve assets such as gold held by a central bank or other monetary authority that are primarily available to balance payments of the country.

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

**Source: PIB**

## **4 years of the Goods and Services Tax (GST)**

### **Why in the News?**

The finance ministry has decided to issue certificates of appreciation to 54,439 GST payers for timely filing of returns and cash payment of the tax, to mark the 4th anniversary of the tax reform GST.

The **Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC)** will issue certificates of appreciation to these taxpayers.

### **Key Points**

As a result, 54,439 taxpayers have been identified. More than 88% of these taxpayers are from Micro (36%), Small (41%) and Medium enterprises (11%).

More than 66 crore GST returns have been filed so far and lower rates have helped increased tax compliance, adding GST revenues have steadily grown and have been above the Rs 1 lakh crore mark for eight consecutive months in a row.

### **About Goods and Services Tax (GST):**

GST is an indirect tax (or consumption tax) used in India on the supply of goods and services.

It is a comprehensive, multistage, destination-based tax.

Goods and services are divided into five different tax slabs for collection of tax: 0%, 5%, 12%, 18% and 28%.

However, petroleum products, alcoholic drinks, and electricity are not taxed under GST and instead are taxed separately by the individual state governments, as per the previous tax system.

The GST, which subsumed 17 local levies like excise duty, service tax and VAT and 13 cesses, was rolled out on **July 1, 2017**.

### **About GST Council:**

The GST Council is an apex member committee to modify, reconcile or to procure any law or regulation based on the context of goods and services tax in India.

The GST council is headed by the **union finance minister**.

**Source: PIB**

## **Freight Smart Cities**

### **Why in the News?**

The **Logistics Division of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry** has unveiled plans for the 'Freight Smart Cities'.

The ministry launched a website on 'Freight Smart Cities' and also released a handbook outlining 14 measures that can be taken to improve urban freight.

### **Key Points**

#### **Freight Smart Cities**

**Freight**, in simple language, means goods or cargo. These may be carried or transported by a ship, train, truck, or airplane.

#### **Need:**

Indian cities are driving the nation's economic activity, contributing more than 63% of the national GDP.

This is all the more relevant as the demand for urban freight is expected to grow by 140 per cent over the next 10 years.

Final-mile freight movement in Indian cities is currently responsible for 50 per cent of total logistics costs in India's growing e-commerce supply chains.

From the **10 cities** to be identified on an immediate basis, it is planned to expand the list to 75 cities in the next phase before scaling up throughout the country, including all state capitals and cities with more than one million population.

**Note:** The need to focus on city logistics was first discussed with States/UTs during the first **National Conference of States on Logistics on 19 January 2021.**

### **Importance of the Freight Smart Cities:**

It is expected that 124 million people will be added to cities in this decade in India, thereby adding to an increase in the demand for urban freight by 140%. Further, the e-commerce market is expected to grow to Rs 11 lakh crore by 2022.

### **Measures to improve the freight system:**

The handbook released by the Logistics department focuses on 14 key measures to enhance the urban freight system. According to it, measures have been divided into **four categories- vehicle use optimization, infrastructure development, demand and land use planning, and technology adoption.**

### **About Logistics Division:**

The Logistics Division was set up on 7 July 2017 due to the Government of India Rules, 1961 in the Department of Commerce, Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

It aims to develop an action plan for the integrated development of the logistics section in the nation by way of policy changes, advances in existing procedures, finding gaps and introducing technology in this sector.

On the **Freight smart city initiatives**, the Logistics Division is working closely with GIZ (Germany) under Indo-German Development Cooperation, Rocky Mountain Institute (RMI) and RMI India.

**Source: PIB**

## **Exports of GI certified Bhalia wheat from Gujarat**

### **Why in the News?**

The first shipment of **Geographical Indication (GI)** certified **Bhalia variety of wheat** was exported to **Kenya and Sri Lanka from Gujarat.**

### **Key Points**

#### **About GI certified Bhalia wheat:**

The GI certified wheat has high protein content and is sweet in taste.

The crop is grown mostly across the Bhal region of Gujarat, which includes Ahmedabad, Anand, Kheda, Bhavanagar, Surendranagar, Bharuch districts.

**Note:**

The Bhalia wheat received Geographical Indication (GI) certification in July 2011.

The registered proprietor of GI certification is Anand Agricultural University, Gujarat.

**Wheat exports from India:**

In 2020-21, the wheat exports from India witnessed a significant growth of 808 % to Rs 4034 crore from Rs 444 crore reported in the previous fiscal.

India exported a substantial quantity of grain to seven new countries - Yemen, Indonesia, Bhutan, Philippines, Iran, Cambodia, and Myanmar during 2020-21.

**Geographical Indication (GI) Certification:**

GI is a name or sign used on certain products which correspond to a specific geographical location or origin (e.g., a town, region, or country).

The Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999, seeks to provide for the registration and better protection of geographical indications relating to goods in India.

The Geographical Indications Registry is located in Chennai.

It is also a part of the World Trade Organisation (WTO)'s Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights.

**Note:** Darjeeling tea became the first **Geographical Indication (GI)** tagged product in India in 2004–2005.

**Source: PIB**

## 'itat e-dwar', an e-filing portal of Income Tax Appellate Tribunal

### Why in the News?

Union Minister for Law & Justice, Communications and Electronics & IT, Ravi Shankar Prasad, launched the e-filing portal of **Income Tax Appellate Tribunal (ITAT), 'itat e-dwar'**.

### Key Points

The 'itat e-dwar' portal will enhance accessibility, accountability and transparency in day to day working of the Income Tax Appellate Tribunal (ITAT).

The newly developed e-Filing Portal would enable the parties to file their Appeals, Miscellaneous Applications, documents, paper books, etc., electronically.

More than 18 crore cases are available in the **National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG)** and suggested that cases of ITAT should also be integrated in the NJDG.

### **National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG):**

NJDG, a flagship project implemented under the aegis of the eCourts project, has been recognized as a significant innovation under the Ease of Doing Business initiative of the Government of India.

The portal is a national repository of data relating to cases pending and disposed of in all district and taluka courts of the country.

The portal has been developed around the concept of elastic search technology enabling efficient case management and monitoring of cases leading to effective disposal of cases.

**Source: PIB**

### **Relief package to support Indian economy in fight against COVID-19 pandemic**

#### **Why in the News?**

Union Finance & Corporate Affairs Minister Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman announced a slew of measures to provide relief to diverse sectors affected by the **2<sup>nd</sup> wave of COVID-19 pandemic**.

A total of 17 measures amounting to **Rs. 6,28,993 crores** were announced.

#### **Key Points**

##### **Economic relief from Pandemic**

**Loan Guarantee Scheme for COVID Affected sectors:** Under this new scheme, additional credit of Rs 1.1 lakh crore will flow to the businesses. This includes Rs 50,000 crore for the health sector and Rs 60,000 crore for other sectors, including tourism.

**Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS):** The government has decided to expand the ECLGS, launched as part of Aatma Nirbhar Bharat Package in May 2020, by Rs 1.5 lakh crore.

**Credit Guarantee Scheme for Micro Finance Institutions:** This is a completely new scheme announced which aims to benefit the smallest of the borrowers who are served by the network of Micro Finance Institutions. Guarantee will be provided to Scheduled Commercial Banks for loans to new or existing NBFC-MFIs or MFIs for on lending upto Rs 1.25 lakh to approximately 25 lakh small borrowers.

**Extension of Aatma Nirbhar Bharat Rozgar Yojana (ANBRY):** ANBRY was launched on 1<sup>st</sup> Oct, 2020. It incentivises employers for creation of new employment, restoration of loss of employment through EPFO.

**Free food grains under Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana (PMGKY):** In the wake of the second wave of COVID-19 pandemic,

the scheme was relaunched in May 2021 to ensure food security of the poor/vulnerable. 5 kg of food grains will be provided free of cost to NFSA beneficiaries from May to November 2021. Estimated financial implications of the scheme will be Rs 93,869 crore, bringing the total cost of PMGKY to Rs 2,27,841 crore.

### **Strengthening Public Health**

Besides supporting the health sector through credit guarantee scheme, a new scheme for strengthening public health infrastructure and human resources with outlay of Rs. 23,220 crore was also announced.

### **Impetus for Growth & Employment**

For this the following eight schemes were announced:

Release of Climate Resilient Special Varieties

Revival of Northeastern Regional Agricultural Marketing Corporation: A revival package of Rs 77.45 crore will be provided.

Rs. 33,000 crore Boost for Project Exports through National Export Insurance Account

Rs. 88,000 crore boost to Export Insurance Cover

Digital India: Rs. 19,041 crore for Broadband to each Village through BharatNet PPP Model

Extension of Tenure of PLI Scheme for Large Scale Electronics Manufacturing

Rs 3.03 lakh crore for Reform-Based Result-Linked Power Distribution Scheme

New streamlined process for PPP Projects and Asset Monetization

**Source: PIB**

## **World Bank approves USD 500 million loan to support India's informal working class**

### **Why in the News?**

The World Bank has approved a USD 500 million loan programme to support India's informal working class to overcome the current pandemic distress.

The loan will create greater flexibility for states to cope with the ongoing pandemic, future climate and disaster shocks.

### **Key Points**

Of the USD 500 million commitment, USD 112.50 million will be financed by its concessionary lending arm **International Development Association (IDA)** and USD 387.50 million will be a loan from **International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)**.

The loan has a **maturity period of 18.5 years** including a grace period of five years.

The funds will be utilised in social protection programmes for urban informal workers, gig-workers, and migrants.

A **National Digital Urban Mission** will create a shared digital infrastructure for people living in urban areas through investments at the municipal level to help scale up urban safety nets and social insurance for informal workers.

It will also include gender-disaggregated information on women workers and female-headed households.

Street vendors are an integral part of India's urban informal economy.

The programme will give street vendors access to affordable working capital loans of up to Rs 10,000.

**Urban Local Bodies (ULBs)** will identify them through an IT-based platform.

Some five million urban street vendors could benefit from the new credit programme.

#### **About Informal Sector Worker:**

The informal sector is the part of any country's economy that is neither taxed nor monitored by any form of government.

The workers who indulge in the informal sector are informal sector workers or informal workers.

India's estimated 450 million informal workers comprise 90 percent of its total workforce, with 5-10 million workers added annually.

Nearly 40 percent of these are employed with MSMEs.

#### **Some Initiatives by the Government:**

Pradhan Mantri Rojgar Protsahan Yojana

Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-dhan Yojana

Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Urban Livelihoods Mission

PM SVANidhi

#### **About World Bank:**

The World Bank was created at the 1944 Bretton Woods Conference.

It comprises two institutions: the **International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)**, and the **International Development Association (IDA)**.

#### **Membership :**

189 countries (IBRD)

173 countries (IDA)

**Source: Indian Express**

## **Important News: Defense**

### **Exercise INDRA-2021**

## Why in News

The **12<sup>th</sup> Edition of Indo-Russia joint military Exercise INDRA-2021** will be held at **Volgograd, Russia** from 01 to 13 August 2021.

### Key Points

#### About INDRA-21:

The armies of the two countries will conduct anti-terrorist exercises in compliance with the **United Nations' decision** on joint action against international terrorist groups.

250 personnel from both the nations will form part of the exercise.

Exercise will strengthen mutual confidence and interoperability between the Indian & Russian Armies.

#### Note:

The first Exercise INDRA was held in 2003.

In 2020, the 11th edition of the Exercise was held in the Bay of Bengal.

### Joint Military Exercises of India conducted with Foreign Countries:

Country	Exercise
Australia	AUSTRA HIND
Bangladesh	SAMPRI TI
China	HAND IN HAND
France	SHAKTI
Indonesia	GARUDA SHAKTI
Kazakhstan	PRABAL DOSTYK
Kyrgyzstan	KHANJAR
Maldives	EKUVERIN
Myanmar	IMBEX
Nepal	SURYA KIRAN
Sri Lanka	MITRA SHAKTI
Thailand	MAITREE
UK	AJEYA WARRIOR

USA	YUDHABHAYAS
	VAJRA PRAHAR
Vietnam	VINBAX

**Source: PIB**

## **Exercise 'Cutlass Express 2021'**

### **Why in News**

**Indian Naval Ship Talwar** is participating in **Exercise Cutlass Express 2021**, being conducted from 26 July 2021 to 06 August 2021 along the **East Coast of Africa**.

### **Key Points**

#### **About Exercise Cutlass Express 2021:**

It is an annual maritime exercise conducted **to promote maritime security in East Africa and the Western Indian Ocean**.

#### **Participants:**

The 2021 edition of the exercise involves participation of 12 Eastern African countries, UK, US, India and various international organisations like International Maritime Organisation (IMO), Interpol, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, European Union Naval Force, Critical Maritime Routes Indian Ocean and EUCAP Somalia.

#### **Note:**

Indian Navy is participating in the exercise in a 'trainer role'.

**IFC-IOR (Information Fusion Centre – Indian Ocean Region)** is participating in the exercise.

The participation of India is in accordance with its stated policy towards maritime cooperation and security in the Indian Ocean region and vision **Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR)**.

#### **About Western Indian Ocean (WIO):**

The WIO connects North America, Europe and Asia, and as such is of global strategic importance.

Its rich natural resource profile has pushed global players, including India, to view the region with increasing interest in recent years.

#### **Inter-regional Cooperation in Western Indian Ocean region:**

Maritime Security regional programme

Djibouti Code of Conduct/Jeddah amendment to the Djibouti Code of Conduct

Indian Ocean Commission

Indian Ocean Rim Association

**Source: PIB**

## **India, UK conduct naval exercise in Bay of Bengal**

### **Why in News**

**Indian Navy** participated in a **bilateral Passage Exercise (PASSEX)** with the **United Kingdom's Royal Navy** in the Bay of Bengal from 21 to 22 Jul, 2021.

### **Key Points**

**The bilateral Maritime Exercise** was designed to hone the ability of the two navies to operate together in the maritime domain.

The maiden exercise between Indian Navy and the Royal Navy's latest Aircraft Carrier, HMS Queen Elizabeth included participation of Carrier Strike Group (CSG)-21 comprising Type 23 Frigates and an *Astute*-class submarine in addition to the other surface combatants.

Indian Navy was represented by *IN Ships Satpura, Ranvir, Jyoti, Kavaratti, Kulish* and a submarine.

**Note: India Navy and US Navy** conducted a **Passage Exercise** from March 28-29, 2021 in the eastern Indian Ocean Region.

**Source: PIB**

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

### **Why in News**

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

### **Key Points**

The missile has been developed by Defence Research & Development Laboratory (DRDL), Hyderabad in collaboration with other DRDO laboratories.

During the test, the missile demonstrated high manoeuvrability required for neutralising fast and agile aerial threats.

**Source: PIB**

## Tri Nation Table Top Naval Exercise 'Shield'

### Why in News

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

The exercise was coordinated by Maritime Warfare Centre, Mumbai.

### Key Points

Anti-Narcotic Operations and Maritime Search and Rescue are the important issues that were deliberated by the participants who share a unique geographic location, sitting astride the major shipping routes of the Indian Ocean Region.

The exercise was focused at enhancing maritime security cooperation and mutual understanding, exchange of best practices/procedures for countering common trans-national maritime crimes such as narcotics smuggling, evolving modalities for exchanging information/intelligence and to assist each other in Maritime Search and Rescue.

### Note:

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

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

**Source: The Hindu**

## DRDO's Short Span Bridging System-10 m inducted into Indian Army

### Why in the News?

The first production lot of **12 Short Span Bridging System (SSBS)-10 m**, designed and developed by **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)**, has been inducted into Indian Army.

### Key Points

The **SSBS-10 m** plays a crucial role of bridging the gaps up to 9.5 m as a single span providing a 4 m wide, fully decked roadway, ensuring faster movement of the troops.

Research & Development Establishment (Engrs) Pune, a premier engineering laboratory of DRDO, has designed and developed the system in association with M/s L&T Ltd.

The 12 bridges are part of 102 SSBS-10 m from M/s L&T Ltd, which is the production agency.

**Source: PIB**

## **DRDO successfully test fires enhanced Pinaka rocket**

### **Why in the News?**

**Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** successfully test fired extended range version of indigenously developed Pinaka rocket from a Multi-Barrel Rocket Launcher (MBRL) at Integrated Test Range, Chandipur off the coast of Odisha.

### **Key Points**

25 Enhanced Pinaka Rockets were launched in quick succession against targets at different ranges.

The enhanced range version of Pinaka Rocket System can destroy targets at distances up to 45 kms.

The rocket system has been developed jointly by **Pune based Armament Research and Development Establishment** and **High Energy Materials Research Laboratory** with manufacturing support from M/s Economic Explosives Limited, Nagpur.

**Source: PIB**

## **Integrated bilateral exercise of Indian Navy and Indian Air Force with US Navy**

### **Why in the News?**

The two-day integrated bilateral exercise between Indian and US Forces in the **Indian Ocean Region** concluded on June 24, 2021.

Indian Navy along with Indian Air Force participated with US Navy Carrier Strike Group in the exercise.

### **Key Points**

The exercise has been a key enabler in building interoperability and strengthening the defence coordination between the two nations and witnessed high tempo-naval operations at sea.

These included intense air dominance exercises, advanced air defence exercises, anti-submarine exercises, tactical manoeuvres and cross deck helicopter operations.

The exercise has been another milestone in strengthening cooperation between the two countries and reinforcing the shared values as partner militaries, in ensuring freedom of seas and commitment to an open, inclusive Indo-Pacific and a rules-based international order.

**Source: PIB**

## **First Indigenous Aircraft Carrier: INS Vikrant**

### **Why in the News?**

Raksha Mantri Rajnath Singh reviewed the progress of construction of the **first Indigenous Aircraft Carrier (IAC), INS Vikrant** built by M/s Cochin Shipyard Ltd., at Kochi.

INS Vikrant would be commissioned in the first half of 2022, which would be the most potent sea-based asset.

He recalled a recent approval accorded by the Defence Acquisition Council for Request for Proposal (RFP) of Project 75-I under the Strategic Partnership model, which will give further fillip to indigenous development of niche manufacturing technologies.

### **Key Points**

The ship shall operate MiG-29K fighter aircraft, Kamov-31 Air Early Warning Helicopters, the soon to be inducted MH-60R multi-role helicopter and the indigenously manufactured Advanced Light Helicopters.

**Note:** The successful completion of the 40,000 tonne aircraft carrier puts India in the elite group of four nations -- the US, Russia, France and the UK- -in the world capable of designing and constructing aircraft carriers.

The Raksha Mantri lauded Indian Navy for its contribution in the fight against COVID-19 - from bringing back Indian citizens from overseas during **Operation Samudra Setu I** and ferrying in Liquid Medical Oxygen from abroad during **Operation Samudra Setu II** - despite the danger of spread of the virus onboard warships.

**Note:** At present, India has only one aircraft carrier, the Russian-origin INS Vikramaditya.

**Source: PIB**

## **New Generation Agni-P Ballistic Missile**

### **Why in the News?**

DRDO successfully flight tested a **New Generation Nuclear Capable Ballistic Missile Agni-P (Agni-Prime)** from Dr APJ Abdul Kalam island off the coast of Odisha, Balasore.

### **Key Points**

**Agni-P** is a new generation advanced variant of the Agni class of missiles.

**Agni-P** was developed under the **Integrated Guided Missile Development Program**.

It is a canisterised missile with range capability between 1,000 and 2,000 kms.

### About Agni missile:

The Agni missile is a family of medium to intercontinental range ballistic missiles developed by India.

Agni missiles are long range, nuclear weapons capable surface to surface ballistic missile.

### The family comprises the following:

<b>Agni-I:</b>	Range: 700–1,200 km (Operational)
<b>Agni-II:</b>	Range: 2,000–3,500 km (Operational)
<b>Agni-III:</b>	Range: 3,000–5,000 km (Operational)
<b>Agni-IV:</b>	Range: 3,500–4,000 km (Operational)
<b>Agni-V:</b>	Range: 5,000–8,000 km (Operational)
<b>Agni-VI:</b>	Range: 11,000–12,000 km (Under development)

### About Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme (IGMDP):

IGMDP was an Indian Ministry of Defence programme for the research and development of the comprehensive range of missiles.

The programme was managed by the DRDO and Ordnance Factories Board in partnership.

The project started in 1982–83 under the leadership of Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam.

### The missiles developed under the programme:

Intermediate-range surface-to-surface ballistic missile: **Agni**

Short-range surface-to-surface ballistic missile: **Prithvi**

Short-range low-level surface-to-air missile: **Trishul**

Medium-range surface-to-air missile: **Akash**

Third generation anti-tank missile: **Nag**

**Source: The Hindu**

### Exercise Sea Breeze 2021

#### Why in the News?

Ukraine and the United States launched joint naval exercise 'Sea Breeze 2021' in the Black Sea in a show of Western cooperation with Ukraine.

The exercise comes days after Russia-U.K. row over warships in disputed waters.

#### Key Points

The Sea Breeze Exercises, which have taken place 21 times since 1997, will involve some 5,000 military personnel from more than 30 countries.

The exercises will last two weeks and involve around 30 ships, including the missile destroyer USS Ross.

### **Significance of Black Sea for Russia:**

The unique geography of the Black Sea region confers various geopolitical advantages to Russia.

Russia annexed Crimea from Ukraine in 2014 and claims the waters around the peninsula as part of its territory.

### **About Black Sea:**

The Black Sea is a marginal sea of the Atlantic Ocean lying between Europe and Asia.

The bordering countries of Black Sea are: Ukraine, Russia, Georgia, Turkey, Romania and Bulgaria.

**Source: The Hindu**

## **Environment**

### **Gross Environment Product (GEP) in Uttarakhand**

#### **Why in News**

The Uttarakhand government recently announced it will initiate valuation of its natural resources in the form of '**Gross Environment Product**' (GEP).

It is along the lines of **Gross Domestic Product (GDP)**.

**Gross domestic product (GDP):** GDP a monetary measure of the market value of all the final goods and services produced in a specific time period.

#### **Key Points**

#### **About 'Gross Environment Product' (GEP):**

It is an **assessment system to measure the ecological status of a region and is one of the components of green GDP**.

It is **considered as the product and service value** that the ecosystem provides for **human welfare, economic and socially sustainable development**.

**About Green GDP:** While calculating Green GDP, economic growth with environmental factors is taken into consideration along with the standard GDP of a country. It factors biodiversity losses and costs attributed to climate change.

The term **“ecosystem services”** was coined in 1981 to attract academics towards this aspect.

According to American ecological economist Robert Costanza, ecosystem services are the benefits human populations derive from ecosystem functions.

The definition is still in the process of evolution.

In 1997, a group of 13 economists and ecologists led by Costanza showed that at global level the value of ecosystem services is about twice as much as the global GDP.

### **Need for Gross Environment Product:**

**Uttarakhand gives services to the tune of Rs. 95,112 crores per year to the nation through its biodiversity and has more than 71% area under forests.**

It is **home to the Himalayas, wildlife reserves** such as Corbett National Park and Rajaji Tiger Reserves, **and the origin point of various rivers** such as Ganga, Yamuna and Sharada.

GEP will **help in the conservation of the environment and climate change.**

**Source: DownToEarth**

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

### **Why in News**

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

### **Key Points**

The **two organizations from India** out of the ten winners globally are— **Aadhimalai Pazhangudiyinar Producer Company Limited** and **Snehakunja Trust**.

They will each receive a prize of US\$10,000 and the opportunity to join a series of special virtual events associated with the UN General Assembly, the Nature for Life Hub and the UN Food Systems Summit later this year.

### **About Aadhimalai Pazhangudiyinar Producer Company Limited:**

This 1,700-member cooperative, managed and run entirely by Indigenous people from the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve in Southern India, has improved livelihoods across 147 villages by

processing and marketing a diverse range of forest produce and crops.

**About Snehakunja Trust:**

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

**About Equator Prize:**

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

**Source: undp.org**

**New Spider Species named 'Icius Tukarami' after 26/11 Martyr Tukaram Omble**

**Why in the News?**

Scientists have discovered two new species of jumping spiders in Maharashtra and named one of them as 'Icius Tukarami', after Tukaram Omble, the Mumbai Police Assistant Sub-Inspector who was killed during the 26/11 terror attacks in the city.

The second species of the jumping spider was called Phintella cholkei.

**Key Points**

This species is distributed in Thane and Aarey Milk Colony in Mumbai. The research paper was published in the Russian science journal Anthropoda Selecta.

Mr Omble, unarmed, was killed while he tried to capture terrorist Ajmal Kasab on the night of November 26, 2008.

**Awards and Honours**

**Government of India launches National Logistics Excellence Awards**

**Why in News**

The **National Logistics Excellence Awards** are in **two categories**; the **first** includes **logistics infrastructure/service providers** and **second** is for **various user industries**.

Awards will give due recognition to various players involved in the logistics supply chain.

**Key Points**



### **About the Awards:**

Through these awards, the government aims to turn the spotlight on **logistics service providers** who have attained operational excellence, adopted digitisation and technology, improved customer service and pursued sustainable practices, among other achievements.

For **user industries**, the awards will showcase efforts towards supply chain transformation, supplier ecosystem development, skill development, automation, and other similar endeavours.

### **Note:**

While the Indian logistics sector has been growing at a CAGR of 10.5%, reaching approximately USD 215 billion in value in 2020, there are systemic, interconnected problems that must be addressed to enhance its efficiency.

Comprehensive logistics costs amount to almost 14% of India's GDP. Closing India's competitiveness gap vis-à-vis the global average of 8 percent, would make the Indian logistics sector advanced, organised and efficient, on par with global peers with the ambition of being amongst the top 25 countries in the global Logistics Performance Index (LPI).

**Source: PIB**

### **Cannes Film Festival 2021**

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

#### **The list of main winners:**

**Palme d'Or:** Julia Ducournau for "Titane" (France)

**Grand Prix:** Ashgar Farhadi for "A Hero" (Iran) and Juho Kuosmanen for "Compartment No.6" (Finland)

**Best director:** Leos Carax for "Annette" (France)

**Best actor:** Caleb Landry Jones for "Nitram" (US)

**Best actress:** Renate Reinsve for "Worst Person in the World" (Norway)

**Jury prize:** Nadav Lapid for "Ahed's Knee" (Israel) and Apichatpong Weerasethakul for "Memoria" (Thailand)

**Best screenplay:** Hamaguchi Ryusuke and Takamasa Oe for "Drive My Car" (Japan)

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

**About Cannes Film Festival:**

The Cannes Film Festival is an annual film festival held in Cannes, France which previews new films of all genres, including documentaries, from all around the world. It was founded in 1946.

The two major awards are Palme d'Or and Grand Prix.

**Source: TOI**

**Odia poet Dr. Rajendra Kishore Panda chosen for 2020 Kuvempu award**

**Why in the News?**

Odia poet Dr. Rajendra Kishore Panda has been selected for the Kuvempu Rashtriya Puraskar 2020.

**Key Points**

Dr Panda has published 16 poetry collections and a novel.

He was awarded the Gangadhar National Award in 2010 and the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1985.

**About Kuvempu Rashtriya Puraskar:**

Founded in 1992, Rashtrakavi Kuvempu Trust instituted this national annual literary award in 2013 in the name of Kuvempu to recognise litterateurs who had contributed in any language recognised by the Constitution of India.

The award carries a cash award of ₹5 lakh, a silver medal and a citation.

**Source: The Hindu**

**Nashik's Community Radio Station bags the National Award**

**Why in the News?**

**Radio Vishwas**, a **Community Radio Station** in Nashik, Maharashtra has bagged two awards at the **8th edition of the National Community Radio Awards** instituted by the **Ministry of Information and Broadcasting**.

Radio Vishwas 90.8 won the **first prize** in the **"Sustainability Model Awards"** category and the **Second prize** in the **"Thematic Awards"** category for its radio program **'Education for All'** in the times of COVID-19.

### Key Points

**Radio Vishwas** is run by the **Vishwas Dhyan Prabodhini & Research Institute, Nashik, Maharashtra** and has been broadcasting since its launch.

### About National Community Radio Awards:

The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting had instituted National Community Radio Awards in the year 2011-12 to encourage innovation and healthy competition amongst Community Radio Stations.

These Community Radio stations have played a significant role in communication during COVID-19 pandemic. As on date, there are 327 community radio stations in operation in India across various states.

**Source: PIB**

## P. Sainath awarded 2021 Japan's Fukuoka Grand Prize

### Why in the News?

Noted journalist P. Sainath has been selected as one of the three recipients of the Fukuoka Prize for 2021.

Mr. Sainath received the 'Grand Prize' of the Fukuoka Prize while Prof. Mio Kishimoto and Thai writer and filmmaker Prabda Yoon received the Academic Prize and the Arts and Culture Prize respectively.

### Key Points

Sainath dedicated the prize to his fellow journalists who are reporting from rural India and to PARI (People's Archive of Rural India), the news website he founded in 2014.

Sainath has been the recipient of many awards, including the Amnesty International Global Human Rights Journalism Prize and the Ramon Magsaysay Award.

### About Fukuoka Prize:

The Fukuoka Prize is an award established by the city of Fukuoka and the Fukuoka City International Foundation to honor the outstanding work of individuals or organizations in preserving or creating Asian culture.

There are three prize categories: Grand Prize, Academic Prize, and Arts and Culture Prize.

**Source: The Hindu**

## Deepika Kumari reclaims world no.1 ranking after hat-trick of gold medals

Star Indian archer Deepika Kumari regained the number one position in the global rankings following her hat-trick of gold medals at the **Archery World Cup Stage 3 in Paris.**

**Gold in all 3 recurve events:** Women's individual, team and mixed pair events.

She has 9 gold, 12 silver and 7 bronze medals in the World Cup.

**Source: Indian Express**

### Reports

#### India ranks 9<sup>th</sup> in global agricultural exporters in 2019: WTO Report Why in News

In 2019, **India ranked 9<sup>th</sup> with a share of 3.1% in global agricultural exports** as per a report by **World Trade Organization (WTO)** on the trends in world agricultural trade in the past 25 years (from 1995).

##### Key Points

India has entered the top 10 list of the countries exporting agricultural produce in the year 2019 with a sizable share in the export of rice, cotton, soya beans and meat.

The USA, which topped the list in 1995, was overtaken by the European Union (EU) in 2019.

Rank	Country	Share of Global Agriculture Exports in 2019
1	European Union (EU)	16.1 %
2	US	13.8 %
3	Brazil	7.8 %
9	India	3.1 %

The top exporting nations of **rice** in 1995 were Thailand (38%), India (26%), and the US (19%). In 2019, **India topped with 33%.**

India is the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest cotton exporter (7.6%) and the 4<sup>th</sup> largest importer (10%) in 2019.

In the largest traded Agri product, soya beans, India (0.1%) has a meagre share, but was ranked 9<sup>th</sup> in the world.

In the “meat and edible meat offal” category, India secured 8<sup>th</sup> rank in the world with a global share of 4%.

India’s share of foreign value-added content in its Agri exports clocked 3.8% share primarily due to high tariffs on Agri imports to boost the domestic markets and local farmers.

**Indian government schemes in agriculture sector:**

National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture

Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana

Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana

Pradhan Mantri Kisan Sampada Yojana

e-National Agriculture Market (e-NAM)

Soil Health Card

Kisan Credit Card

Micro Irrigation Fund scheme

Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana

Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana

PM-Kusum

**Source: newsonair**

**Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) – Annual Report (July, 2019 – June, 2020)**

**Why in News**

**The National Statistical Office (NSO)** released the 3<sup>rd</sup> annual report on **Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS)** conducted during **July 2019-June 2020**.

**Key Points**

**Unemployment Rate (UR):** UR fell to 4.8 % in 2019-20. In 2018-19, it stood at 5.8 % and 6.1 % in 2017-18.

**Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR):** LFPR increased to 40.1% in 2019-20 (37.5%:2018-19 and 36.9%:2017-18).

**Worker Population Ratio (WPR):** WPR improved to 38.2% in 2019-20 (35.3%:2018-19 and 34.7%:2017-18).

**About Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS):**

**The National Statistical Office (NSO)** launched the PLFS in April 2017.

The first annual report (July 2017-June 2018) was released in May 2019 and the second (July 2018-June 2019) in June 2020.

### **Objective:**

To estimate the key employment and unemployment indicators such as WPR, LFPR, UR in the short time interval of 3 months for the urban areas only in the 'Current Weekly Status'

To estimate employment and unemployment indicators in both 'Usual Status' and 'Current Weekly Status' in both urban and rural areas annually

### **Government Initiatives to Tackle Unemployment:**

Pradhan Mantri Street Vendor's Atma Nirbhar Nidhi (PM SVANidhi)

In 2020, an additional fund of Rs 40,000 crore for MGNREGA

Credit guarantees for MSMEs

Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana

New Code on Wages, 2019

### **Key Terms:**

**Labour Force Participation Rate: It** is defined as the percentage of persons in the labour force (i.e. working or seeking or available for work) in the population.

**Worker Population Ratio: It** is defined as the percentage of employed persons in the population.

**Unemployment Rate: It** is defined as the percentage of persons unemployed among the persons in the labour force.

### **About National Statistical Office (NSO):**

NSO is the central statistical agency of the Government mandated under the Statistical Services Act 1980 under the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI).

### **Source: PIB**

### **United Nation's Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation 2021**

#### **Why in News**

India has scored 90.32% in **United Nation's Economic and Social Commission for Asia Pacific's (UNESCAP)** latest **Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation.**

The Survey hailed this as a remarkable jump from 78.49% in 2019.

India has achieved a **100% score for the Transparency index** and 66% in the "Women in trade" component.

#### **Key Points**

#### **Findings of the Survey:**

**After evaluation of 143 economies, the Survey has highlighted India's significant improvement in the scores on all 5 key indicators, as follows:**

**Transparency:** 100% in 2021 (from 93.33% in 2019)

**Formalities:** 95.83% in 2021 (from 87.5% in 2019)

**Institutional Arrangement and Cooperation:** 88.89% in 2021 (from 66.67% in 2019)

**Cross-Border Paperless Trade:** 66.67% in 2021 (from 55.56% in 2019)

**Paperless Trade:** 96.3% in 2021 (from 81.48% in 2019)

India is the best performing country when compared to South and South West Asia region (63.12%) and Asia Pacific region (65.85%).

**Causes of Improvement:**

Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC), has been at forefront of path breaking reforms under the umbrella of 'Turant' Customs to usher in a Faceless, Paperless and Contactless Customs by way of a series of reforms.

Further, during the COVID-19 pandemic, Customs formations have made all efforts to expedite COVID-19 related imports such as Oxygen related equipments, life-saving medicines, vaccines etc.

**About the Survey:**

The Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation is conducted every two years by **UNESCAP**.

The 2021 Survey includes an assessment of 58 trade facilitation measures covered by the WTO's Trade Facilitation Agreement.

**About United Nation's Economic and Social Commission for Asia Pacific's (UNESCAP):**

It is a regional commission under the jurisdiction of the **United Nations Economic and Social Council**.

It was established in order to increase economic activity in Asia and the Far East, as well as to foster economic relations between the region and other areas of the world.

It is composed of 53 Member States and 9 Associate members, mostly from the Asia and Pacific regions.

**Formation:** 1947

**Headquarters:** Bangkok, Thailand

**Source: PIB**

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

### Why in News

**State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2021** report presents the first global assessment of food insecurity and malnutrition for 2020 and offers some indication of what hunger might look like by 2030 in a scenario further complicated by the enduring effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The report is an annual flagship report jointly prepared by FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization), IFAD (International Fund for Agricultural Development), UNICEF, WFP (World Food Programme) and WHO (World Health Organization).

### Key Points

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

### Findings of the report:

In terms of population, it is estimated that between 720 and 811 million people in the world faced hunger in 2020. Considering the middle of the projected range (768 million), 118 million more people were facing hunger in 2020 than in 2019, with estimates ranging from 70 to 161 million.

Of the total number of undernourished people in 2020 (768 million), more than half (418 million) live in Asia and more than one-third (282 million) in Africa, while Latin America and the Caribbean accounts for about 8 percent (60 million).

After remaining virtually unchanged from 2014 to 2019, the prevalence of undernourishment (PoU) increased from 8.4 percent to around 9.9 percent between 2019 and 2020, heightening the challenge of achieving the Zero Hunger target in 2030.

Moderate or severe food insecurity (based on the Food Insecurity Experience Scale) at the global level has been slowly on the rise, from 22.6 percent in 2014 to 26.6 percent in 2019. Then in 2020, the year the COVID-19 pandemic spread across the globe, it rose nearly as much as in the previous five years combined, to 30.4 percent.

Thus, nearly one in three people in the world did not have access to adequate food in 2020 – an increase of 320 million people in just one year, from 2.05 to 2.37 billion.

### **Indian Scenario**

#### **Status of Malnutrition:**

The prevalence of undernutrition among the total population in India was 15.3% during 2018-20.

The country has observed an increase in the prevalence of obesity among the adult population from 3% in 2012 to 3.9% in 2016.

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

#### **Related Initiatives:**

One Nation One Ration Card

PM Garib Kalyan Ann Yojana

Atmanirbhar Bharat Rozgar Yojana

Intensified Mission Indradhanush 3.0 Scheme

Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi

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

## **United District Information System for Education Plus (UDISE+) 2019-20 Report**

### **Why in the News?**

Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank', Union Education Minister released the Report on United Information System for Education Plus (UDISE+) 2019-20 for School Education in India.

As per the UDISE+ report 2019-20, Gross Enrolment Ratio at all levels of school education has improved in 2019-20 compared to 2018-19.

Pupil Teacher Ratio (PTR) has improved at all levels of school education.

### **Key Points**

#### **Highlights of Report on UDISE+ 2019-20:**

In 2019-20, **total students** in school education from pre-primary to higher secondary have crossed 26.45 crore. This is higher by 42.3 lakh compared to 2018-19.

**Gross Enrolment Ratio** increased to 89.7% (from 87.7%) at Upper Primary level, 97.8% (from 96.1%) at Elementary Level, 77.9% (from 76.9%) at Secondary Level and 51.4% (from 50.1%) at Higher Secondary Level in 2019-20 (from 2018-19).

In 2019-20, 96.87 lakh teachers have been engaged in school education. This is higher by about 2.57 lakh compared to 2018-19.

In 2019-20, the **Pupil Teacher Ratio (PTR)** for primary has become 26.5, PTR for upper primary and secondary has become 18.5 and PTR for higher secondary has become 26.1.

In 2019-20, **enrolment of girls** from primary to higher secondary is more than 12.08 crore. This is an increase by 14.08 lakh compared to 2018-19.

**Gross Enrolment Ratio of girls** has increased to 90.5% (from 88.5%) at Upper Primary level, 98.7% (from 96.7%) at Elementary Level, 77.8% (from 76.9%) at Secondary Level and 52.4% (from 50.8%) at Higher Secondary Level in 2019-20 (from 2018-19).

Between 2012-13 and 2019-20, the **Gender Parity Index (GPI)** at both Secondary and Higher Secondary levels have improved.

**Improvement of GPI** has been most pronounced at the higher secondary level, which has gone up **to 1.04 in 2019-20 from 0.97 in 2012-13.**

#### **About Unified District Information System for Education (UDISE):**

It initiated in 2012-13 integrating DISE for elementary and secondary education is one of the largest Management Information Systems on School Education.

UDISE+ is an updated and improved version of UDISE.

#### **Main Schemes Related to Education:**

Pradhan Mantri Innovative Learning Program (DHRUV)

NISHTHA – National Initiative for School Heads' and Teachers' Holistic Advancement

Education Quality Upgradation and Inclusion Programme (EQUIP)

Deeksharambh

PARAMARSH

Scheme for Transformational and Advanced Research in Sciences (STARS)

Rashtriya Uchchar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA)

Impactful Policy Research in Social Science (IMPRESS)

SWAYAM PRABHA- DTH Educational Channels

Scheme for Higher Education Youth in Apprenticeship and Skills (SHREYAS)

National Apprenticeship Promotional Scheme

National Educational Alliance for Technology

Scheme for Trans-disciplinary Research for India's Developing Economy (STRIDE)

DIKSHA

**Source: PIB**

## **India ranked 10th in Global Cybersecurity Index 2020**

**Why in the News?**

India ranked 10th in the 4th edition of the Global Cybersecurity Index (GCI) 2020, a significant jump of 37 places from its previous GCI rank in 2018.

### Key Points

**Rank 1:** US

**Rank 2:** UK, Saudi Arabia

**Rank 3:** Estonia

**Rank 10:** India

**Note:** India has also secured the **4th position in the Asia Pacific region**, underlining its commitment to cybersecurity.

### About Global Cybersecurity Index (GCI):

The GCI is a composite index created, analyzed and published by the **International Telecommunication Union (ITU)**, a specialized agency of the **United Nations**, to measure the commitment to cybersecurity of its **194 member countries**.

GCI assessment is done on the basis of performance on **five pillars** of cybersecurity including – (i) Legal measures, (ii) Technical measures, (iii) Organizational measures, (iv) Capacity development, and (v) Cooperation.

**Source:** Indian Express

## World Drug Report 2021: UNODC

### Why in the News?

Every year, the **United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)** issues the World Drug Report, full of key statistics and factual data obtained through official sources.

### Key Points

#### Findings of the Report:

Around 275 million people used drugs worldwide in 2020, while over 36 million people suffered from drug use disorders.

In the last 24 years **cannabis** potency had increased by as much as four times in parts of the world, even as the percentage of adolescents who perceived the drug as harmful fell by as much as 40 percent.

The percentage of  $\Delta$ 9-THC – the main psychoactive component in cannabis - has risen from around 6 percent to more than 11 percent in Europe between 2002 and 2019.

In surveys of health professionals across 77 countries, 42 percent asserted that cannabis use had increased.

Between 2010 and 2019 the number of people using drugs increased by 22 percent, owing in part to global population growth.

According to the latest global estimates, about 5.5 percent of the population aged between 15 and 64 years have used drugs at least once in the past year.

**Drug markets on the dark web** only emerged a decade ago but major ones are now worth at least \$ 315 million in annual sales. Although this is just a fraction of overall drug sales, the trend is upwards with a fourfold increase between 2011 to mid-2017 and mid-2017 to 2020.

#### **Related International Initiatives:**

Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, 1961

The Convention on Psychotropic Substances, 1971

The United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, 1988

International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking (26th June).

#### **About United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC):**

It is a United Nations office that was established in 1997 as the Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention by combining the United Nations International Drug Control Program and the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Division in the United Nations Office at Vienna, Austria. And was renamed the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in 2002.

**Source: The Hindu**

### **Detailed Project reports of LiDAR survey of forest areas**

#### **Why in the News?**

Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Prakash Javadekar released the Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) of LiDAR based survey of forest areas in **10 states**.

The 10 states are Bihar, Assam, Chhattisgarh, Goa, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, Nagaland, and Tripura.

#### **Key Points**

The project was awarded to **WAPCOS** in July 2020 at a cost of Rs.18.38 Crore for implementation in 26 states over 261897 hectare.

The DPR's for the remaining 16 states will also be released shortly.

The project, which was awarded to **WAPCOS, a PSU under the aegis of Ministry of Jal Shakti, Government of India** is a first of its kind and a unique experiment using LiDAR technology which will help augment water and fodder in jungles areas thereby reducing human-animal conflict

State forest departments will use **Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA)** funds towards implementation of these projects.

#### **About LiDAR:**



**LiDAR (Light Detection and Ranging)** is a remote sensing method that uses light in the form of a pulsed laser to measure ranges (variable distances) to the Earth.

A lidar instrument principally consists of a laser, a scanner, and a specialized GPS receiver.

Airplanes and helicopters are the most commonly used platforms for acquiring lidar data over broad areas.

**Source: PIB**

## Awards and Honours

### **Shibaji Banerjee to be conferred with Mohun Bagan Ratna 2021 posthumously**

Former goalkeeper of the Indian Football team, Late Shibaji Banerjee will be conferred with Mohun Bagan Ratna 2021 posthumously.

During his 8 years long professional career, Banerjee won 4 Calcutta Football League, 5 Durand Cup, 5 IFA Shield, 4 Federation Cup and 2 Rovers Cup titles.

#### **About Mohun Bagan Ratna award:**

It is an award presented each year on Mohun Bagan Day to outstanding former players, irrespective of sports played.

Since 2001, on 29 July each year has been celebrated as Mohun Bagan Day.

**Source: The Hindu**

### **Kajal Chakraborty wins Norman Borlaug National Award 2020**

#### **Why in News**

**Kajal Chakraborty, Principal Scientist** at the **Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI)** has won the **Norman Borlaug National Award** for Excellence in Agricultural Research instituted by the **Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR)**.

The award was presented during the **93rd Foundation Day of ICAR**.

#### **Key Points**

The award is in recognition of Chakraborty's outstanding achievement in developing and commercialising nutraceutical products from selected seaweeds to combat rheumatoid

arthritic pains, type-2 diabetes, dyslipidemia, hypertension and hypothyroidism.

**About Norman Borlaug National Award:**

The award, which is announced every five years, carries a cash prize of Rs 10 lakh.

Besides, the scientist will be given a research grant of Rs 1.5 crore for carrying out a challenging research project for five years.

**Source: The Hindu**

## New Appointments

### Pushkar Singh Dhami sworn in as new Uttarakhand Chief Minister

**Why in the News?**

Pushkar Singh Dhami was sworn in as the 11th Chief Minister of Uttarakhand, along with an 11-member cabinet.

**Key Points**

Pushkar Singh Dhami is Uttarakhand's third chief minister in nearly four months.

Dhami succeeds Tirath Singh Rawat, who resigned recently after nearly four months in office. Tirath Singh Rawat replaced Trivendra Singh Rawat in March 2021.

Dhami is an MLA from the Khatima assembly constituency in the hill state's Udham Singh Nagar district.

**Source: The Hindu**

### New Governors appointed in 8 states

**Why in the News?**

In a major reshuffle, President of India Ram Nath Kovind appointed eight new governors giving them charge of the administration of new states. While many were transferred, others were new appointments.

Union Minister and the **BJP's Rajya Sabha leader Thawarchand Gehlot** has been appointed as the **Governor of Karnataka**.

**Key Points**

**Thawarchand Gehlot** has been appointed as the Governor of Karnataka.

**Hari Babu Kambhampati** has been appointed as the Governor of Mizoram.

**Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar** has been appointed as the Governor of Himachal Pradesh.

**Mangubhai Chhaganbhai Patel** has been appointed as the Governor of Madhya Pradesh.

**Satyadev Narayan Arya**, Governor of Haryana, has been transferred and appointed as Governor of Tripura.

**PS Sreedharan Pillai**, Governor of Mizoram, has been transferred and appointed as Governor of Goa.

**Bandaru Dattatraya**, Governor of Himachal Pradesh, has been transferred and appointed as Governor of Haryana.

**Ramesh Bais**, Governor of Tripura, has been transferred and appointed as Governor of Jharkhand.

**Source: The Hindu**

## **Tenure of Attorney General K.K. Venugopal extended by a year**

### **Why in the News?**

The central government has extended the tenure of Attorney General (AG) for India K.K. Venugopal by a year.

Venugopal will continue on the constitutional post till 30 June 2022.

With this extension, Venugopal will complete 5 years as AG next year.

Venugopal, who will turn 90 on 6th September this year, is the oldest person to serve on this post.

### **Key Points**

K K Venugopal took over as the 15th Attorney General for India on July 1, 2017.

In 2002, he was awarded the Padma Bhushan and in 2015 Padma Vibhushan.

### **About the Attorney General for India:**

The Attorney General for India is the Indian government's chief legal advisor, and is its principal barrister in the Supreme Court of India.

They are appointed by the President of India on the advice of the Union Cabinet under Article 76 of the Constitution.

**Source: Indian Express**

## **Praveen Sinha appointed as Special Director of CBI**

### **Why in the News?**

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has appointed CBI Additional Director Praveen Sinha as the Special Director of Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

### Key Points

Sinha, a Gujarat-cadre IPS officer of the 1988 batch, has served as the agency's acting Director after Rishi Kumar Shukla had retired.

The post of Special Director is the second senior-most position in the CBI after the Director. The post was vacant for the last three years.

### Facts about Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI):

**Headquarters:** New Delhi

**Founded:** 1 April 1963

**Director:** Subodh Kumar Jaiswal

**Parent organization:** Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions

**Source:** The Hindu

## Important Days

### July 29, International Tiger Day

#### Why in News

**International Tiger Day** or **Global Tiger Day** is an annual celebration to raise awareness for tiger conservation, held annually on 29 July.

#### Key Points

**International Tiger Day** was created at the Saint Petersburg Tiger Summit in Russia in 2010.

**Tiger Range Countries:** 13 tiger range countries are India, Bhutan, Bangladesh, China, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Myanmar, Malaysia, Nepal, Russia, Vietnam & Thailand.

#### Tiger Reserve in India:

Recently, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change approved the conversion of the Ramgarh Vishdhari Wildlife Sanctuary in Rajasthan's Bundi district into the 4th tiger reserve in the state.

It is the country's 52nd tiger reserve.

#### About National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA):

It is a statutory body under the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change constituted under enabling provisions of the **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972**, as amended in 2006.

#### About Project Tiger:

It is a tiger conservation programme launched in **April 1973** by the Government of India.

It is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme for the conservation of the tiger in the country.

**Source: The Hindu**

## **July 28, World Hepatitis Day 2021**

### **Why in News**

World Hepatitis Day is observed each year on 28 July to raise awareness of viral hepatitis.

### **Key Points**

This year's **theme** is **"Hepatitis can't wait"**, conveying the urgency of efforts needed to eliminate hepatitis as a public health threat by 2030.

**About Hepatitis:** Hepatitis, which causes inflammation in the liver, is a group of infectious diseases known as Hepatitis A, B, C, D, and E.

### **Note:**

**World Hepatitis Day** is one of 11 official global public health campaigns marked by the **World Health Organization (WHO)**.

**Others** are World Health Day, World Chagas Disease Day, World Blood Donor Day, World Malaria Day, World Immunization Week, World Tuberculosis Day, World No Tobacco Day, World Patient Safety Day, World Antimicrobial Awareness Week and World AIDS Day.

**Source: who.int**

## **July 23, National Broadcasting Day**

### **Why in News**

In India, "National Broadcasting Day" is celebrated on 23rd July every year to make people aware of the importance of radio.

### **Key Points**

On this day in the year 1927, the broadcast of radio started from Bombay station for the first time in the country under a private company called Indian Broadcasting Company of India (IBC).

### **History of National Broadcasting Day**

Broadcasting service was started in 1927 with two privately owned transmitters in Mumbai and Kolkata.

After that, in 1930, the government took these transmitters under its control.

Till 1935, it was known as Indian Broadcasting Service. But in the year 1936 its name was changed to **All India Radio (AIR)** and in 1956 it came to be known as **'Aakashvani'**.

**All India Radio** is owned by **Prasar Bharti**, which is a statutory autonomous body set up by an Act of parliament.

**Note:** Prasar Bharati has 470 broadcasting centers across the country, covering approximately 92% of the country's area and 99.19% of the total population.

**Source: newsonair**

## **July 18, Nelson Mandela International Day**

### **Why in News**

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

### **Key Points**

The theme for 2021 is "One Hand Can Feed Another".

The United Nations (UN) officially declared July 18th as Nelson Mandela International day in 2009. It was first celebrated in 2010.

### **About Nelson Mandela:**

Nelson Mandela was the former president of South Africa.

He is widely regarded as a leader of social justice and a staunch advocate for democracy.

He received over 250 honours and was awarded the prestigious Nobel Peace Prize in 1993.

**Source: TOI**

## **July 17, World Day for International Justice**

### **Why in News**

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

### **Key Points**

The theme for 2021 is "A Call for Social Justice in the Digital Economy."

July 17 is the date of the adoption of the treaty that created the International Criminal Court.

On 1 June 2010, at the Review Conference of the Rome Statute held in Kampala (Uganda), the Assembly of State Parties decided to celebrate 17 July as the Day of International Criminal Justice.

**Source: TOI**

## July 01, National Doctors' Day

### Why in the News?

National Doctors' Day is a day celebrated to recognize the contributions of physicians to individual lives and communities.

This day serves to show gratitude to all those doctors who have selflessly aided us in our time of need and tirelessly worked for the health of their patients.

### Key Points

#### History of National Doctors' Day

The National Doctors' Day is celebrated on July 1 all across India to honour the legendary physician and the second Chief Minister of West Bengal, **Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy**. He was born on July 1, 1882 and died on the same date in 1962.

The National Doctors' Day was first observed in 1991.

## Books and Authors

### Former RBI Governor Bimal Jalan's book titled "The India Story"

Former RBI Governor Bimal Jalan's book **"The India Story: An Epic Journey of Democracy and Development"** focuses on India's economic history and aims to provide lessons for the future of India's political economy.

The book is published by Rupa Publications India.

#### About Bimal Jalan:

Bimal Jalan is a former Governor of RBI and was a nominated member of the Upper House of India's Parliament, the Rajya Sabha during 2003–2009.

He has held several government positions throughout his career, such as finance secretary and chairman of the Economic Advisory Council to Prime Minister.

**Source: ThePrint**

## Obituaries

### Veteran Actress Jayanthi passes away

Veteran actress Abhinaya Sharade Jayanthi, was known for her work in Tamil, Telugu and Kannada movies, passed away.

Jayanthi acted in more than 500 films in Kannada, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam and Hindi.

She had received 7 Karnataka State Film Awards and 2 Filmfare Awards.

She won the Padmabhushan Dr. B. Saroja Devi National Award, 2017.

**Source: The Hindu**

### **Legendary badminton player Nandu Natekar passes away**

Legendary badminton player Nandu Natekar became the first Indian player to win an international event when he won the Sellanger International in Malaysia in 1956.

Natekar won over 100 national and international titles.

He was conferred with the prestigious Arjuna Award in 1961.

He won 12 out of the 16 singles matches and 8 out of 16 in doubles as part of the Indian team at the Thomas Cup between 1951 and 1963.

**Source: The Hindu**

### **Kerala's oldest learner Bhageerathi Amma dies at 107**

Kerala's oldest learner, Bhageerathi Amma who passed a state literacy mission examination at the age of 105, passed away.

Bhageerathi was awarded the Centre's **Nari Shakti Puraskar** in 2020 for her contribution towards women empowerment.

**Source: Indian Express**

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

Surekha Sikri worked in theatre, films and television.

She received the National Film Award for Best Supporting Actress thrice, including Tamas (1988), Mammo (1995) and Badhaai Ho (2018).

She won the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award in 1989.

**Source: Indian Express**

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

Pulitzer Prize winning Indian photojournalist Danish Siddiqui was killed in a Taliban attack in Afghanistan while covering the conflict between the Afghan armed forces and the Taliban.

He was an Indian photo-journalist based in Mumbai, who used to head the national Reuters Multimedia team.

He received the Pulitzer Prize in 2018, as part of the Reuters team, for documenting the Rohingya Refugee Crisis.

**Source: The Hindu**

## **Legendary actor Dilip Kumar passes away**

### **Why in the News?**

Legendary actor Dilip Kumar, who was popularly known as the tragedy king of Bollywood, passed away at 98.

### **Key Points**

Dilip Kumar, real name Yusuf Khan, appeared in Indian cinema's most iconic and landmark films, including Mughal-e-Azam, Naya Daur, Devdas, Ram Aur Shyam, Andaz, Ganga Jamuna and Madhumati.

He was the **first actor to win the Filmfare Award for Best Actor in 1954** and won it a total of **8 times**.

He was honoured with the Dadasaheb Phalke Award in 1994 and Padma Vibhushan in 2015.

He also received Pakistan's highest civilian honour, the Nishan-e-Imtiaz.

**Source: Indian Express**

## **Former Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Virbhadra Singh passes away**

Congress leader and former Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Virbhadra Singh passed away at 87.

Virbhadra Singh was the nine-time MLA, five-time Member of Parliament, and the Chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh for six terms.

Before his death, he served as MLA from the Arki Assembly constituency in Solan District.

**Source: The Hindu**

## **Legendary Musician Parassala B Ponnammal passes away**

### **Why in the News?**

Legendary Carnatic musician and Padmashree awardee, Parassala B Ponnammal, passed away.

### **Key Points**

Parassala B Ponnammal was a recipient of several notable honours including the Lifetime Achievement Award instituted by Chennai Fine Arts, Sangeetha Prabhakara Award, Sangeet Natak Akademi

Award, Swathi Sangeetha Puraskaram, Sree Guruvayurappan Chembai Puraskaram and so on.

### **About Carnatic music:**

Carnatic music, known as Karnāṭaka sāngitam in the South Indian languages, is a system of music commonly associated with South India, including the modern Indian states of Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Kerala and Tamil Nadu, and Sri Lanka.

**Source: The Hindu**

## **Editor of world's only Sanskrit daily KV Sampath Kumar passes away**

KV Sampath Kumar, 64, editor of **Sudharma**, reckoned to be the country's and the world's only Sanskrit daily (newspaper), passed away.

Sampath Kumar had taken over the mantle from his father Pandit K.N. Varadaraja Iyengar, who had founded Sudharma in 1970. He was awarded the Padma Shri in 2020.

## **Sports**

### **Brisbane to host 2032 Olympics**

#### **Why in News**

President of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) Thomas Bach announced **Brisbane, Australia as the 2032 Summer Olympics host city** during the 138th IOC Session in Tokyo, Japan.

#### **Key Points**

Brisbane becomes the 3<sup>rd</sup> Australian city to get the Olympics Games after Melbourne in 1956 and Sydney in 2000.

**Note:** Tokyo: 2020 Olympics (23 July 2021 - 8 August 2021), Paris: 2024, Los Angeles: 2028

**Source: The Hindu**

### **WAKO India Kickboxing Federation gets government recognition as National Sports Federation**

#### **Why in the News?**

The Ministry of Youth affairs & Sports has decided to grant recognition to WAKO India Kickboxing Federation as National Sports Federation

(NSF) for promotion and development of the Kickboxing sport in India.

### Key Points

WAKO India Kickboxing Federation is affiliated to **World Association of Kickboxing Organizations (WAKO)**, which is the International Federation for the sport of Kickboxing.

The **International Olympic Committee (IOC)** Executive Board at its meeting in June 2021 has approved the recommendation for WAKO to become a fully recognized member of the Olympic family of sport.

WAKO has been provisionally recognized as a member of the IOC since 30 November 2018.

**Note:** The full recognition of WAKO will be finally decided by the IOC Session in Tokyo in July 2021.

Source: PIB

## Miscellaneous

### Indian Railways' first movable freshwater tunnel aquarium

#### Why in the News?

Indian Railway has opened the first movable freshwater tunnel aquarium at the **Krantivira Sangolli Rayanna (KSR) Railway Station, Bengaluru** (Bengaluru City Railway Station).

#### Key Points

The aquarium is a one-of-its-kind aquatic park based on the Amazon River concept.

It has been opened by the **Indian Railway Stations Development Corporation Ltd (IRSDC)** in collaboration with **HNI Aquatic Kingdom**.

The 12-foot long aquatic kingdom is Indian Railways first paludarium housing myriad flora and fauna.

Source: Indian Express

### Minister of Ayush launches 5 Important Portals on Ayush sector

#### Why in the News?

Kiran Rijju, Union Minister of Ayush (IC), launched **5 Important Portals in the Ayush sector**.

He also released four publications related to the Traditional Indian Medicine System of India.

Ayush will play a big role in the **National Digital Health Mission** to provide health security to Indian people.

### Key Points

#### Five Portals:

**Ayurveda Dataset on Clinical Trial Registry of India- CTRI Portal** is a primary Register of Clinical Trials under the World Health Organization's International Clinical Trials Registry Platform.

**CCRAS-Research Management Information System (RMIS)**- A collaborative effort of ICMR and CCRAS, this portal will be a one-stop solution for Research and Development in Ayurveda based studies.

**e-Medha (electronic Medical Heritage Accession) Portal**- Online public access catalogue for more than 12000 Indian medical heritage books through NIC's e-granthalaya platform.

**SHAI (Showcase of Ayurveda Historical Imprints) Portal**- SHAI portal showcases inscriptions, Sculptures, Archeo-botanical Information, advanced Archeo Genetic studies and Philological sources.

**AMAR (Ayush Manuscripts Advanced Repository) Portal**- AMAR Portal is of immense value. It has digitized rare and hard to find Manuscripts and catalogues of Ayurveda, Yoga, Unani, Siddha, Sowa Rigpa in libraries or individual collections.

#### Four publications:

Proceedings of International Workshop on Preservation and Promotion of SOWA-RIGPA in Asia

Compendium of Important Cereals mentioned in Ayurveda-Series-1, volume-1

PathapathyaVinishcaya- An important book of Ayurveda and has details of diet and lifestyle

Ayurveda Sangraha: An important classical textbook of Ayurveda

#### About National Digital Health Mission (NDHM):

Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced the establishment of the NDHM on Independence Day 2020.

The NDHM is an agency of the Government of India which seeks to provide medical identity documents to Indian people.

This identity document would enable people to use Ayushman Bharat Yojana, service in India's publicly funded health care.

**Source: PIB**

## Regeneron International Science and Engineering Fair

### Why in the News?

**Team India 2021** won 9 Grand Awards and 8 Special Awards at **Regeneron International Science and Engineering Fair (ISEF)**.

## Key Points

26 winners of the Initiative for Research and Innovation in STEM -IRIS National Fair participated as 'Team India 2021' in the Regeneron International Science and Engineering Fair.

### About Regeneron International Science and Engineering Fair (ISEF):

It is an annual science fair in the United States. It is owned and administered by the Society for Science, a 501 non-profit organization based in Washington, D.C.

**Source: PIB**

## KVIC's project BOLD

### Why in the News?

The **Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC)**, under the Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises, has launched the project "**Bamboo Oasis on Lands in Drought**" (**BOLD**).

The project BOLD is the first of its kind exercise in the country, launched from the tribal village **NichlaMandwa in Udaipur, Rajasthan**.

## Key Points

### About Project BOLD:

**5000 saplings** of special bamboo species – BambusaTulda and BambusaPolymorpha specially brought from Assam – have been planted over 16 acres approx of vacant arid Gram Panchayat land of village NichlaMandwa.

**KVIC** has thus created a **world record of planting** the highest number of **bamboo saplings** on a single day at one location.

### Part of Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav:

The initiative has been launched as part of **KVIC's "Khadi Bamboo Festival"** to celebrate 75 years of independence "**Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav**".

KVIC is set to replicate the Project in Gujarat and Leh-Ladakh region by August 2021. KVIC will plant a total of 15,000 bamboo saplings before August 2021.

**Note:** Recently, the Space Application Centre, ISRO, also published the **Desertification and Land Degradation Atlas** of India, which provides a state-wise area of degraded lands for 2018-19.

### Benefits to the environment:

Bamboos are great sources to reduce land degradation, prevent land desertification, achieve sustainable development, and solve food security issues.

Preventing land desertification can further solve associated problems like soil infertility, soil erosion, and deforestation.

### Other Initiatives to fight Desertification:

United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (India is the part of it)

Soil Health Card Scheme

Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana

Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojna

National Mission for Green India

**Source: PIB**

## Indian Army Memorial in Italy

### Why in the News?

**Indian Army Chief Manoj Naravane** will inaugurate the **Indian Army Memorial at Cassino in Italy** during his visit to the UK and Italy.

In World War II, the memorial commemorates over 3,100 Commonwealth servicemen who took part in liberating Italy.

900 Indian soldiers were also commemorated on this memorial.

### Key Points

#### India Army in Italy:

Three infantry divisions (4th, 8th and 10th Divisions) of the Indian Army took part in the Italian campaign.

#### India's involvement in World War II:

The Indian Army was the largest volunteer force during **World War II** (WWII), with over 2.5 million (more than 20 lakh) Indians participating.

#### World War I:

World War I (WWI) was a global war originating in Europe that lasted from 28 July 1914 to 11 November 1918.

#### World War II:

World War II (WWII) was a global war that lasted from 1939 to 1945. It involved the vast majority of the world's countries—including all of the great powers—forming two opposing military alliances: the Allies and the Axis powers.

**Source: Indian Express**

## Khadi Prakritk Paint: Brand Ambassador

### Why in the News?

**Minister for Road Transport and Highways & MSME Nitin Gadkari** declared himself the "Brand Ambassador " of Khadi Prakritk Paint.

Nitin Gadkari inaugurated the new automated manufacturing unit of Khadi Prakritk Paint in Jaipur.

### Key Points

The new plant has been set up on the campus of Kumarappa National Handmade Paper Institute, Jaipur, a Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC).

Earlier Prakritik Paint was being manufactured manually on a prototype project.

### About Khadi Prakritk Paint:

Khadi Prakritk Paint is India's first and only paint made from cow dung.

Nitin Gadkari launched it on 12th January 2021.

To enable maximum people to benefit from this innovation, KVIC has included this project under the **Prime Minister Employment Generation Program**, a flagship scheme of the Central government for employment generation.

Source: PIB

## 52nd International Film Festival of India (IFFI) in Goa

### Why in the News?

**Minister of Information and Broadcasting Prakash Javadekar** released the regulations and poster for the **52nd edition of the International Film Festival of India (IFFI)**.

The festival will be held in **Goa from 20th -28th November 2021**.

### Key Points

#### About International Film Festival of India (IFFI):

IFFI is reckoned as one of Asia's oldest and India's biggest international film festivals.

The Directorate of Film Festivals is organizing the Festival, **Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India**, and the State Government of Goa and the Indian Film Industry.

IFFI is recognized by the **International Federation of Film Producers Associations**. **Note:** The "**Satyajit Ray Lifetime Achievement Award for Excellence in Cinema**" has been instituted from this year to be given at the **International Film Festival of India** every year starting from this year.

Source: PIB

## NSDC and WhatsApp launch Digital Skill Champions Programme

### Why in the News?

The **National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC)** and **WhatsApp** launched Digital Skill Champions Programme that aims to train Indian youth on digital skills to make them employment ready.

The partnership identifies two broad areas of collaboration - WhatsApp Digital Skills Academy, and Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Kendra (PMKK) and WhatsApp Business App Training sessions.

### Key Points

Through this programme, school and university students would be coached to imbibe digital and online skills that would culminate with WhatsApp and NSDC awarding "Digital Skill Champions" certification.

As part of WhatsApp Digital Skills Academy, youth from tier III and IV cities will be trained on critical aspects of digital safety and online privacy.

The initiative will kick off with a pilot across 50 campuses in five states - Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka.

The programme will be imparted through WhatsApp's project implementation partner, InfiSpark.

**Source: PIB**

## Asia's longest and world's fifth longest High Speed Track for automobiles in India

### Why in the News?

Minister of Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises Prakash Javadekar inaugurated **NATRAX- the High Speed Track (HST)** in Indore, Madhya Pradesh.

### Key Points

#### About NATRAX- the High Speed Track (HST):

It is the **longest** track in **Asia** and **world's fifth longest** High Speed Track for automobiles.

It is a world class **11.3 km High Speed Track**.

#### One Stop Solution:

**NATRAX (National Automotive Test Tracks)**, developed in an area of 1000 acres of land, is a **one stop solution** for all sorts of high speed performance tests for widest categories of vehicles from 2 wheelers to heavy tractor trailers.

Being centrally located in Madhya Pradesh, it is accessible to most of the major **Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs)**.

Foreign OEMs will be looking at NATRAX for the development of prototype cars for Indian conditions.

At present, foreign OEMs go to their respective high speed track abroad for high speed test requirements.

## Comprehensive study on not-for-profit hospital model in country

### Why in the News?

**NITI Aayog** released a comprehensive study on the not-for-profit hospital model in the country, in a step towards closing the information gap on such institutions and facilitating robust policymaking in this area.

### Key Points

#### Findings of the Report:

There has been relatively low investment in the expansion of the health sector in the private domain.

The not-for-profit hospital provides not only curative but also preventive healthcare services.

Most of the not-for-profit hospitals in the country charge lower than the for profit hospitals.

It links healthcare with social reform, community engagement, and education. It uses government resources and grants to provide cost-effective healthcare to people without being concerned about profits.

For-profit hospitals account for 55.3% of in-patients, while not-for-profit hospitals account for only 2.7% of in-patients in the country.

To promote these hospitals, the government should increase **the tax exemption** for donations and membership fees of these hospitals.

#### Challenges:

Recruitment, Reimbursements, Funding, Compliance burden

Some of the hospitals, especially those in remote areas, reported challenges because of the high compliance burden of staffing requirements of the Regulations for running a blood bank 1999, Clinical Establishments Act 2010, Pre-Conception and Pre-natal Diagnostic Techniques 1994, and Quality standards.

#### Suggestions:

The report proposes short- and long-term policy interventions—such as developing criteria to identify these hospitals, ranking them through a performance index, and promoting top hospitals for practising philanthropy, among others.

#### Recent Initiatives in Health Sector:

Prime Minister Atmanirbhar Swasth Bharat Scheme

Increased Allocation for Health in Budget 2021

National Digital Health Mission

National Medical Commission Act, 2019  
Ayushman Bharat  
Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana

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

**Formed:** 1 January 2015  
**Headquarters:** New Delhi  
**Chairperson:** Narendra Modi  
**Vice Chairperson:** Rajiv Kumar  
**CEO:** Amitabh Kant

**Source:** PIB

## Monthly Current Affairs June 2021

### Important News: State

#### Assam Chief Minister appoints 'Guardian Ministers'

##### Why in the News?

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

##### Key Points

These guardians, each a minister of the Himanta Biswa Sarma Cabinet, have been given the responsibility of 2-3 districts to review implementation of all centrally-sponsored schemes & the state's own priority programmes.

13 ministers will be responsible for the implementation of the government's policy decision, administrative reforms and other welfare schemes for the public in the 34 districts.

##### Facts about Assam:

**State Dance:** Bihu Dance  
**State Bird:** White-winged wood duck  
**State Animal:** One-horned rhinoceros  
**State Flower:** Foxtail orchids  
**State Tree:** Hollong

#### Mekedatu Project

##### Why in the News?

Recently, the Karnataka government has decided on legal action against the **National Green Tribunal**, setting up a committee to look into the alleged violations at Mekedatu, the proposed site for construction of a dam across the Kaveri (Cauvery) River.

##### Key Points

### **About Committee:**

The **National Green Tribunal (NGT)** has formed a committee to submit a report on alleged violation of norms in the construction of a reservoir across the Cauvery River at Mekedatu in Karnataka.

### **Mekedatu Project**

It is a multipurpose (drinking and power) project, which involves building a balancing reservoir, near Kanakapura in Ramanagara district.

The project once completed is aimed at ensuring drinking water to Bengaluru and neighboring areas (4.75 TMC) and also can generate 400 MW power, and the estimated cost of the project is Rs 9,000 crore.

It was first approved by the Karnataka government in 2017.

The approval from the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) is crucial because 63% of the forest area of the **Cauvery Wildlife Sanctuary** will be submerged.

**Note:** In 2018, Tamil Nadu approached the Supreme Court against the project even if Karnataka had held that it would not affect the flow of water to Tamil Nadu

### **Reasons for opposition by Tamil Nadu:**

Tamil Nadu is opposed to any project being proposed in the upper riparian unless it was approved by the Supreme Court.

Karnataka has no right to construct any reservoir on an inter-state river without the consent of the lower riparian state i.e. Tamil Nadu in this case.

The project is against the final order of the **Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal (CWDT)** in which the Supreme Court held that no state can claim exclusive ownership or assert rights to deprive other states of the waters of inter-state rivers.

### **Kaveri River**

**The Kaveri (also known as Cauvery)** is an Indian River flowing through the states of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.

It is the third largest river – after Godavari and Krishna – in South India and the largest in the State of Tamil Nadu.

### **The Dispute:**

As the river originates in Karnataka, flows through Tamil Nadu with major tributaries coming from Kerala and drains into Bay of Bengal through Puducherry the dispute therefore involves 3 states and one Union Territory.

### **Recent Developments:**

The final verdict of the Supreme Court came in 2018 where it declared the Cauvery a national asset and largely upheld the water-sharing arrangements finalized by the CWDT and also reduced the allocation of water from Karnataka to Tamil Nadu.

As per the Supreme Court, Karnataka would get 284.75 thousand million cubic feet (tmcft), Tamil Nadu 404.25 tmcft, Kerala 30 tmcft and Puducherry 7 tmcft.

It also directed the Centre to notify the **Cauvery Management Scheme**. The central government notified the '**Cauvery Water Management Scheme**' in June 2018, constituting the '**Cauvery Water Management Authority**' and the '**Cauvery Water Regulation Committee**'.

## Madhya Pradesh government launches 'Ankur' scheme

### Why in the News?

Madhya Pradesh government launched 'Ankur' scheme to award people for planting trees during monsoon.

People who take the initiative to plant saplings will be given the **Pranvayu Award** for their participation.

### Key Points

#### About 'Ankur' scheme:

The scheme will ensure public participation in the programme.

People who wish to participate in the tree plantation drive can register themselves on the Vayudoot app.

Participants need to upload a picture while planting the sapling and upload another photograph after taking care of the sapling for 30 days.

After verification, the Chief Minister will give away the Pranvayu Award to winners selected from each district.

## Indus Best Mega Food Park at Raipur, Chhattisgarh

### Why in the News?

Union Minister for Food Processing Industries Narendra Singh Tomar virtually inaugurated the Indus Best Mega Food Park at Raipur, Chhattisgarh.

### Key Points

#### About Indus Best Mega Food Park:

Mega Food Park is being implemented by M/s Indus Best Mega Food Park Pvt Ltd.

M/s Indus Best Mega Food Park Pvt Ltd has been set up in 63.8 acres of land at a project cost of Rs. 145.5 crore.

#### Benefits:

The Mega Food Park will ensure value addition, longer shelf life for farm produce, better price realization for farmers, excellent storage facility and will provide an alternate market for farmers in the region.

The Park will also provide direct and indirect employment to about 5,000 persons and benefit about 25,000 farmers.

#### About Mega Food Park Scheme:

Mega Food Park is a scheme of the Ministry of Food Processing, Government of India with the aim of establishing a "direct linkage from farm to processing and then to consumer markets" through a network of Collection Centres (CCs) and Primary Processing Centres (PPCs).

The Mega Food Park project is implemented by a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) which is a Body Corporate registered under the Companies Act 2013.

Under the Scheme, the Government of India provides financial assistance up to Rs. 50.00 Crore per Mega Food Park project.

#### Note:

42 Mega Food Parks have been sanctioned in six phases.  
Presently, 22 Mega Food Parks are operational.

**Source: PIB**

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## **Madhya Pradesh to launch 'Yuva Shakti Corona Mukti Abhiyan'**

### **Why in the News?**

In Madhya Pradesh, 'Yuva Shakti Corona Mukti Abhiyan' means free from corona with the help of a youth power campaign will be launched to make people aware about the COVID pandemic.

### **Key Points**

#### **About 'Yuva Shakti Corona Mukti Abhiyan':**

This campaign will be run by the Higher Education and Technical Education Department in collaboration with the Public Health and Family Welfare Department.

In the Yuva Shakti Corona Mukti Abhiyan, college teachers and around 16 lakh students will be made aware of corona infection by learning Covid appropriate behavior and vaccination.

**Facts about Madhya Pradesh:**

**Capital:** Bhopal

**Governor:** Anandiben Patel

**Chief Minister:** Shivraj Singh Chouhan

## Bihar Chief Minister launches two new schemes to promote entrepreneurship among youth and women

### Why in the News?

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar launched two new schemes- the '**Mukhya Mantri Yuva Udyaymi Yojna**' (MYUY) and the '**Mukhya Mantri Mahila Udyami Yojna**' (MMUY) to promote entrepreneurship among youth and women of all sections under the state's '**Mukhya Mantri Udyami Yojna**' scheme.

### Key Points

'**Mukhya Mantri Udyami Yojna**' was started in 2018 and is limited to the members of SC, ST and the extremely backward classes (EBCs).

### About '**Mukhya Mantri Yuva Udyaymi Yojna**' (MYUY):

Under the MYUY, an unemployed youth would be provided a sum of Rs 10 lakh to start a new enterprise or industry. Of the total Rs 10 lakh, Rs 5 lakh would be the subsidy amount which the youth need not to return, the rest Rs 5 lakh would be a loan on simple interest of 1%, to be returned in many installments.

### About '**Mukhya Mantri Mahila Udyami Yojna**' (MMUY):

Under the MMUY, an unemployed woman would be provided a sum of Rs 10 lakh to start a new business or small industry.

Rs 10 lakh, Rs 5 lakh would be a subsidy amount which the woman doesn't need to return, while the rest Rs 5 lakh would be an interest-free loan, to be returned in many installments.

**Source:** TOI

## Assam government signs MoU with Survey of India for implementing the SVAMITVA scheme

### Why in the News?

The Assam government has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the **Survey of India** for implementing the **SVAMITVA scheme** in the state.

It aims to provide an integrated property validation solution for rural areas.

### Key Points

The Union Ministry of Panchayati Raj, and Assam Government's Department of Revenue and Disaster Management will implement the scheme with the support of the Panchayat and Rural Development.

Survey of India, as the technology partner, will take steps for survey of inhabited rural land by drone as well as establishment of ground based control stations to enable a detailed spatial database of properties in rural areas.

It is expected to reduce property related disputes in rural areas and legal cases.

### **About SVAMITVA (Survey of Villages Abadi and Mapping with Improved Technology in Village Areas) Scheme:**

It is a Central Sector scheme launched by the Prime Minister of India on **National Panchayat Day i.e. 24th April 2020.**

The Ministry of Panchayati Raj is the Nodal Ministry for implementation of the scheme.

**Survey of India** shall work as the technology partner for implementation.

It aims to provide an integrated property validation solution for rural India.

### **About Survey of India:**

It is India's central engineering agency in charge of mapping and surveying. Set up in 1767, it is one of the oldest Engineering Departments of the Government of India.

**Source: TOI**

## **Delhi government's 'Mukhyamantri COVID-19 Pariwar Aarthik Sahayata Yojana'**

### **Why in the News?**

The Delhi government's Social Welfare Department launched the 'Mukhyamantri COVID-19 Pariwar Aarthik Sahayata Yojana'.

The scheme to provide financial assistance to families of those who died of COVID-19 was notified.

### **Key Points**

The scheme will offer a monthly financial assistance of ₹2,500 to the families of those who have lost their earning member and also a one-time compensation of ₹50,000 if a member has died due to COVID-19.

**Note:** Children who lost their both parents or single parent to COVID-19 will also be provided Rs 2,500 per month till they achieve 25 years of age. The government will also provide free education to them.

**Source: TOI**

## **Tamil Nadu constituted a 5-member economic advisory council**

### **Why in the News?**

Tamil Nadu government constituted a **5-member economic advisory council** to the Chief Minister.

### **Five Members:**

**Esther Duflo**- Nobel Prize-winning economist

**Raghuram Rajan**- Former RBI Governor

**Arvind Subramanian**- Former Chief Economic Advisor to the GOI

**S Narayan**- Former Union Finance Secretary

**Jean Dreze**- Welfare economist and social scientist

### **Key Points**

The council will provide general guidance on economic and social policy, social justice and human development-related issues, and in matters related to equal opportunities for women and well-being of underprivileged groups.

**Facts about Tamil Nadu:**

**Capital:** Chennai

**Governor:** Banwarilal Purohit

**Chief Minister:** M. K. Stalin

**Source:** The Hindu

**NHRC forms 7-member panel to probe post-poll violence in West Bengal**

**Note:** Recently, TMC chief Mamata Banerjee was sworn-in as the Chief Minister of West Bengal for the third consecutive term.

**About National Human Rights Commission of India (NHRC):** NHRC is a statutory public body constituted on 12 October 1993 under the Protection of Human Rights Ordinance of 28 September 1993. It was given a statutory basis by the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993.

**Source:** TOI

**Important News: India**

## Ayush Clinical Case Repository Portal and Ayush Sanjivani App

### Why in the News?

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

### Key Points

#### About the Ayush Clinical Case Repository Portal:

It will serve as a platform to support both Ayush practitioners and the general public.

This portal aims at aggregating information about clinical outcomes achieved by Ayush practitioners on a large scale.

#### About the third version of Ayush Sanjivani App:

The third version of Ayush Sanjivani App will facilitate a significant study regarding the efficacy of selected Ayush interventions, including **Ayush 64 and Kabasura Kudineer medicines** in the management of asymptomatic and mild to moderate COVID 19 patients.

First version was launched in May 2020.

It is developed by the Ministry of Ayush and the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.

**Ayush 64** is a poly-herbal formulation developed by the Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences. Ayush 64 is useful in the treatment of asymptomatic, mild and moderate COVID-19 infection. Initially the drug was developed for **Malaria** in the year 1980.

**Kabasura Kudineer** is a traditional formulation used by Siddha practitioners. It is useful in the treatment of common respiratory health.

### Related Initiatives:

AYUSH Health and Wellness Centres

**National Ayush Mission (NAM):** Government of India is implementing the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of NAM through States/UTs for development and promotion of AYUSH system of medicine.

Recently, Government notification listed out specific surgical procedures by a postgraduate medical student of Ayurveda.

## Traceability Provision in the new IT Rules 2021

### Why in the News?

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

### Key Points

#### Traceability Provision:

Traceability Provision is a part of the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021.

As per guidelines, significant social media intermediaries providing messaging services must identify the first originator of the information based on an order by the court or competent authority.

**According to WhatsApp,** Requiring messaging apps to 'trace' chats is the equivalent of asking to keep a fingerprint of every single message sent on

WhatsApp, which would **break end-to-end encryption and fundamentally undermines people's right to privacy.**  
WhatsApp has invoked the Puttaswamy Judgement 2017 to argue that the traceability provision is unconstitutional and against people's fundamental right to privacy.

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

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

## Horticulture Cluster Development Programme

### Why in the News?

The Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare launched the Horticulture Cluster Development Programme (CDP) to ensure holistic growth of horticulture.

### Key Points

#### About Cluster Development Programme (CDP):

A central sector programme implemented by the **National Horticulture Board (NHB)** of the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, CDP aims at growing and developing identified horticulture clusters to make them globally competitive.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare has identified **53 horticulture clusters, of which 12 have been selected for the pilot launch of the programme.**

CDP will benefit about 10 lakh farmers and related stakeholders of the value chain.

CDP is expected to attract an estimated investment of INR 10,000 crore when implemented in all the 53 clusters.

#### Horticulture Sector in India:

India is the second-largest producer of horticulture crops globally, accounting for approximately 12% of the world's production of vegetables and fruits.

India is a leader in producing fruits like Banana, Mango, Pomegranate, Acid Lime, Aonla and Sapota.

#### Recent steps taken:

The Ministry has provided an enhanced allocation of Rs. 2250 Crore for the year 2021-22 for **'MIDH-Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture'**.

MIDH is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme for the holistic growth of the horticulture sector.

## NCPCR launches Online Tracking Portal “Bal Swaraj (COVID-Care)”

### Why in the News?

**The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR)**, in furtherance to its function as a monitoring authority under section 109 of the Juvenile Justice Act, 2015 and in view of the growing problem related to children affected by COVID-19, has devised an online tracking portal “**Bal Swaraj (COVID-Care link)**” for child in need of care and protection.

### Key Points

#### About “Bal Swaraj”:

This portal of the Commission has been created with a purpose for **online tracking and digital real time monitoring mechanism of children** who are in need of care and protection.

The Commission has extended the use of this portal for tracking children who have lost both their parents or either of the parents during COVID-19 and provided a link under the name of “**COVID-Care**” for uploading of data of such children by the concerned officer/department on the portal.

#### About NCPCR:

**The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR)** is an Indian statutory body established by an Act of Parliament, the **Commission for Protection of Child Rights (CPCR) Act, 2005**. The Commission works under the aegis of Ministry of Women and Child Development, Govt. of India. The Commission began operations on 5 March 2007.

## NITI Aayog releases SDG India Index and Dashboard 2020–21

### Why in the News?

NITI Aayog has released the **third edition of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) India Index and Dashboard 2020–21**.

NITI Aayog launched the report titled, ‘**SDG India Index and Dashboard 2020–21: Partnerships in the Decade of Action**’.

The index documents the progress made by India’s States and Union Territories towards achieving the 2030 SDG targets.

The SDG India Index 2020–21, developed in collaboration with the United Nations in India, tracks progress of all States and UTs on 115 indicators that are aligned to MoSPI’s National Indicator Framework (NIF).

The 115 indicators incorporate 16 out of 17 SDGs, with a qualitative assessment on Goal 17, and cover 70 SDG targets.

### Key Points

#### Methodology

The SDG India Index computes goal-wise scores on the 16 SDGs for each State and Union Territory.

Overall State and UT scores are generated from goal-wise scores to measure aggregate performance of the sub-national unit based on its performance across the 16 SDGs.

These scores range between 0–100, and if a State/UT achieves a score of 100, it signifies it has achieved the 2030 targets. The higher the score of a State/UT, the greater the distance to target achieved.

States and Union Territories are classified as below based on their SDG India Index score:

Aspirant: 0–49

Performer: 50–64

Front-Runner: 65–99

Achiever: 100

### Overall Results and Findings

The country's overall SDG score improved by 6 points—from 60 in 2019 to 66 in 2020–21.

This positive stride towards achieving the targets is largely driven by exemplary country-wide performance in Goal 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation) and Goal 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), where the composite Goal scores are 83 and 92, respectively.

**Kerala has the top rank with a score of 75** followed by Himachal Pradesh and Tamil Nadu with 74 points.

**Bihar has emerged as the worst performer with the lowest score of 52** followed by Jharkhand with score of 56.

**In Union Territories: Chandigarh has topped the list with the score of 79.**

**Note:** Mizoram, Haryana, and Uttarakhand are the top gainers in 2020–21 in terms of improvement in score from 2019, with an increase of 12, 10 and 8 points, respectively.

## Union Cabinet approves Agreement on Mass Media Cooperation SCO

### Why in the News?

The Union Cabinet has given its ex-post facto approval for signing and ratification of an agreement on "Cooperation in the field of Mass Media" between all the member states of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO).

The agreement, which was signed in June 2019, would provide an opportunity to the member states to share best practices and new innovations in the field of mass media.

### Key Points

#### Main areas of cooperation:

Creation of favorable conditions for wide and mutual distribution of information through mass media in order to further deepen the knowledge about the lives of the peoples of their states.

Cooperation among the editorial offices of the mass media of their states, as well as among relevant ministries, agencies.

It will assist in broadcasting of television and radio programmes and those, distributed legally within the territory of the state of the other side.

The agreement will encourage the exchange of experience and specialists in the field of mass media, provide mutual assistance in training media professionals and encourage cooperation among the educational and scientific research institutions.

**Facts about SCO:** Shanghai Cooperation Organisation or Shanghai Pact, is a Eurasian political, economic and security alliance.

**Formed:** 15 June 2001

**Members:** China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, India & Pakistan.

**Headquarter:** Beijing, China

India became a full member of the SCO in 2017. Prior to that, India had an observer status, which was granted to it in 2005.

## **SAGE (Seniorcare Aging Growth Engine) initiative and SAGE portal**

### **Why in the News?**

The Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment launched the SAGE (Seniorcare Aging Growth Engine) initiative and SAGE portal for elderly persons.

An amount of **Rs 100 crore** has been assigned for the promotion of the **silver economy**.

### **About Silver economy**

It is the system of production, distribution and consumption of goods and services aimed at using the purchasing potential of older and ageing people and satisfying their consumption, living and health needs.

### **Key points**

#### About SAGE portal

The SAGE portal will be a “one-stop access” of elderly care products and services by credible start-ups.

SAGE programme and SAGE portal have been launched with a view to help such persons who are interested in entrepreneurship in the field of providing services for elderly care.

The start-ups selected under SAGE will be those which will provide new innovative products and services to elderly persons in various areas like health, travel, finance, legal, housing, food among others.

**An allocation of Rs 25 crores** has been made for the SAGE project in the **current financial year i.e 2021-22**.

The SAGE project is shaped on the recommendations of the empowered expert committee (EEC) report on start-ups for elderly.

### Need for the Initiative

India's elderly population is on the rise, and as per surveys, the share of elders, as a percentage of the total population in the country, is expected to increase from around 7.5% in 2001 to almost 12.5% by 2026 and surpass 19.5% by 2050.

### Other Government Initiatives for Elderly people

Integrated Programme for Older Persons (IPOP)

Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana (RVY)

Pradhan Mantri Vaya Vandana Yojana (PMVVY)  
Vayoshreshtha Samman  
Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens (MWPSA) Act, 2007  
Senior Citizen Welfare Fund

**Source: PIB**

## India's first International Maritime Services Cluster to set up at GIFT City

### Why in the News?

**Gujarat Maritime Board (GMB)** will be setting up India's first international maritime services cluster at GIFT City in Gujarat.

### Key Points

The Maritime Cluster will be developed as a dedicated ecosystem comprising ports, shipping, logistics services providers and pertinent government regulators, all present in the same geographic vicinity.

### About Maritime Services Cluster:

This will be the first of its kind commercial maritime services cluster in India which has been conceptualized to enhance competitiveness and self-sufficiency of India in the maritime sector and provide a one-stop solution for the entire maritime fraternity.

### About Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT City):

GIFT City is India's first operational smart city and International Financial Services Centre (IFSC).

GIFT City has state-of-the-art infrastructure and world-class banking facilities and institutions that will be beneficial for fostering innovation, economic viability, collaboration, and business opportunities for the Cluster.

### About Gujarat Maritime Board (GMB):

The Gujarat Maritime Board - a Government of Gujarat undertaking, and the first maritime board of India was set up in 1982.

It is responsible for the development, administration, operation and regulation of the 48 Non-Major Ports as well as for the development of other maritime / shipping activities in the state of Gujarat.

**Source: TOI**

## CBSE to introduce Coding, Data Science in Curriculum

### Why in the News?

The **Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE)** collaborated with **Microsoft** to introduce Coding for class VI-VIII and Data Science curriculum for class VIII-XII as new skilling subjects in the 2021-2022 academic session.

### Key Points

### About Coding and Data Science Curriculum:

In keeping with the **NEP (National Education Policy) 2020**, the introduction of these courses aims to build next-generation skills in students.

Coding and Data Science Curriculum are focused on building critical thinking, computational skills, problem-solving skills, creativity and hands-on exposure to new technologies.

**Source: The Hindu**

## **‘Awareness Campaign on Single Use plastics’ and ‘India Plastic Challenge – Hackathon 2021’**

### **Why in the News?**

The Union Environment Minister launched a two-month **‘Awareness Campaign on Single Use plastics’** and **‘India Plastic Challenge – Hackathon 2021’**.

The Government of India had set a target to phase out single use plastics by 2022.

### **Key Points**

#### **About Single Use Plastics:**

Plastics that are thrown away after their first use are known as single-use plastics.

According to the United Nations, much of the plastics produced today are designed to be thrown away after first use.

#### **About ‘Awareness Campaign on Single Use plastics’:**

GIZ (The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH), UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) along with Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India, are organizing the two-month long awareness campaign.

It will comprise of four on-line regional events and a social media campaign to spread the message of mitigation of plastic pollution to a wider audience.

#### **About ‘India Plastic Challenge – Hackathon 2021’:**

The ‘India Plastic Challenge – Hackathon 2021’ is a unique competition calling upon start-ups /entrepreneurs and students of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to develop innovative solutions to mitigate plastic pollution and develop alternatives to single use plastics.

#### **Initiatives taken by India:**

The Government of India has already banned import of plastic waste in the country.

#### **Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016:**

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change for the first time brought out **Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016**, for handling plastic waste in an environmentally sound manner.

Under the rules, plastic carry bags below 50 microns have been banned.

Further, the Ministry has issued a draft notification in March 2021 for amending the Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016, with respect to prohibiting identified 12 single use plastic items such as disposable plastic cutlery etc.

**Source: PIB**

## Cabinet approves allotment of 5 MHz spectrum in 700 MHz band to Indian Railways

### Why in the News?

The Union Cabinet has approved the proposal for allotment of 5 MHz Spectrum in 700 MHz frequency band to Indian Railways for public safety and security services at stations and in trains.

**Note:** In addition to this, Indian Railways has approved **TCAS (Train Collision Avoidance System)**.

### Key Points

The estimated investment in the project is more than Rs. 25,000 Crore. The project will be completed in the next 5 years.

The Spectrum charges may be levied based on formula basis as prescribed by Department of Telecommunications for Royalty Charges and License Fee for Captive use as recommended by **Telecom Regulatory Authority of India**.

With this spectrum, Indian Railways has envisaged to provide **LTE (Long Term Evolution)** based **Mobile Train Radio Communication** on its route.

### About LTE (Long-Term Evolution):

It is a 4G wireless standard that provides increased network capacity and speed for cellphones and other cellular devices compared with 3G technologies.

### Purpose

The purpose of the LTE for Indian Railways is to provide secure and reliable voice, video and data communication services for operational, safety and security applications.

It will also enable **Internet of Things (IoT)** based remote asset monitoring especially of coaches, wagons & locos, and live video feed of CCTV cameras in the train coaches.

### About TCAS (Train Collision Avoidance System):

It, an indigenously developed ATP (Automatic Train Protection) System, which will help in avoiding train collisions thereby reducing accidents and ensuring passenger safety.

### About Radio Spectrum:

The radio spectrum is the part of the electromagnetic spectrum with frequencies from 30 Hz to 300 GHz.

Electromagnetic waves in this frequency range, called radio waves, are widely used in modern technology, particularly in telecommunication.

To prevent interference between different users, the generation and transmission of radio waves is strictly regulated by national laws, coordinated by an international body, the **International Telecommunication Union (ITU)**.

**Source: PIB**

## ‘Surakshit Hum Surakshit Tum Abhiyaan’ launched in 112 Aspirational Districts

### Why in the News?

**NITI Aayog** and **Piramal Foundation** launched ‘Surakshit Hum Surakshit Tum Abhiyaan’ in 112 Aspirational Districts to assist district administrations in providing home-care support to COVID-19 patients who are asymptomatic or have mild symptoms.

### Key Points

#### Objective

The campaign is expected to play a key role in district preparedness for managing nearly 70% of COVID cases at home, reducing pressure on the health system, and stemming the spread of fear amongst the people.

#### About Surakshit Hum Surakshit Tum Abhiyaan:

The Abhiyaan is being part of a special initiative, **Aspirational Districts Collaborative**, in which local leaders, civil societies and volunteers work with district administrations to address emerging problems across key focus areas of the **Aspirational Districts Programme**.

Surakshit Hum Surakshit Tum Abhiyaan will be led by district magistrates in partnership with over 1000 local NGOs, which will enlist and train over 1 lakh volunteers to connect with patients through inbound/outbound calls.

Volunteers will be trained to support 20 affected families each by educating caretakers to follow COVID protocols, provide psycho-social support and timely updates about patients to the administration.

Piramal Foundation will work with district magistrates to support the training of NGOs and volunteers.

#### About Aspirational Districts Programme

The Government of India has launched the 'Transformation of Aspirational Districts' initiative in January 2018 with a vision of a New India by 2022.

The focus is to improve India's ranking under Human Development Index, raising living standards of its citizens and ensuring inclusive growth of all.

**Source: PIB**

## Union Cabinet approves “Deep Ocean Mission”

### Why in the News?

The **Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs** has approved the proposal of the **Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES)** on "Deep Ocean Mission".

It explores the Deep Ocean for resources and develops deep sea technologies for sustainable use of ocean resources.

MoES will be the nodal Ministry implementing this multi-institutional ambitious mission.

### Key Points

#### About "Deep Ocean Mission":

Deep Ocean Mission will be a mission mode project to support the **Blue Economy Initiatives** of the Government of India.

The estimated cost of the Mission will be Rs. 4077 crore for a period of 5 years to be implemented in a phase-wise manner.

This mission will make India one among the handful of powerful nations that already have dedicated ocean studies and missions, including the **US, Japan, France, Russia and China.**

#### **Major Components of the Deep Ocean Mission:**

Development of Technologies for Deep Sea Mining, and Manned Submersible

Development of Ocean Climate Change Advisory Services

Technological innovations for exploration and conservation of deep-sea biodiversity

Deep Ocean Survey and Exploration

Energy and freshwater from the Ocean

Advanced Marine Station for Ocean Biology

#### **Significance of Mission:**

Oceans, which cover 70 percent of the globe, remain a key part of our life. About 95 percent of the Deep Ocean remains unexplored.

For India, with its three sides surrounded by the oceans and around 30 percent of the country's population living in coastal areas, the ocean is a major economic factor supporting fisheries and aquaculture, tourism, livelihoods and blue trade.

India's 7517 km long coastline is home to nine coastal states and 1382 islands.

Considering the importance of the oceans on sustainability, the United Nations has declared the decade, 2021-2030 as the Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development.

#### **About Blue Economy:**

The blue economy is the sustainable use of ocean resources for economic growth, improved livelihoods, and jobs while preserving the health of the ocean ecosystem.

#### **Other Blue Economy Initiatives:**

Ocean Services, Modelling, Applications, Resources and Technology **(O-SMART) Scheme**

India-Norway Task Force on Blue Economy for Sustainable Development

Sagarmala Project

National Fisheries Policy

Integrated Coastal Zone Management

### **MoU for development of Sea Plane services in India**

#### **Why in the News?**

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the **Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways** and **Ministry of Civil Aviation** for development of Sea Plane services in India was signed.

**Note:** India's first sea plane service between Kevadia and Sabarmati Riverfront in Ahmedabad started operation in October 2020, under Sagarmala Sea plane Services.

### Key Points

This MoU envisages **development of Non Scheduled/Scheduled operation of seaplane** services within territorial jurisdiction of India under **RCS-UDAN (Regional Connectivity Scheme-Ude Desh ka Aam Naagrik scheme** of government of India.

As per MoU, a Co-ordination Committee with officials of Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA), Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways (MoPSW) and Ministry of Tourism (MoT) is to be set up for timely completion of operationalisation of Seaplane services at various locations.

MoCA, MoPSW, SDCL (Sagarmala Development Company Limited) will consider operationalising Seaplane operating routes as identified/suggested by all agencies.

It will enhance seamless connectivity across the nation by promoting eco-friendly transportation through Sea planes and to boost the tourism industry.

### About UDAN Scheme:

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

This **Regional Connectivity Scheme** offers a unique opportunity to a common man to fly at an affordable price.

The UDAN Scheme is a key component of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's National Civil Aviation Policy (NCAP) which was released by the Ministry of Civil Aviation (India) on 15 June 2016.

### About UDAN 4.1:

The UDAN 4.1 scheme focuses on connecting smaller airports, along with special helicopter and sea plane routes.

### Sagarmala Sea plane Services:

Sagarmala Seaplane Services is a project under the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways.

This project is being initiated under a Special Purpose Vehicle framework through airline operators.

The project execution and implementation would be through **Sagarmala Development Company Ltd (SDCL)**.

**Rs 40,700 crores allocated under Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen) towards SLWM support for over 2 lakh villages in 2021-22**

### Why in the News?

The Ministry of Jal Shakti under **Swachh Bharat Mission Grameen (SBM-G)** Phase 2 is set to support over 2 lakh villages achieve **Solid and Liquid Waste Management (SLWM)** arrangements through an investment of over Rs. 40,700 crores in the present FY 2021-22.

The National Scheme Sanctioning Committee of SBM-G under the Chairmanship of Secretary, Ministry of Jal Shakti approved the Annual Implementation Plan (AIP) of States and UTs.

### Key Points

SBM (G) Phase 2 aims at achieving comprehensive cleanliness in villages also called ODF Plus status by focusing on ODF sustainability and ensuring SLWM arrangements in villages.

Implementation of Swachh Bharat Mission Grameen Phase 2 in 2021-2022 will see construction of over 50 lakh Individual Household toilets (IHHLs), one Lakh Community toilets, Plastic Waste Management Units in over 2400 Blocks of India, Gobardhan projects in 386 Districts, Faecal sludge management arrangements in over 250 Districts apart from the targeted support for over 2 lakh villages in implementation of SLWM interventions.

### Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM):

Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) is a country-wide campaign initiated by the Government of India in 2014 to eliminate **open defecation** and improve **solid waste management**.

Phase 1 of the Swachh Bharat mission lasted till October 2019. Phase 2 is being implemented between 2020-21 and 2024-25.

The mission was split into two: rural and urban.

### Other Schemes as part of SBM:

GOBAR-DHAN (Galvanizing Organic Bio-Agro Resources) Scheme

Individual Household Latrines (IHHL)

Swachh Vidyalaya Abhiyan

**Source: PIB**

## 14 Cross-Disability Early Intervention Centres for children

### Why in the News?

The Minister for Social Justice & Empowerment Thaawarchand Gehlot inaugurated 14 Cross-Disability Early Intervention Centres located at 7 National Institutes and 7 Composite Regional Centres under the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan).

### Key Points

#### About Disability Early Intervention Centres:

The Centres will provide screening and identification, rehabilitation, counselling, therapeutic services among others for different disabilities under one roof and in a contiguous manner.

These 14 Early Intervention Centers have been started in Mumbai, Dehradun, Delhi, Secunderabad, Kolkata, Cuttack, Lucknow, Chennai, Surendranagar, Bhopal, Rajnandgaon, Patna, Nellore and Kozhikode.

The **Handbook on Early Intervention Centres for Children** with Disabilities was also released on the occasion.

**Need:**

According to the 2011 Census, there are more than 20 lakh children with disabilities in the age group of 0-6 years, who belong to the categories of visually impaired, hearing impaired, locomotor disability etc.

This means that around 7 percent of children in this age group suffer from some form of disability.

These are expected to increase with the enactment of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPWD) Act 2016, as there are now 21 categories in the disability category instead of 7.

### **Other Initiatives:**

Right of Persons with Disabilities (RPWD) Act 2016

Unique Disability Identification (UDID) Portal

Accessible India Campaign

DeenDayal Disabled Rehabilitation Scheme

Schemes of the National Trust

National Fellowship for Students with Disabilities

**Source: PIB**

## **'Customized Crash Course' Programme for COVID 19 Frontline workers**

### **Why in the News?**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the **six 'Customized Crash Course'** programme for COVID 19 Frontline workers under the **Skill India Scheme**.

The training programme would be conducted in **111 training centres spread over 26 states**.

About **one lakh** frontline workers will be trained in this initiative.

### **Key Points**

#### **About the course:**

The training will be imparted to COVID warriors in six customised job roles namely Home Care Support, Basic Care Support, Advanced Care Support, Emergency Care Support, Sample Collection Support, and Medical Equipment Support.

The course programme is designed as a special programme under the Central Component of **Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana 3.0**, with a financial outlay of ₹276 crore.

The course programme will create skilled non-medical healthcare workers to fill the present and future needs of manpower in the health sector.

### **About Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana:**

The **1st version** of **Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY)** was **launched in 2015** to encourage and promote skill development by providing free short duration skill training.

**Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) 2.0 (2016-20)** was launched by scaling up sectors, geographies and by greater alignment with other missions / programs of Government of India such as Digital India, Make in India and Swachh Bharat Mission.

**PMKVY 3.0** shall be implemented in two phases: **1st phase** shall be implemented on pilot basis during the year 2020- 21 known as PMKVY 3.0 (2020-21).

The scheme shall initiate the creation of an implementation framework for the **2nd phase** (2021-2026).

**Source: PIB**

## Union Cabinet approves Inland Vessels Bill 2021

### Why in the News?

The Union Cabinet has approved the Inland Vessels Bill 2021 which looks at streamlining vessels running on inland waterways in the country.

Inland Vessels Bill 2021 will replace the Inland Vessels Act, 1917.

The Bill will regulate safety and registration of inland vessels.

### Key Points

#### About Inland Vessel Bill 2021:

The Inland Vessel Bill, 2021 will act as a unified law for the country in place of separate rules framed by the States.

It will aid in providing a central database for keeping records of vessel registration, crew, and details of vessels.

The bill will create pollution control measures for Inland Vessels.

It expands the scope of 'inland water' by including national waterways.

#### Inland Water Transport (IWT) in India:

As of now, 4,000 km of inland waterways are operational in the country.

There are about 14,500 km of navigable waterways including rivers, backwaters, canals, creeks, etc, in the country.

111 waterways have been declared as National Waterways as per the National Waterways Act, 2016.

The Inland Water Transport in the country is a fuel-efficient and environment-friendly mode of moving around 55 million tonnes of cargo.

The **National Waterway 1 (NW-1)**: Ganga-Bhagirathi-Hooghly River System (Prayagraj-Haldia) with length 1620 km is the longest National Waterway in India.

#### Inland Waterways Authority of India:

**Formed:** 27 October 1986

**Headquarters:** Noida, Uttar Pradesh

**Chairman:** Amita Prasad

**Parent department** : Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways

**Source: The Hindu**

## Important News: World

## India elected to UN Economic and Social Council

### Why in the News?

**India** has been elected to the **United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) for the term 2022-24** in the Asia-Pacific States Category along with Kazakhstan, Afghanistan, and Oman.

### Key Points

#### About United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC):

**ECOSOC** is one of the six principal organs of the UN, responsible for coordinating the economic and social fields of the organization.

It was established on 26 June 1945.

The Council consists of 54 Member States.

#### Note:

**India** is currently serving the 2021-22 term as a **non-permanent member** of the **UN Security Council** and will assume the Presidency of the 15-nation UN organ in August 2021.

**Source: Times of India**

## G7: Global Minimum Corporate Tax Rate

### Why in the News?

The **Finance Ministers from the G7** nations reached a landmark accord setting a Global Minimum Corporate Tax Rate on multinational companies.

The decision regarding the Global Minimum Corporate Tax Rate will now be discussed in detail at a meeting of G20 financial ministers and central bank governors in July 2021.

### Key Points

#### About Global Minimum Corporate Tax Rate:

G7 would back a **minimum global corporation tax rate of at least 15%** and put in place measures to ensure taxes were paid in the countries where businesses operate.

**Corporation tax** is a direct tax imposed on the net income or profit those enterprises make from their businesses.

#### Applicability:

It would apply to companies' overseas profits. Therefore, if countries agree on a global minimum, governments could still set whatever local corporate tax rate they want.

But if companies pay lower rates in a particular country, their home governments could "top-up" their taxes to the agreed minimum rate, eliminating the advantage of shifting profits to a tax haven.

#### Need of Global Minimum Corporate Tax Rate:

Reduce Tax Loss

To Bring Uniformity

#### Other International Effort:

OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) has been coordinating tax negotiations among 140 countries for years on rules for

taxing cross-border digital services and curbing tax base erosion, including a global corporate minimum tax.

### India's Stand:

India is likely to benefit from the global minimum 15% corporate tax rate pact as the effective domestic tax rate is above the threshold, and the country would continue to attract investment.

In September 2019, the government had reduced the corporate tax rate to 22% for companies that gave up all exemptions and incentives. Further, a 15% rate was offered to new manufacturing firms.

For Indian domestic companies, the effective tax rate, inclusive of surcharge and cess, is around 25.17%.

### Facts about G7:

It is an intergovernmental organisation.

**Founded:** 1975

**Members:** United Kingdom, United States, Japan, France, Germany, Canada, Italy

All the G7 countries and India are a part of G20.

**Source: The Hindu**

## Global database "I-Familia" to identify missing persons launched

### Why in the News?

The **Interpol** has launched a new global database named "I-Familia" to identify missing persons through family **DNA (Deoxyribonucleic Acid)** and help the police solve cold cases in member countries.

### Key Points

#### About "I-Familia":

The first of its kind, I-Familia is a global database for identifying missing persons based on international DNA kinship matching.

Interpol's I-Familia service provides the necessary international mechanism to allow missing persons DNA data to be compared globally.

I-Familia is powered by Bonaparte, a forensic DNA matching software system developed by SMART Research.

#### About Interpol:

The **International Criminal Police Organization**, commonly known as **Interpol**, is an international organization that facilitates worldwide police cooperation and crime control.

**Headquarters:** Lyon, France

**President:** Kim Jong Yang

**Founded:** 7 September 1923

**Source: The Hindu**

## 5th edition of VivaTech

### Why in the News?

The Prime Minister, Narendra Modi delivered the keynote address at the 5th edition of VivaTech 2021.

### Key Points

#### About VivaTech:

VivaTech is one of the largest digital and startup events in Europe, held in Paris every year since 2016.

It is jointly organized by Publicis Groupe – a prominent advertising and marketing conglomerate and Les Echos – a leading French media group.

It brings together stakeholders in technology innovation and the startup ecosystem and includes exhibitions, awards, panel discussions and startup contests.

#### Key Points of the speech:

**Infosys** is providing tech support for the French Open tournament and collaboration involving French companies like Atos, Capgemini and India's **TCS and Wipro** as examples of IT talent of the two countries serving companies and citizens all over the world.

India's universal and unique **bio-metric digital identity system - Aadhar** - helped to provide timely financial support to the poor.

Two public digital education programmes- **Swayam and Diksha** - in quick time to help students.

Indigenous IT platform, **Arogya-Setu** enabled effective contact tracing.

The **COWIN digital platform** has already helped ensure vaccines to millions.

The Prime Minister enumerated initiatives like **state-of-the-art public digital infrastructure, five hundred and twenty three thousand kilometres of fibre optic network linking One hundred and fifty six thousand village councils**, public wi-fi networks across the country.

There are state-of-the-art innovation labs in Seven Thousand Five Hundred schools under the **Atal Innovation Mission**.

## IIT Bombay hosts Conference of BRICS Network Universities as part of 13th BRICS Summit

### Why in the News?

A three day virtual Conference of BRICS Network Universities on the **theme of electric mobility** was hosted by IIT Bombay.

This conference was part of the engagements that **India** is hosting under the education stream during its **Chairship of the 13<sup>th</sup> BRICS Summit this year**.

### Key Points

Eighteen experts from Brazil, Russia, India, China and S. Africa talked about various aspects of electric mobility like traffic management, hydrogen technology, hybrid vehicles, lithium-ion batteries and linkage between e-mobility and livelihoods.

#### About BRICS Network University:

It is a union of higher education institutions of the five BRICS member countries, formed with the objective of enhancing educational cooperation in general, and especially in the realm of research and innovation.

IIT Bombay is the lead institution of India for the BRICS Network University.

**Note:** The **13th BRICS Summit** will be held under India's Chairship in 2021, and it will be the third time India will host the BRICS Summit after 2012 and 2016.

The theme for India's Chairship for 2021 would be '**BRICS @ 15: Intra-BRICS Cooperation for Continuity, Consolidation, and Consensus**'.

#### **Facts about BRICS:**

**Formation:** 2009

**Countries:** Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa

### **SIPRI Report: China, India, Pakistan expanding nuclear arsenal**

#### **Why in the News?**

Swedish think tank, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) launched the findings of *SIPRI Yearbook 2021*, which assesses the current state of armaments, disarmament and international security.

#### **Key Points**

**India** has an estimated **156 nuclear warheads** at the start of 2021 compared to 150 at the start of last year.

Pakistan- 165 nuclear warheads

China- 350 nuclear warheads

Russia- 6255 nuclear warheads

USA- 5550 nuclear warheads

**The U.S., Russia, the U.K., France, China, Pakistan, India, Israel and North Korea** - together possessed an estimated **13,080 nuclear weapons** at the start of 2021.

**The U.S. and Russia** together possessed over **90%** of global nuclear weapons.

**Note:**

**India, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, China and Australia** were the five largest **importers** of major arms in the world between 2016 and 2020.

Saudi Arabia had 11 percent share and **India 9.5 percent** in the global **imports** of the major arms in this time period.

#### **Treaties Preventing Nuclear Proliferation and Testing:**

Partial Test Ban Treaty (PTBT)

Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT)

Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW)

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)

#### **India's Nuclear Weapon Program:**

India tested its first nuclear device in May 1974.

However, India has a facility-specific safeguards agreement in place with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and a waiver from the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) allowing it to participate in global civilian nuclear technology commerce.

India was admitted as a member into the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) in 2016 and Wassenaar Arrangement in 2017.

## 75th session of UNGA on prevention of HIV/AIDS

### Why in the News?

Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare addressed the 75<sup>th</sup> session of the **United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)**.

The Union Health Minister spoke on **UNGA Resolution 75/260** which concerns the **Implementation of the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS and the political declarations on HIV/AIDS**.

### Key Points

#### Main points of address:

In India, the **HIV & AIDS Prevention and Control Act, 2017**, provides a legal and enabling framework to safeguard the human rights of infected and affected populations.

India's unique HIV prevention model is centered around the concept of 'Social Contracting' through which the 'Targeted Interventions Program' is implemented with support from civil society.

The program is aimed at behaviour change, communication, outreach, service delivery, counselling & testing and ensuring linkages to HIV care.

India is providing free anti-retro-viral treatment to close to 1.4 million people.

Indian drugs are also reaching millions of People living with HIV in Africa.

#### India's National AIDS Control Program:

**NACO (National AIDS Control Organisation)**, established in 1992 is a division of India's Ministry of Health and Family Welfare that provides leadership to **HIV/AIDS control programme** in India through **35 HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control Societies**.

India's National AIDS Control Program has been **Revised, Revived and Revamped** to focus on hard-to-reach and at-risk populations.

**SDG (Sustainable Development Goal) and HIV/AIDS:** There are a number of SDGs related to the HIV response:

SDG 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing for all at all ages.

Target 3.3: **End AIDS as a public health threat by 2030**

SDG 4: Quality education

SDG 5: Gender equality

SDG 10: Reduced inequalities

SDG 16: Peace, justice, and strong institutions

#### Other Initiatives:

The Red Ribbon

Project Sunrise

90-90-90

GFATM (Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria)

#### HIV (human immunodeficiency virus):

Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) is an infection that attacks the body's immune system, specifically the white blood cells called CD4 cells.

HIV destroys these CD4 cells, weakening a person's immunity against infections such as tuberculosis and some cancers.

**Source: PIB**

## 47th G7 Leaders' Summit 2021

### Why in the News?

Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the 47th G7 Leaders' Summit 2021.

The 47th G7 summit was held on 11–13 June 2021 in **Cornwall in the United Kingdom** while it held the presidency of the G7.

Apart from India, South Korea, South Africa, and Australia were also invited to participate in the proceedings of the summit as **“Guest Countries”**.

**Note:** Earlier, the Finance Ministers from the G7 reached a landmark accord setting a **Global Minimum Corporate Tax Rate**.

### Key Points

#### Build Back Better World (B3W) Project:

**B3W Project** will collectively catalyse hundreds of billions of infrastructure investment for low- and middle-income countries (in Asia and Africa) and offer a values-driven, high-standard and transparent partnership with G7.

#### Democracies 11:

Signed off on a joint statement (Democracies 11) by G7 and Guest Countries on “open societies” that reaffirms and encourages the values of freedom of expression, both online and offline, as a freedom that safeguards democracy.

The statement also refers to politically motivated internet shutdowns as one of the threats to freedom and democracy.

#### Carbis Bay Declaration:

The G7 signed the Carbis Bay Declaration. It is aimed at preventing future pandemics.

The G7 also pledged over 1 billion coronavirus vaccine doses for poorer nations with half of that coming from the United States and 100 million from Britain.

#### Climate Change:

Pledged to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2050.

#### India's Stand:

India is a natural ally for the G7 countries in defending the shared values from a host of threats stemming from authoritarianism, terrorism and violent extremism, disinformation, and economic coercion.

It sought the support of the grouping to lift patent protections for COVID-19 vaccines.

Planet's atmosphere, biodiversity and oceans cannot be protected by countries acting in silos, and called for collective action on climate change.

India is the only G-20 country on track to meet its Paris commitments.

#### Facts about G7:

It is an intergovernmental organisation.

**Founded:** 1975

**Members:** United Kingdom, United States, Japan, France, Germany, Canada and Italy

**Source: Indian Express**

## **El Salvador becomes first country to adopt bitcoin as legal tender**

### **Why in the News?**

El Salvador has become the first country in the world to adopt bitcoin as legal tender.

Its use as legal tender will begin in 90 days, with the bitcoin-dollar exchange rate set by the market.

### **Key Points**

The use of bitcoin will be optional for individuals and would not bring risks to users.

Bitcoin could boost the economy, help counter El Salvador's low banking penetration rate and facilitate faster transfers for \$6 billion of remittances a year.

### **About Bitcoin:**

It is a decentralized digital currency, without a central bank or single administrator that can be sent from user to user on the peer-to-peer bitcoin network without the need for intermediaries.

### **Facts about El Salvador:**

**President:** Nayib Bukele

**Capital:** San Salvador

**Currency:** United States Dollar (USD)

**Source: The Hindu**

## **42nd session of FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization) Conference**

### **Why in the News?**

Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare Narendra Singh Tomar addressed the 42nd session of FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization) Conference.

India is a founder member of the FAO and has played a significant role since inception as Chair and member of various statutory bodies and committees.

### **Key Points**

#### **India's efforts for Food Security during the COVID 19 pandemic:**

The Agriculture sector in India performed well during the severe COVID-19 pandemic and registered an all time high production of **305 million tons of food grains** as well as their exports contributing to the Global Food Security.

Special parcel trains with refrigeration facilities "**KISAN RAIL**" were introduced by Indian Railways.

The Government of India launched the "**Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Package**". Under this scheme, free food grains were provided to 810 million beneficiaries.

More than **Rupees 137000 Crore** have been sent to the bank accounts of over 100 million farmers under the **“PM Kisan” Scheme** to provide income support to the farmers.

**Climate change and Agriculture schemes:**

Green India Mission

Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana

Sub-mission on AgroForestry

Soil Health Card

Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana

Mission Organic Value Chain Development for North Eastern Region

India has launched various projects under the **National Mission on Sustainable Agriculture** to develop, demonstrate and disseminate the techniques to make agriculture resilient to adverse impacts of climate change.

The Green Revolution, White Revolution, blue revolution along with the Public Distribution System and price support system for farmers.

**Facts about Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO):**

**Formation:** 16 October 1945

**Headquarters:** Rome, Italy

**Parent organization:** United Nations Economic and Social Council

**Director-General:** Qu Dongyu

**Note:**

To commemorate the long-standing relationship between India and the FAO, the Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi had released a special **75 rupees commemorative coin to mark the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the FAO** on 16<sup>th</sup> Oct 2020.

**Source: PIB**

## 8th ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting Plus

### Why in the News?

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh called for an open and inclusive order in Indo-Pacific based

upon respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity of nations while addressing the **8<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting (ADMM) Plus** on June 16, 2021.

Brunei is the Chair of the ADMM Plus forum in 2021.

### Key Points

#### About ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting (ADMM) Plus:

The ADMM Plus is an annual meeting of Defence Ministers of 10 ASEAN countries and eight dialogue partner countries - Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, Russia and the United States.

#### Facts about Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN):

**The 10 member countries of ASEAN** are Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Brunei, Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar and Cambodia.

**Headquarters:** Jakarta, Indonesia

**Founded:** 8 August 1967

**Key points of the meeting:**

India supports utilisation of ASEAN-led mechanisms as important platforms for implementation of shared vision for the Indo-Pacific.

India's support to freedom of navigation, over-flight and unimpeded commerce for all in international waters in accordance with the **UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)**.

The **Sea lanes of Communication** are critical for peace, stability, prosperity and development of the Indo-Pacific region.

On the '**Act East Policy**', announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in November 2014, the key elements of the policy aim to promote economic cooperation, cultural ties and develop strategic relationships with countries in the Indo-Pacific region through continuous engagement at bilateral, regional and multilateral levels.

As a member of the **Financial Action Task Force (FATF)**, India remains committed to combat financing of terrorism.

Through the **Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR)** operations, India remains one of the first to respond in times of distress in the immediate as well as extended neighbourhood.

As a founding member of the **Heads of Asian Coast Guard Agencies Meeting (HACGAM)**, India seeks to enhance capacity building through collaboration in the areas of Maritime Search & Rescue.

**Source: PIB**

## G20 Education Ministers' Meeting

### Why in the News?

The Minister of State for Education Sanjay Dhotre addressed the meeting of the G20 Education Ministers on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2021.

The meeting was hosted in blended mode by **Italy**.

### Key Points

G20 Education Ministers exchanged views on how to progress on the fight against educational poverty and inequalities, especially in context of the COVID-19.

The Education Ministers also resolved to share innovative experiences implemented during the COVID-19 to ensure the continuity and quality of learning pathways through **blended education**.

**Blended learning** is an approach that combines online educational materials and opportunities for interaction online with traditional place-based classroom methods.

### Education in India:

**India's Efforts:** Increasing intake capacity of schools; tracking out-of-school children; monitoring the learning outcomes of vulnerable students; mid-day meals to ensure health of children; ensuring physical safety & zero tolerance to breach of child rights; enabling mechanisms for Children with Special

Needs; promoting multiple pathways to learning and strengthening open and distance learning programmes.

**Digital educational** content has been made available on various e-learning platforms like **SWAYAM, DIKSHA** and several others which can be accessed by Anyone, Anytime, and Anywhere free of cost.

Permissible **online component** in conventional education has been increased from 20% to 40%.

A **National Education Technology Forum** is being set up under **NEP 2020** to aid technology led education.

The Government also took special care to address mental health issues of students through counseling programmes like **Manodarpan** and others.

**National Education Policy (NEP) 2020** aims that **by 2025, at least 50%** of learners in the school and higher education system would have exposure to **vocational education**.

Vertical mobility for students from the vocational stream is being ensured through a **National Skills Qualifications Framework**.

Standards under this framework will be aligned with the **International Standard Classification of Occupations** maintained by the **International Labour Organization (ILO)**.

#### Facts about G20:

**Formation:** 26 September 1999

**Members:** 20  
(Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, South Korea, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States and European Union)

**Source:** PIB

## G20 Labour and Employment Ministers' Meeting

### Why in the News?

**Union Minister for Labour and Employment Santosh Gangwar** delivered the Ministerial Address on **Declaration and Employment Working Group (EWG) Priorities** at G20 Labour and Employment Ministers' Meeting.

India is making collective efforts to reduce gender gaps in **labour force participation**.

### Key Points

#### Issues Discussed:

The Employment Working Group (EWG) deliberated upon key issues, including women employment, social security and remote working.

The subject for the meeting being Fostering an inclusive, sustainable, and resilient recovery of labour markets and societies.

In 2014, G20 Leaders pledged in Brisbane to reduce the gap in **labour force participation rates** between men and women by **25% by 2025**.

#### Initiatives by India:

The country is ensuring education, skilling, training, entrepreneurship development and equal pay for equal work.

The **New Code on Wages, 2019** shall reduce gender-based discrimination in wages, recruitment and conditions of employment.

The duration of paid **maternity leave** has been increased from 12 weeks to 26 weeks.

**Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY)** provides financial support to women entrepreneurs to start small enterprises. There have been around 70% accounts of women in this Scheme. Collateral free loans worth Rupees 9 thousand billion have been disbursed under this scheme.

The **New Code on Social Security** may now include even self-employed and all other classes of workforce into the folds of social security coverage.

**The G20 Roadmap Towards and Beyond the Brisbane Target** has been developed for achieving equal opportunities and outcomes for women and men in our labour markets as well as societies in general.

### **Labour Force Participation:**

The labor force participation rate indicates the percentage of all people of working age who are employed or are actively seeking work.

According to the Periodic Labour Force Survey, 2018-19, the female labour force participation rates (LFPR) among women aged above 15 years are as low as 26.4% in rural areas and 20.4% in urban areas in **India**.

In 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic, female labor force participation in India was 23.5%, according to ILO estimates.

**Note:** G20 Leaders' Summit 2021 will convene in October 2021 in Rome Italy. For 2021, the G20, under the Italian Presidency, will focus on three broad, interconnected pillars of action: People, Planet, and Prosperity.

**Source: PIB**

## Important News: Economy

### World Bank: Indian Economy to grow at 8.3% in 2021

#### Why in the News?

The World Bank slashed its 2021-22 GDP growth forecast for the Indian economy to 8.3 percent from 10.1 percent estimated in April 2021.

#### Key Points:

##### For India:

The Washington-based global lender, in its latest issue of Global Economic Prospects June 2021 said India's economy is expected to grow at **8.3% for Fiscal Year 2021-22, 7.5% for 2022-23 and 6.5% for 2023-24.**

##### For World:

The global economy is set to expand by 5.6 per cent in 2021 - its strongest post-recession pace in 80 years.

#### Steps Taken by India:

The government announced that the health-related spending would more than double and set out a revised medium-term fiscal path intended to address the economic legacy of the pandemic.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) announced further measures to support liquidity provision to micro, small and medium firms, and loosened regulatory requirements on the provisioning for non-performing loans.

#### About World Bank:

The World Bank was created at the 1944 Bretton Woods Conference.

It comprises two institutions: the **International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)**, and the **International Development Association (IDA)**.

The World Bank is a component of the **World Bank Group**.

#### The World Bank Group's five international organizations

International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)

International Development Association (IDA)

International Finance Corporation (IFC)

Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA)

International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID)

### Membership

189 countries (IBRD)

173 countries (IDA)

### Major Reports:

World Development Report

Ease of Doing Business

Human Capital Index

Global Economic Prospects

Migration and Development Brief

Source: The Hindu

## India 5<sup>th</sup> largest recipient of FDI inflows: UNCTAD Report

### Why in the News?

India received \$64 billion in **Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)** in 2020, the 5<sup>th</sup> largest recipient of inflows in the world, according to the **World Investment Report 2021** released by the **UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)**.

### Key Points

**Global FDI flows** have been severely hit by the pandemic and they plunged by 35 percent in 2020 to \$1 trillion from \$1.5 trillion in 2019.

#### FDI Inflows in 2020:

Rank 1: US

Rank 2: China

Rank 5: India

#### FDI Outflows in 2020:

Rank 1: China

Rank 2: Luxembourg

Rank 18: India

### India's FDI:

In India, FDI increased 27 percent to \$64 billion in 2020 from \$51 billion in 2019, pushed up by acquisitions in the **ICT (Information and Communication Technology)** industry.

The pandemic boosted demand for digital infrastructure and services globally.

India ranked 18 out of the world's top 20 economies for FDI outflows, with 12 billion dollars of outflows recorded from the country in 2020 as compared to 13 billion dollars in 2019.

### About UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD):

UNCTAD is a permanent intergovernmental body. It deals with trade, investment, and development issues.

**Parent organization:** United Nations General Assembly (UNGA); United Nations Secretariat

**Headquarters:** Geneva, Switzerland

**Formation:** 30 December 1964

### Government Measures to promote FDI:

Measures taken by the Government on the fronts of FDI policy reforms, investment facilitation and ease of doing business have resulted in increased FDI inflows into the country.

Launch of schemes attracting investments, such as, National technical Textile Mission, Pradhan Mantri Kisan SAMPADA Yojana, Production Linked Incentive Scheme etc., and the initiatives under the Atmanirbhar Bharat to encourage investments in different sectors.

**Source: The Hindu**

## Important News: Defense

### Offshore Patrol Vessel 'Sajag' commissioned into the Indian Coast Guard

#### Why in the News?

National Security Advisor Ajit Doval commissioned the **Offshore Patrol Vessel (OPV) 'Sajag'** into the **Indian Coast Guard (ICG)** and dedicated it to the nation for the protection of maritime interests.

#### Key Points

Sajag is third out of five Offshore Patrol Vessels indigenously designed and built under the Make in India policy.

OPV Sajag is constructed by M/s Goa Shipyard Limited.

Other four OPVs are Indian Coast Guard Ship (ICGS) Saksham, ICGS Sachet, ICGS Sujeet, and ICGS Sarthak.

#### About Indian Coast Guard:

The Indian Coast Guard is a maritime law enforcement and search and rescue agency of India with jurisdiction over its territorial waters including its contiguous zone and exclusive economic zone.

The Indian Coast Guard was established by the **Coast Guard Act, 1978** of the Parliament of India.

It operates under the Ministry of Defence.

The blueprint for a multidimensional Coast Guard was conceived by the visionary **Rustamji Committee**.

**Note:** ICG ships are being built within the country in various shipyards, including private yards in line with the Government's vision of 'Make in India'.

The ICG has a total 160 ships and 62 aircraft in its fleet.

## 'Second Positive Indigenisation List'

### Why in the News?

The Ministry of Defence (MoD) has notified the 'Second Positive Indigenisation List' of 108 items.

### Key Points

#### About the Second Positive Indigenisation List:

All the **108 items** will be procured from indigenous sources as per provisions given in **Defence Acquisition Procedure (DAP) 2020**.

This second list is planned to be implemented progressively with effect from **December 2021 to December 2025**.

This will give further boost to indigenisation with active participation of public and private sector for fulfilling the twin objectives of achieving self-reliance and promoting defence exports.

**Note:** In August 2020, the '**First Positive Indigenisation**' List comprising **101 items** was notified.

#### About Defence Acquisition Procedure (DAP 2020):

The Defence Acquisition Procedure (DAP 2020), which supersedes the Defence Procurement Procedure 2016 (DPP 2016), is a sincere effort by the Ministry of Defence to improve the capital procurement procedure.

#### Other Initiatives to boost domestic production of Defence Equipment:

**Defence Industrial Corridors:** India has inaugurated two defence industrial corridors, one in Tamil Nadu and the other in Uttar Pradesh to boost the flagship "Make in India" programme.

Increased Capital Acquisition Budget for Domestic Sector

The Central government has increased the Foreign Direct Investment limit in the defence sector from 49 to 74% under automatic route and beyond 74% through the government route.

Defence India Startup Challenge

Corporatization of the Ordnance Factory Boards

**Note:** The Ministry of Defence is also expected to put out the final version of the '**Defence Production and Export Promotion Policy (DPEPP) 2020**'.

## Indo-Thai Coordinated Patrol (CORPAT) 2021

### Why in the News?

The **31st edition** of **India-Thailand Coordinated Patrol (Indo-Thai CORPAT)** between the Indian Navy and the Royal Thai Navy is being conducted from 09 – 11 June 2021.

### Key Points

Indian Naval Ship (INS) Saryu, an indigenously built Naval Offshore Patrol Vessel and His Majesty's Thailand Ship (HTMS) Krabi, an Offshore Patrol Vessel, along with Dornier Maritime Patrol Aircraft from both navies are participating in the CORPAT.

#### About CORPAT:

The two navies have been undertaking CORPAT bi-annually along their International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL) since 2005.

CORPAT builds up understanding and interoperability between navies and facilitates institution of measures to prevent and suppress unlawful activities like Illegal Unreported Unregulated fishing, maritime terrorism, drug trafficking, armed robbery and piracy.

### About SAGAR:

As part of Government of India's vision of **SAGAR (Security And Growth for All in the Region)**, the Indian Navy has been proactively engaging with the countries in the Indian Ocean Region towards enhancing regional maritime security.

This has been through bilateral and multilateral exercises, Coordinated Patrols, Joint EEZ Surveillance, and Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) operations.

## Defence innovation through iDEX – DIO

### Why in the News?

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has approved the budgetary support of Rs **498.8 crore** to **Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX) - Defence Innovation Organisation (DIO)** for the next five years.

Earlier, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh released an E-booklet titled '**20 Reforms in 2020**', highlighting the major reforms undertaken by the Ministry of Defence (MoD) in 2020.

### Key Points

The scheme, with budgetary support of Rs 498.8 crore for the next five years, is aimed at providing financial support to nearly 300 start-ups/MSMEs/individual innovators and 20 partner incubators under the DIO framework.

The **Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX)** was launched by the Prime Minister in April 2018.

The creation of the **iDEX** framework and establishment of the **DIO** by the **Department of Defence Production (DDP)** is aimed at creating an ecosystem to foster innovation and technology development in defence and aerospace by engaging Industries including MSMEs, start-ups, individual innovators, Research & Development institutes & academia.

**Defence India Start-up Challenge (DISC)** is launched with Problem Statements (PS) from Armed Forces and OFB/DPSUs for resolution by innovators.

### Other Channels for procuring innovative technologies:

- Technology Development Fund scheme
- Indigenous Development by Services

### Other Related Initiatives:

- Defence Industrial Corridors
- Artificial Intelligence in Defence
- Strategic Partnership Model

**Source: PIB**

## 2021 NATO Summit

### Why in the News?

The 2021 Brussels summit of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was the 31st formal meeting of the heads of state and heads of government of the NATO, held in Brussels, Belgium, on 14 June 2021.

**Note:** US President Joe Biden took part in his first in-person NATO summit.

### Key Points

NATO Leaders discussed a wide range of issues at the 2021 Brussels Summit, including the main themes of the NATO 2030 initiative: how to reinforce the Alliance's unity, broaden its approach to security and contribute to safeguarding the rules-based international order.

**Note:** NATO leaders declared **China a global security challenge**.

### About NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization):

NATO, also called the North Atlantic Alliance, is an intergovernmental military alliance between 30 European and North American countries. The organization implements the North Atlantic Treaty that was signed on 4 April 1949.

**Source: The Hindu**

## Indian Navy - European Union Naval Force (IN-EUNAVFOR) Exercise

### Why in the News?

Indian Naval Ship Trikanth, a mission deployed for Anti-Piracy Operations, has participated in the maiden **IN- EUNAVFOR Joint Naval Exercise** in the **Gulf of Aden** on 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> June 2021.

### Key Points

A total of five warships from four navies (**India, Italy, Spain and France**) have participated in the exercise.

The aim of the exercise was to enhance and hone their war-fighting skills and their ability as an integrated force to promote peace, security and stability in the maritime domain.

### Significance:

Indian Navy and EUNAVFOR converge on multiple issues including counter piracy operations and protection of vessels deployed under the charter of **World Food Programme (UN WFP)**.

Indian Navy and EUNAVFOR also have regular interaction through **SHADE (Shared Awareness and De-confliction)** meetings held annually at Bahrain.

Concurrently, a virtual “**Information sharing Exercise**” was also conducted between the Indian Navy Information Fusion Centre – Indian Ocean Region and Maritime Security Centre-Horn of Africa.

### Major Indian Maritime Exercises:

JIMEX:	Japan
SLINEX:	Sri Lanka
Bongosagar and IN-BN CORPAT:	Bangladesh
Naseem-Al-Bahr:	Oman
Indra:	Russia

Samudra Shakti:

Za'ir-Al-Bahr:

Indo-Thai CORPAT :

IMCOR:

AUSINDEX:

Malabar Exercise:

SIMBEX:

**Source: PIB**

Indonesia

Qatar

Thailand

Malaysia

Australia

Japan and the USA

Singapore

## Science and Technology

## "AmbiTAG" India's first indigenous temperature data logger for the cold chain management

### Why in the News?

**Indian Institute of Technology, Ropar (IIT Ropar) in Punjab** has developed a first-of-its-kind IoT device – AmbiTag that records real-time ambient temperature during the transportation of perishable products, vaccines and even body organs and blood.

### Key Points

#### About "AmbiTAG"

Shaped as a USB device, AmbiTag continuously records the temperature of its immediate surroundings “from -40 to +80 degrees in any time zone for a full 90 days on a single charge.

The device has been developed under **Technology Innovation Hub – AWaDH (Agriculture and Water Technology Development Hub) and its Startup ScratchNest.**

AWaDH is a Government of India project.

The device is certified with ISO 13485:2016, EN 12830:2018, CE & ROHS.

**Note:** Such devices are being imported by India in a massive quantity from other countries such as Singapore, Hong Kong, Ireland, and China.

## IFFCO launches “World’s First Nano Urea Liquid”

### Why in the News?

**The Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative Limited (IFFCO)** launched the “World’s First Nano Urea Liquid”, a nutrient to provide nitrogen to plants as an alternative to the conventional urea.

### Key Points

#### About Nano Urea:

Urea that is produced from nanotechnology to improve the efficiency of the nutrients of the crops is called Nano Urea.

Nano Urea Liquid is developed to replace conventional urea and it can curtail the requirement of the same by at least 50%.

Conventional urea is effective 30-40 per cent in delivering nitrogen to plants, while the effectiveness of the Nano Urea Liquid is over 80 percent.

## WHO names COVID-19 variants first found in India as 'Kappa' and 'Delta'

### Why in the News?

**The World Health Organisation (WHO)** announced the B.1.617.1 and B.1.617.2 variants of the COVID-19, first identified in India, have been named as 'Kappa' and 'Delta' respectively.

### Key Points

They will not replace existing scientific names but are aimed to help in public discussion of Variants of Concern (VOCs) & Variants of Interest (VOIs).

### Other COVID-19 variants:

The B.1.1.7 COVID-19 strain which was first detected in the UK will be known as 'Alpha'.

The COVID-19 strains that were found in the US are 'Epsilon' and 'Iota'.

The B.1.351 variant detected in South Africa is now called 'Beta'.

P.1 variant which was first found in Brazil is 'Gamma' and the P.2 variant is 'Zeta'.

## NASA announces 2 missions to Venus

### Why in the News?

NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) has selected 2 missions for the exploration of Venus.

### Key Points

#### The selected missions:

**DAVINCI+ (Deep Atmosphere Venus Investigation of Noble gases, Chemistry, and Imaging):** It will measure the composition of Venus' atmosphere to understand how it formed and evolved, as well as determine whether the planet ever had an ocean.

**VERITAS (Venus Emissivity, Radio Science, InSAR, Topography, and Spectroscopy):** It will map Venus' surface to determine the planet's geologic history and understand why it developed so differently than Earth.

Mission is expected to launch in the 2028-2030 timeframe.

### About Venus:

Venus is the second planet from the Sun. It is named after the Roman goddess of love and beauty.

Venus is one of the four terrestrial planets in the Solar System, meaning that it is a rocky body like Earth. It is similar to Earth in size and mass, and is often described as Earth's "sister" or "twin".

**Note:** India has planned to launch the **Shukrayaan Venus mission** in 2024.

**Source:** Indian Express

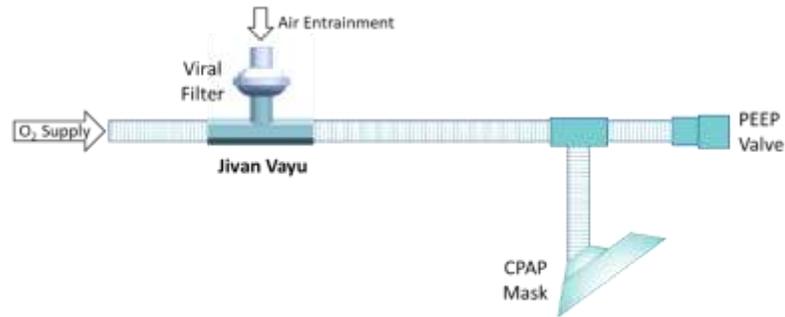
## IIT Ropar develops nation's first power-free CPAP device 'Jivan Vayu'

### Why in the News?

Indian Institute of Technology, Ropar has developed a device 'Jivan Vayu' which can be used as a substitute of CPAP (Continuous Positive Airway Pressure) machine.

This is Nation's first such device which functions even without electricity and is adapted to both kinds of oxygen generation units like O<sub>2</sub> cylinders and oxygen pipelines in hospitals.

These provisions are not available in otherwise existing CPAP machines.



## Key Points

### About 'Jivan Vayu':

It has an inbuilt viral filter at the air entrainment end which has a viral efficacy of 99.99%.

The viral filter ensures that the air does not bring in any pathogens from the environment.

The device has been manufactured using 3D printing and has also been tested mechanically.

### Need of 'Jivan Vayu':

This was the need of the hour during the present COVID pandemic when power supply is the key concern for saving lives of those on medical equipments such as ventilators and oxygen concentrators.

**Source: PIB**

## World's first wooden satellite to be launched from New Zealand

### Why in the News?

The **European Space Agency (ESA)** has planned to put the world's first wooden satellite, **WISA Woodsat**, on Earth's orbit.

### Key Points

#### About WISA Woodsat:

It will be launched to space by the end of 2021 with a Rocket Lab Electron rocket from the Mahia Peninsula launch complex in **New Zealand**.

The mission of the satellite is to test the applicability of wooden materials like plywood in spacecraft structures.

The satellite, designed and built in Finland, will orbit at around 500-600 km altitude in a roughly polar Sun-synchronous orbit.

#### About European Space Agency (ESA):

It is an intergovernmental organization of 22 member states dedicated to the exploration of space.

**Headquarters:** Paris, France

**Founded:** 30 May 1975

**CEO:** Johann-Dietrich Wörner

**Source: The Hindu**

## China launches Shenzhou-12 spacecraft

### Why in the News?

China has successfully launched its spacecraft **Shenzhou-12** with three astronauts on board to its space station's core module Tianhe for a three-month mission.

### Key Points

The Shenzhou-12 spacecraft was launched from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Centre in northwest China's Gobi Desert.

It is China's seventh crewed mission to space and the first during the construction of China's space station.

It is also the first in nearly five years after the country's last manned mission in 2016.

This is the first of two manned space missions planned in 2021.

### China's Space Station:

China is not a participant in the **International Space Station**.

The **International Space Station (ISS)** is a modular space station (habitable artificial satellite) in low Earth orbit. It is a multinational collaborative project involving five participating space agencies: NASA (United States), Roscosmos (Russia), JAXA (Japan), ESA (Europe), and CSA (Canada).

**Note:** China is the third country after the former Soviet Union and the United States to carry out a manned mission on its own.

**Source: The Hindu**

## Biotech KISAN Programme for improving agriculture productivity in the NER

### Why in the News?

Under the Ministry of Science and Technology, the **Department of Biotechnology (DBT)** has issued a special call for **North East Region (NER)** as a part of its Mission Programme "**Biotech-Krishi Innovation Science Application Network (Biotech-KISAN)**".

Biotech KISAN Programme aims to understand the local problems of the **NER farmers** and provide scientific solutions to those problems.

### Key Points

#### About Biotech-KISAN:

It is a scientist-farmer partnership scheme launched in 2017 for agriculture innovation with an objective to connect science laboratories with the farmers to find out innovative solutions and technologies to be applied at farm level.

Under this scheme, so far 146 Biotech-KISAN Hubs have been established covering all 15 agro climatic zones and 110 Aspirational Districts in the country.

#### About Department of Biotechnology (DBT):

Under the Ministry of Science and Technology, the Department of Biotechnology (DBT) enhances and improves the development of biotechnology in India, via its growth and application in agriculture, animal sciences, healthcare, environment, and industry.

#### About the Present Call:

The present call specifically focuses on the Northeast Region as it is predominantly agrarian with 70% of its workforce engaged in agriculture and allied sector for livelihood.

The region produces merely 1.5 percent of the country's food grain and continues to be a net importer of food grains even for its domestic consumption.

### **About Agricultural biotechnology:**

Agricultural biotechnology, also known as agri-tech, is an area of agricultural science involving the use of scientific tools and techniques, including genetic engineering, molecular diagnostics, molecular markers, vaccines, and tissue culture, to modify living organisms: plants, animals, and microorganisms.

**Source: PIB**

## **Environment**

### **Jayanti: A new species of Spider Cricket**

#### **Why in the News?**

**Recently**, a team of zoologists headed by Dr Ranjana Jaiswara of the Zoology Department of Panjab University, Chandigarh, have discovered a new species of Spider Cricket in the **Kurra caves of Chhattisgarh**.

The new subgenus was named **Jayanti after Professor Jayant Biswas**, one of the leading cave explorers in the country.

#### **Key Points**

##### **About the New Spider Cricket:**

Jayanti has become the twelfth subgenus, or species, of cricket identified under the genus *Arachnomimus* Saussure, 1897.

Males of the new Jayanti subgenus cannot produce sound and their females don't have ears.

The newly discovered subgenus, *Indimimus*, is different from the two subgenera, *Arachnomimus* and *Euarachnomimus*, because of the male genitalia structure.

Insects have a lock-and-key model genitalia structure which is unique to each subgenus.

##### **Significance of the Discovery:**

The new species may be communicating by beating their abdomen or any other body part on the cave walls.

**Vibrational communication** is one of the softest but fastest modes of signal transmission.

Further studies on their skills of **vibrational communication may help in designing hearing aids for humans** which can capture quietest signals and amplify to an audible hearing range.

With the discovery of Jayanti from India, the genus *Arachnomimus* is now known from 12 species. Distribution of these species is very wide, ranging from Brazil to Malaysia.

In India, the diversity of spider crickets is still unexplored. Given India is home to four **biodiversity hotspots**, and all the hotspots have unexplored caves, there is significant scope for many more discoveries.

## Raimona becomes Assam's sixth national park

### Why in the News?

Raimona in Kokrajhar district has become Assam's sixth national park. The 422 sq ft wildlife habitat in Kokrajhar district adjoins western-most buffer to Manas Tiger Reserve.

### Key Points

The **Raimona reserve forest** in Kokrajhar district under the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR), bordering Bhutan, has been upgraded as the sixth national park of the state.

It is home to golden langur, Asian elephants, tigers, clouded leopards, Indian gaur, wild buffalo, spotted deer, hornbill, more than 150 species of butterflies, 170 species of birds and 380 varieties of plants and orchids.

### Note:

The other five national parks in the state are **Kaziranga, Manas, Nameri, Orang and Dibru-Saikhowa**.

**National parks in India** are IUCN category II protected areas.

**India's first national park** was established in 1936 as Hailey National Park, now known as Jim Corbett National Park, Uttarakhand.

In 1972, India enacted the Wildlife Protection Act and Project Tiger in 1973 to safeguard the habitats of conservation reliant species.

**Source: The Hindu**

## Assam's 7th National Park 'Dihing Patkai'

### Why in the News?

**Assam's Dehing Patkai wildlife sanctuary** has been announced as the 7<sup>th</sup> national park of the state.

The announcement comes shortly after **Raimona reserve forest in western Assam's Kokrajhar district** was upgraded to a **national park on June 5, 2021**.

### Key Points

#### About Dehing Patkai National Park:

The 111.942-sqkm Dehing Patkai wildlife sanctuary (notified in 2004) is located inside the larger Dehing Patkai Elephant Reserve, which spreads across Dibrugarh, Tinsukia and Sivasagar districts of Upper Assam — rich in coal and oil.

The area is home to hoolock gibbon, leopard, elephant, slow loris, tiger, clouded leopard, golden cat, fishing cat, sambar, hog deer, marble cat, sloth bear, and several bird species including the endangered state bird, the white-winged wood duck.

#### National Parks in Assam:

The seven national parks of Assam are **Kaziranga, Nameri, Orang, Manas, Dibru-Saikhowa, Raimona and Dehing Patkai.**

**Assam** now is the **state with the second highest** number of national parks in the country, after **Madhya Pradesh's 11.**

The **Union Territory of Andaman and Nicobar** has **nine national parks.**

**Note:** Kaziranga national park and Manas national park are UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

**Source: PIB**

## UN 'High-Level Dialogue on Desertification, Land degradation and Drought'

### Why in the News?

**Prime Minister Narendra Modi** delivered a keynote address at the UN “High-Level Dialogue on Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought”.

He spoke at the Opening Segment in his capacity as the **President of the 14th Session of the Conference of Parties of United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD).**

### Key Points

#### Steps taken by India to deal with the Land Degradation issue:

India is on track to achieve its national commitment of Land degradation neutrality (Sustainable Development Goal target 15.3).

Restoration of 26 million hectares of degraded land aimed by 2030 to achieve an additional carbon sink of 2.5 to 3 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent.

In the last 10 years, around 3 million hectares of forest cover has been added in India, enhancing the combined forest cover to almost one-fourth of the country's total area.

The Prime Minister gave an example of the **Banni region in Rann of Kutch in Gujarat** to illustrate how restoration of land can start a virtuous cycle of good soil health, increased land productivity, food security and improved livelihoods.

Centre of Excellence is being set up in India to promote a scientific approach towards land degradation issues.

#### About Land Degradation:

Land degradation is a process in which the value of the biophysical environment is affected by a combination of human-induced processes acting upon the land.

Land degradation is caused by multiple forces, including extreme weather conditions, particularly drought.

#### Consequences

There are four main ways of looking at land degradation and its impact on the environment around it:

A temporary or permanent decline in the productive capacity of the land

Action in the land's capacity to provide resources for human livelihoods

Loss of biodiversity  
Shifting ecological risk

**Global Efforts to Check Land Degradation:**

United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)

The Delhi Declaration of 2019, signed by 14th CoP of the UNCCD, called for better access and stewardship over land.

The Bonn Challenge

Great Green Wall Initiative

Drought Initiative

Land Degradation Neutrality programme

**India's Efforts to Check Land Degradation:**

The National Action Programme for combating desertification in 2001

Integrated Watershed Management Programme (Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana)

National Mission for Green India

National Afforestation Programme

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme

Soil Health Card Scheme

Soil Conservation in the Catchment of River Valley Project

Command Area Development and Water Management programme

**Source: PIB**

## Schemes

### YUVA - Prime Minister's Scheme for Mentoring Young Authors

#### Why in the News?

The Ministry of Education, Department of Higher Education launched YUVA-Prime Minister's Scheme for Mentoring Young Authors.

#### Key Points

#### About YUVA (Young, Upcoming and Versatile Authors) Scheme:

It is an Author Mentorship programme to train young and budding authors (**below 30 years of age**) in order to promote reading, writing and book culture in the country, and project India and Indian writings globally.

**YUVA is a part of India@75 Project (Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav)** to bring to the fore the perspectives of the young generation of writers on themes like Unsung Heroes, Freedom Fighters, Unknown and Forgotten Places and their role in National Movement, and other related themes in an innovative and creative manner.

#### Implementation and Execution:

**The National Book Trust, India** under the Ministry of Education will be the **Implementing Agency** of the scheme.

The books prepared under this scheme will be **published by National Book Trust, India.**

A total of 75 authors will be selected through an All India Contest to be conducted from 1 June - 31 July 2021.

The winners will be announced on 15 August 2021.

The young authors will be trained by eminent authors/mentors.

Under the mentorship, the manuscripts will be readied by 15 December 2021 for publication.

The published books will be launched on **12 January 2022 on the occasion of National Youth Day (Yuva Diwas).**

A consolidated scholarship of Rs.50,000 per month for a period of six months per author will be paid under the Mentorship Scheme.

### Monetary Assistance through DBT under MDM Scheme

#### Why in the News?

The Ministry of Education has approved the proposal to provide monetary assistance through **Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT)** of the cooking cost component of the **Mid-Day-Meal (MDM) Scheme**, to all eligible children, as a special welfare measure.

#### Key Points

This decision will help safeguard the nutritional levels of children and aid in protecting their immunity during the challenging **pandemic times.**

This is in addition to the Government of India's announcement of distribution of free-of-cost food grains @ 5 Kg per person per month to nearly 80 Crore beneficiaries under **Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PM-GKAY).**

The Central Government will provide additional funds of about Rs 1200 crore to State Governments and UT Administrations for this purpose.

This one-time special welfare measure of the Union Government will benefit about 11.8 crore children studying in class I to VIII in the 11.20 lakh Government and Government aided schools across the country.

### **About Midday Meal (MDM) Scheme:**

It is a centrally sponsored scheme which was **launched in 1995**.

The Midday Meal Scheme is a school meal programme in India designed to better the nutritional standing of school-age children nationwide.

The programme supplies free lunches on working days for children in primary and upper primary classes in government, government aided, local body, Education Guarantee Scheme, and alternate innovative education centres, Madarsa and Maqtabas supported under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, and National Child Labour Project schools run by the ministry of labour.

### **Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT):**

Direct Benefit Transfer is an attempt to change the mechanism of transferring subsidies launched by the Government of India **on 1 January 2013**. This program aims to transfer subsidies directly to the people through their bank accounts.

### **Other Schemes involving DBT:**

Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana, National Food Security Mission, PM KISAN (Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana), Swachh Bharat Mission Gramin, National AYUSH Mission, Atal Pension Yojana.

## **'PM-CARES for Children' Scheme**

### **Why in the News?**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched '**PM-CARES for Children**' Scheme for children orphaned due to COVID 19.

### **Key Points**

All children who have lost both parents or surviving parents or legal guardian/adoptive parents due to COVID 19, will be supported through the 'PM-CARES for Children'.

### **About 'PM-CARES for Children' Scheme:**

Such children to get a monthly stipend once they turn 18 and a fund of Rs 10 lakh when they turn 23 from PM CARES

Free education to be ensured for children who lost their parents to COVID 19

The children will be assisted to get an education loan for higher education & PM CARES Fund will pay interest on the loan

The children will get free health insurance of Rs 5 lakh under Ayushman Bharat Scheme (PM-JAY) till 18 years & premium will be paid by PM CARES Fund

### **About PM CARES Fund:**

Keeping in mind the need for having a dedicated national fund with the primary objective of dealing with any kind of emergency or distress situation, like posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, and to provide relief to the affected, a

public charitable trust under the name of '**Prime Minister's Citizen Assistance and Relief in Emergency Situations Fund**' (PM CARES Fund)' has been set up.

Prime Minister is the ex-officio Chairman of the PM CARES Fund and Minister of Defence, Minister of Home Affairs and Minister of Finance, Government of India are ex-officio Trustees of the Fund.

Donations to PM CARES Fund would qualify for 80G benefits for 100% exemption.

Donations to PM CARES Fund will also qualify to be counted as Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) expenditure under the Companies Act, 2013

PM CARES Fund has also got exemption under the FCRA and a separate account for receiving foreign donations has been opened.

## Kerala's Smart Kitchen Scheme

### Why in the News?

The Chief Minister of Kerala, Pinarayi Vijayan has announced that the Secretary level committee is set to make the recommendations and guidelines for the implementation of the 'Smart Kitchen scheme' by July 10, 2021.

### Key Points

#### About the Smart Kitchen Scheme:

It aims to reduce the workload of women's domestic labour.

The women will be provided a loan by the government to refurbish their kitchens with a low-interest rate in the installment schemes.

## Digitized versions of flagship health schemes on NHA's IT platform

### Why in the News?

Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare launched the revamped **Central Government Health Scheme (CGHS)** and the **Umbrella schemes of Rashtriya Arogya Nidhi (RAN)** and **Health Minister's Discretionary Grant (HMDG)** on **National Health Authority (NHA)**'s IT platform.

### Key Points

This will enable seamless delivery of healthcare services to eligible beneficiaries under these schemes by making the whole process paperless.

Now all the schemes have become cashless, paperless and citizen centric.

#### About Central Government Health Scheme (CGHS):

The CGHS, a comprehensive Health Scheme for Serving Employees, Pensioners, Members of Parliament, ex-MPs, etc., and their dependent family members, during the last 7 years has expanded to 72 Cities with more than 38 lakh beneficiaries covered under the scheme.

#### About Rashtriya Arogya Nidhi (RAN):

The Scheme provides for financial assistance of Rs. 15 lakh to patients, living below poverty line and who are suffering from major life threatening diseases,

to receive medical treatment at any of the super specialty Government hospitals / institutes.

**About Health Minister's Discretionary Grant (HMDG):**

Under HMDG a maximum amount of Rs.1,25,000/- is provided to patients whose annual income does not exceed Rs.1,25,000/-, to defray a part of the expenditure on hospitalization/treatment in Government Hospitals.

**Source: PIB**

## Proposals for construction of nearly 3.61 Lakh houses approved under PMAY-U

**Why in the News?**

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) has approved 708 proposals for construction of 3.61 lakh houses under **Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana – Urban (PMAY-U)**.

The decision was taken at the 54th Meeting of the Central Sanctioning and Monitoring Committee (CSMC) under PMAY-U held in New Delhi.

In addition, **'PMAY- U Awards 2021 - 100 Days Challenge'** was also launched by the Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs.

**Key Points**

**About 'PMAY- U Awards 2021 - 100 Days Challenge':**

The awards are given to recognize and celebrate the outstanding contribution and performances by States, Union Territories (UTs), Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) and beneficiaries for successful implementation of the Mission and create a healthy competition.

With this, as on date, the total number of sanctioned houses under PMAY-U is now 112.4 lakh and so far 82.5 lakh have been grounded for construction of which 48.31 lakh have been completed/delivered.

Total investment under the Mission is Rs 7.35 Lakh Crore which has Central assistance of Rs 1.81. Lakh Crore of which Rs 96,067 Crore of funds have been released.

**About Six Light House Projects (LHPs):** The foundation stones of LHPs were laid by the Prime Minister in January 2021.

The LHPs are being constructed at Agartala, Chennai, Lucknow, Ranchi, Rajkot and Indore.

An **E-Module on Technograh**i comprising learning tools on innovative construction technologies shortlisted under Global Housing Technology Challenge – India and being used in six LHPs was also launched at the event.

Secretary, MoHUA, also inaugurated a newly constructed **Demonstration Housing Project in Panchkula, Haryana** which will be used as a working women hostel on rental basis.

Under the Technology sub mission of PMAY-U, 6 Demonstration Housing Projects (DHPs) have been completed so far and 7 are being constructed in different parts of the country.

**About Demonstration Housing Projects (DHPs):**

DHPs are model housing projects built with new/alternate technology that not only showcase field level application of the technology but also used as platform to impart on-site orientation & training to practitioners & students in the housing sector on the application and use of such technology.

**About Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY):**

It is an initiative by the Government of India in which affordable housing will be provided to the urban poor with a target of building 2 crore (20 million) affordable houses by 31 March 2022.

It has two components: **Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban) (PMAY-U)** for the urban poor and **Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Gramin) (PMAY-G)** for the rural poor.

**Source: PIB**

## Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) for "Mission Karmayogi"

### Why in the News?

**Former Infosys CEO (Chief Executive Officer) S D Shibu Lal** was appointed **chairperson** of a **3-member task force** formed.

The task force will help the government in bringing major bureaucratic reforms through its ambitious "**Mission Karmayogi**".

**Other members** are Govind Iyer and Pankaj Bansal.

### Key Points

The Centre has recently approved the '**National Programme for Civil Services Capacity Building - Mission Karmayogi**' to effect a transformational shift from rule based training to role-based capacity development of all civil services in the country.

To effectively roll out this mission, a **Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV), namely Karmayogi Bharat**, would be set up as a not-for-profit company.

It will be set up under **section 8 of Companies Act, 2013** as a 100% government-owned entity.

The Special Purpose Vehicle will be responsible to deliver and manage design, implement, enhance and manage a digital platform and infrastructure, manage and deliver competency assessment services, and manage governance of telemetry data and ensure provision of monitoring and evaluation.

The **task force** shall submit its recommendations on organisational structure for the SPV aligning its vision, mission and functions.

### About 'Mission Karmayogi':

The National Programme for Civil Services Capacity Building (NPCSCB) – "Mission Karmayogi" has been launched with the objective of enhancing governance through Civil Service Capacity Building.

Mission Karmayogi will have the following **six pillars**:

Policy Framework

Competency Framework

Institutional Framework

Digital Learning Framework (**Integrated Government Online Training Karmayogi Platform (iGOT-Karmayogi)**)

Monitoring and Evaluation Framework.

## Awards and Honours

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

#### Why in the News?

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

#### Key Points

Amartya Sen won the award for his research on famines and his theory of human development, welfare economics and the underlying mechanisms of poverty

have contributed to the fight against injustice, inequality, disease and ignorance.  
The award comprises a Joan Miro sculpture representing and symbolising the Award, a diploma, an insignia and a cash prize of 50,000 Euros.

**Note:**

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

## Launch of Gopal Ratna Awards and Integration of e- Gopala app with UMANG platform

### Why in the News?

The Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying announced the launch of the Gopal Ratna Awards and Integration of e- Gopala app with UMANG platform on the occasion of World Milk Day.

Every year, the **first day of June is observed as World Milk Day.**

### Key Points

#### About the Gopal Ratna Awards:

The Gopal Ratna Awards are the National Awards **for the Cattle and Dairy sector.**

The award has three categories - **i) Best Dairy farmer, ii) Best Artificial Insemination Technician (AIT) and (iii) Best Dairy Cooperative/ Milk producer Company/ FPO.**

#### About UMANG platform:

**Unified Mobile Application for New-age Governance (UMANG)** is a mobile app, a Digital India initiative of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, by the Government of India for access to central and state government services.

The app was developed by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology with the National e-Governance Division and launched in November 2017 by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

#### About e- Gopala app:

**e- Gopala app (Generation of wealth through Productive Livestock)**, a comprehensive breed improvement marketplace and information portal for direct use of farmers, was launched by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2020.

#### Other Initiatives related to the Dairy sector:

National Animal Disease Control Programme & National Artificial Insemination Programme

National Action Plan on Dairy Development 2022

Rashtriya Gokul Mission

Pashu-Aadhar

#### About Operation Flood (White Revolution):

Operation Flood, launched on 13 January 1970, was the world's largest dairy development program and a landmark project of India's National Dairy Development Board (NDDB).

Operation Flood is the program that led to the "White Revolution".

**Vergheese Kurien** is known as the "**Father of the White Revolution**" in India.

**Note:**

India is a global leader amongst dairying nations and produced 198.4 million tonnes of milk during 2019-20.

Currently, India is the world's largest milk producer, with 22% of global production.

## WHO awards Harsh Vardhan with 'WHO Director-General Special Recognition Award'

### Why in the News?

On account of the World No Tobacco Day, World Health Organisation (WHO) has awarded Union Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan with 'WHO Director-General Special Recognition Award' for his accomplishments in the area of tobacco control.

### Key Points:

The award has been given to Mr Vardhan for **banning E-cigarettes and heated tobacco products**.

His leadership was instrumental in the **2019 national legislation to ban e-cigarettes and heated tobacco products**.

WHO has also awarded **Madhya Pradesh Voluntary Health Association and Uttar Pradesh Tobacco Control Cell** with the **World No Tobacco Day award** in the **South East region category**.

**Note:** World No Tobacco Day 2021 was celebrated on 31<sup>st</sup> May 2021.

## Assam to confer Civilian Honours on lines of Bharat Ratna, Padma Awards

### Why in the News?

The Assam government announced state awards on the lines of Bharat Ratna and Padma annual awards for eminent personalities and achievers in the state, by providing cash rewards and a slew of other benefits.

### Key Points

#### About newly announced awards:

Assam announced conferring **one Asom Ratna, three Asom Bibhushan, five Asom Bhushan and ten Asom Shree awards** every year.

The awards will carry ₹ 5 lakh, ₹ 3 lakh, ₹ 2 lakh and ₹ 1 lakh cash respectively.

The awards will also include benefits like free medical treatment of critical illness, free stay at Asom Bhawans, free travel in ASTC buses etc.

**Source:** NDTV

## International Booker Prize 2021: David Diop becomes first French winner

### Why in the News?

David Diop, a French novelist, won the International Booker Prize 2021 for '**At Night All Blood is Black**'.

### Key Points

The book was translated by **Anna Moschovakis**.

The winning book was first published in 2018 with the French title '**Frere d'ame**'.

It was **published by Pushkin Press**.

### About International Booker Prize

The International Booker Prize, formerly known as the Man Booker International Prize, has been awarded since 2005.

**Source: Indian Express**

## 2021 Pulitzer Prizes

### Why in the News?

The 2021 Pulitzer Prizes were awarded by the Pulitzer Prize Board for work during the 2020 calendar year on June 11, 2021.

The 105th class of 2021 Pulitzer Prize winners in Journalism, Books, Drama and Music were announced.

### Key Points

The awards highlighted coverage of the COVID-19 pandemic, racial unrest, and other major stories in the U.S. that year.

Several publications, including The Atlantic and BuzzFeed News, received their first Pulitzers.

**Indian-origin journalist Megha Rajagopalan** from BuzzFeed News won the Pulitzer Prize for exposing China's vast infrastructure for detaining Muslims.

### Main 2021 Pulitzer Prize winners:

Category	Winner
<b>Journalism</b>	
Public Service	<b>The New York Times</b>
Breaking News Reporting	Staff of the Star Tribune, Minneapolis, Minn.
Investigative Reporting	Matt Rocheleau, Vernal Coleman, Laura Crimaldi, Evan Allen and Brendan McCarthy of The Boston Globe
Explanatory Reporting	Andrew Chung, Lawrence Hurley, Andrea Januta, Jaimi Dowdell and Jackie Botts of Reuters
Local Reporting	Kathleen McGrory and Neil Bedi of the Tampa Bay Times

National Reporting	Staffs of The Marshall Project; AL.com, Birmingham; IndyStar, Indianapolis; and the Invisible Institute, Chicago
International Reporting	<b>Megha Rajagopalan</b> , Alison Killing and Christo Buschek of BuzzFeed News
Criticism	Wesley Morris of The New York Times
Editorial writing	Robert Greene of the Los Angeles Times
Breaking News Photography	Photography Staff of Associated Press
<b>Books, Drama and Music</b>	
Fiction	The Night Watchman by Louise Erdrich
Drama	The Hot Wing King by Katori Hall
History	Franchise: The Golden Arches in Black America by Marcia Chatelain
Poetry	Postcolonial Love Poem by Natalie Diaz
Special Citation	<b>Darnella Frazier</b> , The teenager who recorded the killing of George Floyd
Music	Stride, by Tania León

**Source: Pulitzer.org**

## United Nations' Land for Life Award 2021

### Why in the News?

Rajasthan-based climate activist **Shyam Sundar Jyani's** environment conservation concept, **Familial Forestry** has won the United Nations' Land for Life Award 2021.

### Key Points

Shyam Sundar Jyani, an associate professor of Sociology, has been campaigning for Familial Forestry for over 15 years.

### About the award:

Launched at the UNCCD COP (Conference of Parties) 10 in 2011, the Award is considered as the world's highest reward regarding land conservation and restoration.

It made a significant contribution towards achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 15: "Life on Land", in particular Target 15.3 Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN).

### About Familial Forestry:

Familial Forestry means transferring the care of trees and environment so that a tree becomes a part of the family's consciousness.

More than a million families from more than 15,000 villages of desert-prone northwest Rajasthan in over 2.5 million saplings have been planted in the past 15 years.

### About the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD):

UNCCD was established in 1994. It is the sole legally binding international agreement linking environment and development to sustainable land management under the UN.

UNCCD is one of the three **Rio Conventions**; the other two are the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD) and UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

**Source: The Hindu**

## Former Kerala Health Minister KK Shailaja honoured with CEU Open Society Prize 2021

### Why in the News?

Former Health Minister KK Shailaja has been awarded the prestigious **Central European University (CEU) Open Society Prize 2021**.

### Key Points

#### About the Award:

Open Society Prize, the highest civilian recognition by the university, is annually awarded to persons of exceptional distinction who serve the ideals of an open society.

**Note:** Nobel Laureate Svetlana Alexeyevich received the Open Society Prize in 2020.

**Source: Indian Express**

## Indian American Sumita Mitra wins European Inventor Award 2021

### Why in the News?

Indian American chemist Sumita Mitra has won the **European Inventor Award 2021 in the 'Non-EPO countries' category**.

### Key Points

Sumita Mitra was honoured with the European Inventor Award 2021 for her application of nanotechnology in dentistry.

Mitra was the first to successfully integrate nanotechnology into dental materials to produce stronger and more aesthetically pleasing fillings, which are now used by dentists around the world.

### About the Award:

The Award, one of Europe's most prestigious innovation prizes, is presented annually by the **EPO (European Patent Office)** to distinguish outstanding inventors from Europe and beyond who have made an exceptional contribution to society, technological progress and economic growth.

**Source: Economic Times**

## Jamsetji N Tata becomes world's top philanthropist of the last century

### Why in the News?

According to the list of 50 global philanthropists compiled by Hurun Research and EdelGive Foundation, India's pioneer **industrialist and Tata Group founder Jamsetji N Tata** is the world's biggest philanthropist of the last century.

**Total global donations** in the last century stood at \$832 billion.

**Hurun Research and EdelGive Foundation** released the **2021 EdelGive Hurun Philanthropists of the Century Report**, a ranking of the world's most generous individuals from the past century. This is the first year of the ranking.

### Key Points

**Rank 1:** Jamsetji N Tata (\$102.4 billion)

**Rank 2:** Bill Gates & Melinda French Gates (\$74.6 billion)

**Rank 3:** Henry Wellcome (\$56.7 billion)

**Rank 12:** Azim Premji (\$22 billion)

**Note:** The **US topped** the list with 38 billionaires, followed by UK with 5, China 3, India 2 and Portugal and Switzerland 1 each.

**Source: The Hindu**

sexamprep.com

## Books and Authors

### Cricket legend Ravi Shastri's book 'Stargazing: The Players in My Life'

#### Why in the News?

Cricket legend, commentator and one of Team India's most successful coaches, Ravi Shastri has penned a book titled '**Stargazing: The Players in My Life**'.

#### Key Points

##### About the Book

The 'Stargazing: The Players in My Life' is co-authored by Ravi Shastri and sports journalist Ayaz Memon and it is expected to be out in 2021.

In the book, Shastri writes about some 60 extraordinary talents he has met from across the world who have inspired him.

It will be published by HarperCollins India.

## Salman Rushdie's book "Languages of Truth: Essays 2003-2020"

### Why in the News?

Salman Rushdie has penned a new book titled "Languages of Truth: Essays 2003-2020".

### Key Points

#### About the Book:

In his new book, "Languages of Truth: Essays 2003-2020," Rushdie attempts to perform a defensive castling move.

He suggests his work has been misunderstood and mistreated because the literary culture has turned from brio-filled imaginative writing toward the humbler delights of "autofiction," as exemplified by the work of Elena Ferrante and Karl Ove Knausgaard.

#### About the Author:

Salman Rushdie is a British Indian novelist and essayist. His second novel, 'Midnight's Children' (1981), won the Booker Prize in 1981. Much of his fiction is set on the Indian subcontinent.

## 'Home in the World': Amartya Sen's memoir

### Why in the News?

**Nobel Prize winner Amartya Sen** has penned his memoir titled 'Home in the World'.

The book will be published in July 2021 by **Penguin Random House**.

### Key Points

In 'Home in the World', Sen shares details from his life and explores the idea of 'home'.

He was awarded the **Nobel Prize in Economics** in 1998 and **Bharat Ratna** in 1999.

**Source: TOI**

## Amitav Ghosh's new book 'The Nutmeg's Curse'

### Why in the News?

Jnanpith awardee and renowned author Amitav Ghosh's new book '**The Nutmeg's Curse: Parables for a Planet in Crisis**' is all set to release soon.

### Key Points

In 'The Nutmeg's Curse', Ghosh discusses that the nutmeg's journey from its native Banda islands sheds light on a widespread colonial mindset of exploitation of human life and the environment, which is present even today.

The book has been published by John Murray.

**Source: TOI**

## Important Days

### May 29, International Day of UN Peacekeepers

#### Why in the News?

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

#### Key Points

The **theme** of 2021 is “**The road to a lasting peace: Leveraging the power of youth for peace and security.**”

The International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers was established by the General Assembly in 2002.

#### Dag Hammarskjold Medal Award:

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

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

### May 31, World No Tobacco Day

#### Why in the News?

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

#### Key Points

The theme of World No Tobacco Day 2021 is “**Commit to quit.**”

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

#### About National Tobacco Control Programme (NTCP):

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

### June 05, World Environment Day

#### Why in the News?

World Environment Day (WED) is celebrated on June 5, annually to encourage awareness and environmental protection.

#### Key Points

The **theme** of World Environment Day 2021 is ‘**Ecosystem Restoration**’.

#### History:

World Environment Day was established in 1972 by the United Nations (UN) at the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment (June 5-16, 1972). Two years later, in 1974 the first World Environment Day was held.

**Pakistan** was the **global host** of World Environment Day 2021.

### **About Ecosystem:**

An ecosystem is a community of plants and animals interacting with each other in a given area, and also with their non-living environments. The non-living environments include weather, earth, sun, soil, climate and atmosphere.

### **About Ecosystem restoration:**

Ecosystem restoration means assisting in the recovery of ecosystems that have been degraded or destroyed, as well as conserving the ecosystems that are still intact.

### **India's Initiatives:**

**On the World Environment Day 2021**, Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the ambitious **E-100 pilot project** in Pune for the production and distribution of **ethanol across the country**.

The Government has resolved to meet the **target of 20 percent ethanol blending in petrol by 2025**. Earlier the resolve was to achieve the target by 2030 which is now postponed by 5 years.

### **Other Initiatives:**

National Biodiversity Action Plan  
National Afforestation Programme  
National Mission for a Green India

**Source: Business Standard**

## **June 07, World Food Safety Day**

### **Why in the News?**

Celebrated on June 7 every year, World Food Safety Day aims to spread awareness, detect, and prevent foodborne risks, contributing to food security, human health, economic prosperity, agriculture, market access, tourism and sustainable development.

### **Key Points**

The **theme** of World Food Safety Day 2021 is **'Safe food today for a healthy tomorrow'**.

### **History**

In 2018, the **United Nations General Assembly** proclaimed that every year June 7 would be observed as **World Food Safety Day**.

The observance is jointly facilitated by the **Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO)** and the **World Health Organisation (WHO)**.

### **Note:**

The World Health Assembly in 2020 further passed a resolution to strengthen efforts across the world for food safety and controlling foodborne diseases.

By 2030, food borne diseases are expected to rise to 150 to 177 million annually.

According to the UN, unsafe food kills an estimated 420,000 people every year.

**Source: Indian Express**

## June 08, World Oceans Day 2021

### Why in the News?

World Oceans Day is observed on June 8. Oceans play a major role in everyday life of people globally.

### Key Points

The **theme** of World Oceans Day 2021 is **'The Ocean: Life and Livelihoods'**.

### History

In 2008, the United Nations General Assembly decided that 8 June would be designated by the United Nations as "World Oceans Day".

### Note:

Over three billion people rely on the ocean for their livelihood.

Only one per cent of the ocean is legally protected.

About 70 percent of the oxygen, we breathe is produced by the oceans.

According to the World Register of Marine Species (WoRMS), there are currently at least 236,878 named marine species.

90 percent of all volcanic activity occurs in the oceans.

**Source: NDTV**

## June 17, World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought

### Why in the News?

World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought is a United Nations observance celebrated each year on 17 June.

Its purpose is to raise awareness of the presence of desertification and drought, highlighting methods of preventing desertification and recovering from drought.

### Key Points

The **theme** for 2021 is **"Restoration. Land. Recovery. We build back better with healthy land"**.

### History:

This day was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly resolution on January 30, 1995, after the day when the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) was drafted.

**Note:** India is working towards restoring 2.6 crore hectares of degraded land by 2030 and assisting fellow developing countries to develop land-restoration strategies.

**Source: Indian Express**

## June 21, International Day of Yoga

### Why in the News?

**International Day of Yoga (IDY)** is observed annually on June 21. The idea behind the day is to create awareness about yoga and its many benefits.

### Key Points

It is said that the word 'Yoga' was first mentioned in the sacred text of the Rig Veda.

The **theme** for 2021 is '**Yoga for well-being**'.

### History:

The idea of an International Day of Yoga was proposed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2014 in the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) Meeting.

UNGA proclaimed 21st June as the International Day of Yoga in their resolution adopted on 11th December 2014. Since 2015, this Day has been observed all over the world in ever-growing numbers of participants.

**Source: Indian Express**

## Sports

### Asian Boxing Championships 2021

#### Why in the News?

The 31st edition of the Asian Amateur Boxing Championships was held from 24 to 31 May 2021 in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

#### Key Points

India ranked 4<sup>th</sup> with 2 gold, 5 silver and 8 bronze medals.

#### Medal table

Rank	Nation	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
1	Kazakhstan	8	6	2	16
2	Uzbekistan	7	6	5	18
3	Mongolia	3	0	5	8
4	India	2	5	8	15

#### Note:

India's **Mary Kom** settled for a silver medal at the 2021 Asian Boxing Championships.

It is the second silver for Mary Kom at the Asian Championships who has previously won titles on five occasions --2003, 2005, 2010, 2012, and 2017 besides silver in 2008.

### French Open 2021

The French Open 2021 is a Grand Slam tennis tournament played on outdoor clay courts.

It was held at the Stade Roland Garros in Paris, France, from 30 May to 13 June 2021.

#### List of winners:

Men's singles	Women's singles	Men's doubles	Women's doubles	Mixed doubles
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<p><b>Winner-</b> Novak Djokovic (Serbia)</p> <p><b>Runner-up-</b> Stefanos Tsitsipas (Greece)</p>	<p><b>Winner-</b> Barbora Krejčíková (Czech Republic)</p> <p><b>Runner-up-</b> Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova (Russia)</p>	<p><b>Winner-</b> Pierre-Hugues Herbert (France), Nicolas Mahut (France)</p> <p><b>Runner-up-</b> Alexander Bublik (Kazakhstan), Andrey Golubev (Kazakhstan)</p>	<p><b>Winner-</b> Barbora Krejčíková (Czech Republic), Katerina Siniakova (Czech Republic)</p> <p><b>Runner-up-</b> Bethanie Mattek-Sands (America), Iga Świątek (Poland)</p>	<p><b>Winner-</b> Desirae Krawczyk (America), Joe Salisbury (Britain)</p> <p><b>Runner-up-</b> Elena Vesnina (Russia), Aslan Karatsev (Russia)</p>
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**Note:** Novak Djokovic (Serbia) won his second French Open title and 19th Grand Slam title.

**Source:** Indian Express

## F1 French Grand Prix 2021

**Max Verstappen (Red Bull)** won the **F1 French Grand Prix 2021** held at Paul Ricard Circuit, France.

**Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes)** got second position and **Sergio Perez (Red Bull)** got third position.

**Source:** Indian Express

## Reports and Indexes

### State of Finance for Nature Report 2021: UN

#### Why in the News?

The State of Finance for Nature Report by the United Nations analyzes the investment flow in nature-based solutions and identifies the future investment needed to meet the climate change, biodiversity and land degradation crises.

The report was jointly produced by the **UN Environment Programme (UNEP)**, the **World Economic Forum (WEF)** and the **Economics of Land Degradation (ELD)**

#### Key Points

##### About the 'Nature-based solutions':

A nature-based solution refers to the sustainable management and use of nature for tackling socio-environmental challenges. The challenges include issues such as climate change, water security, water pollution, food security, human health, biodiversity loss and disaster risk management.

### **Key Findings of Report:**

A total investment in nature of USD 8.1 trillion is required between now and 2050 – while annual investment should reach USD 536 billion by 2050.

The report finds that annual investments in nature-based solutions will have to triple by 2030 and increase four-fold by 2050 from the current investments into nature-based solutions of USD 133 billion (using 2020 as base year).

### **Top Spenders:**

Public sector spending for the same is dominated by the US and China, followed by Japan, Germany and Australia.

Countries such as India, Brazil and Saudi Arabia are likely spending large amounts of money too, but they do not report internationally comparable data.

### **About the UN Environment Programme (UNEP):**

The United Nations Environment Programme is responsible for coordinating responses to environmental issues within the United Nations system.

**Headquarters:** Nairobi, Kenya

**Formation:** June 1972

### **About the World Economic Forum (WEF):**

The World Economic Forum is an international NGO.

**Headquarters:** Cologny, Switzerland

**Formation:** January 1971

### **About the Economics of Land Degradation (ELD) Initiative:**

The ELD Initiative is a global initiative established in 2011 by the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, and the European Commission. It is supported by a broad network of partners across diverse fields of knowledge.

**Source:** [unep.org](http://unep.org)

## **Performance Grading Index (PGI) 2019-20**

### **Why in the News?**

Union Education Minister, Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' released the Performance Grading Index (PGI) 2019-20 for States and Union Territories of India.

The PGI: States/UTs for 2019-20 is the **third publication**.

### **Key Points**

#### Implementing Agency

The scheme is initiated by the **Department of School Education and Literacy (DoSEL)**.

#### About Performance Grading Index (PGI)

The PGI helps the States/UTs to pinpoint the gaps and accordingly prioritise areas for intervention to ensure that the **school education system** is robust at every level.

The Government has introduced the **Performance Grading Index with a set of 70 parameters** to catalyse transformational change in the **field of school education**.

**Note:** The PGI for States and Union Territories was **first published in 2019 with reference year 2017-18**.

#### Overall Results and Findings

**Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Chandigarh, Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Kerala** recorded the highest score (Grade I++) for 2019-20.

<b>Grade (Scores)</b>	<b>Names of States/ UTs</b>
Level I (951 - 1000) Grade I ++	Nil
Level II (901 - 950) Grade I ++	Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Chandigarh, Punjab, Kerala, Tamil Nadu
Level III (851 - 900) Grade I +	Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Gujarat, Haryana, Maharashtra, NCT of Delhi, Puducherry, Rajasthan
Level IV (801-850) Grade I	Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Daman & Diu, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Odisha, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh
Level V (751 - 800) Grade II	Goa, Uttarakhand, Jharkhand, Lakshadweep, Manipur, Sikkim, Telangana
Level VI (701 - 750) Grade III	Assam, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Mizoram
Level VII (651 - 700) Grade IV	Arunachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Nagaland
Level VIII (601 - 650) Grade V	Meghalaya
Level XI (551 - 600) Grade VI	Nil
Level X (0 - 550) Grade VII	Ladakh

Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh, Puducherry, Punjab and Tamil Nadu have improved overall PGI score by 10%, i.e., 100 or more points.

**Source: PIB**

## **State of India's Environment Report 2021**

### **Why in the News?**

According to the State of India's Environment Report 2021, India's position has slipped by two places from last year to **117 on the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**.

The report is released by the **Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), New Delhi, India**.

In 2020, India's rank was 115.

### Key Points

India's overall SDG **score is 61.9 out of 100.**

India was ranked below four South Asian nations - Bhutan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Nepal.

SDG Goals were adopted as a part of the 2030 agenda by 193 United Nations member states in 2015.

### Reason for the drop in rank

The reason is due to major challenges like ending hunger and achieving food security (SDG 2), achieving gender equality (SDG 5) and building resilient infrastructure, promoting inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and fostering innovation (SDG 9) in the country.

### State-wise preparedness

According to the State of India's Environment Report 2021, Kerala, Himachal Pradesh and Chandigarh with the best overall score are the states and Union Territories on the path to achieving the SDGs.

Bihar and Jharkhand are the least prepared to meet the SDGs by the target year 2030.

### The Hindu

## ILO: World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends 2021

### Why in the News?

The **International Labour Organisation (ILO)** has released the World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends 2021 (WESO Trends).

The report analyses the impact of the crisis on the labour market across the world.

### Key Points

#### Findings:

The World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends 2021 projects the global crisis-induced 'jobs gap' will reach 75 million in 2021, before falling to 23 million in 2022.

The **global unemployment rate will be 5.7 % in 2022, 6.3 % in 2021.**

Global unemployment is expected to stand at **205 million people in 2022.**

The related gap in working-hours, which includes the jobs gap and those on reduced hours, amounts to the equivalent of 100 million full-time jobs in 2021 and 26 million full-time jobs in 2022.

The crisis has also hit women disproportionately. Their employment declined by 5 percent in 2020 compared to 3.9 percent for men.

### About International Labour Organization (ILO):

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

**Headquarters:** Geneva, Switzerland

**Director-General;** Guy Ryder

**Formation:** 11 April 1919

The ILO has **187 state members.**

**India** is a founder member of the International Labour Organization.

**Note:** India has assumed the Chairmanship of the Governing Body of ILO in 2020.

**Source: ILO**

## UN Global Compact's CEO Water Mandate

### Why in the News?

**NTPC Ltd** has become a signatory to the prestigious UN Global Compact's CEO Water Mandate.

### Key Points

NTPC is committed to proactively address water sustainability issues through implementing Water Policy, which will serve as a directive for establishing water management strategies, systems, processes, practices and research initiatives.

NTPC will further imbibe the 3 R's (reduce, reuse, recycle) for water conservation and management while carrying out its core business activity of power generation.

### About CEO Water Mandate:

The CEO Water Mandate is a UN Global Compact initiative that mobilizes business leaders on water, sanitation, and the Sustainable Development Goals.

### The Mandate's Six Commitment Areas:

- Direct Operations
- Supply Chain & Watershed Management
- Collective Action
- Public Policy
- Community Engagement
- Transparency

### About UN Global Compact:

The **United Nations Global Compact** is a non-binding United Nations pact to encourage businesses and firms worldwide to adopt sustainable and socially responsible policies, and to report on their implementation.

India is also a part of the UN Global Compact.

### About NTPC Limited:

It, formerly known as National Thermal Power Corporation Limited, is an Indian government electricity board engaged in the business of generation of electricity and allied activities.

NTPC was conferred Maharatna status by the Government of India in may 2010.

### Other Initiatives for Environmental Conservation:

- Race to Zero Campaign
- Industrial Deep Decarbonization Initiative

**Source: PIB**

## QS World University Rankings 2022

### Why in the News?

**Three Indian Universities** have achieved top-200 positions in **QS World University Rankings 2022**.

**IISc Bengaluru** ranked **number 1 in the world for research**.

### Key Points

#### Indian Institutions:

Three Indian universities are ranked in the top-200 in QS World University Rankings 2022, with **IIT-Bombay securing 177th position, IIT-Delhi at 185th, and IISc-Bengaluru placed on 186th position**.

The **Indian Institute of Science (IISc) Bangalore** has got a perfect score of 100 out of 100 for the citations per faculty (CPF) metric in the analysis.

#### Global Rankings:

The US-based **Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)** achieved a record-extending 10th consecutive year as **world number-one**.

The **University of Oxford** has risen to **second** for the first time since 2006, while the **Stanford University and the University of Cambridge** share **third** spot.

#### About QS World University Rankings:

London-based QS Quacquarelli Symonds, global higher education analysts, released the **18th edition** of the world's international university rankings.

For the QS World University Rankings, institutions and universities were judged on **six indicators**-- academic reputation, employer reputation, citations per faculty, faculty/student ratio, international faculty ratio and international student ratio.

#### Related Indian Initiatives for Education:

**National Education Policy (NEP), 2020:** NEP aims to introduce several changes in the Indian education system - from the school to college level and make India a global knowledge superpower.

**Institutions of Eminence (IoE) Scheme:** IoE is a scheme to provide the regulatory architecture for setting up or upgrading of 20 Institutions (10 from public sector and 10 from the private sector) as world-class teaching and research institutions called 'Institutions of Eminence'.

**Uchhatar Avishkar Yojana (UAY):** UAY was announced with a view to promote innovation of a higher order that directly impacts the needs of the Industry and thereby improves the competitive edge of Indian manufacturing.

**Impacting Research Innovation and Technology (IMPRINT):** It is a first-of-its-kind Pan-IIT and IISc joint initiative to develop a new education policy and a roadmap for research to solve major engineering and technology challenges.

**Source: TOI**

## All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) 2019-20 Report

### Why in the News?

Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank', Union Education Minister, approved the release of the report of All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) 2019-20.

This Report provides key performance indicators on the current status of Higher education in the country.

This report is the 10th in the series of All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) annually released by the Department of Higher Education.

## Key Points

### Key features of AISHE 2019-20 Report:

In the last five years from 2015-16 to 2019-20, there has been a growth of 11.4% in the student enrolment.

**Total Enrolment** in Higher Education stands at 3.85 crore in 2019-20 as compared to 3.74 crore in 2018-19, registering a growth of 11.36 lakh (3.04 %). Total enrolment was 3.42 crore in 2014-15.

**Gender Parity Index (GPI)** in Higher Education in 2019-20 is 1.01 against 1.00 in 2018-19 indicating an improvement in the relative access to higher education for females of eligible age group compared to males.

**Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER)**, the percentage of students belonging to the eligible age group enrolled in Higher Education, in 2019-20 is 27.1% against 26.3% in 2018-19 and 24.3% in 2014-2015.

**Pupil Teacher Ratio** in Higher Education in 2019-20 is 26.

In 2019-20: Universities: 1,043(2%); Colleges: 42,343(77%) and stand-alone institutions: 11,779(21%).

3.38 crore Students enrolled in programmes at under-graduate and post-graduate level. Out of these, nearly 85% of the students (2.85 crore) were enrolled in the six major disciplines such as **Humanities, Science, Commerce, Engineering & Technology, Medical Science and IT & Computer.**

The **Total Number of Teachers** stands at 15,03,156 comprising of 57.5% male and 42.5% female.

The rise in female enrolment in higher education during the period is 18.2%.

### Recent Initiatives:

Scheme for Promotion of Academic and Research Collaboration (SPARC)

National Education Policy (NEP), 2020

Prime Minister's Research Fellowship (PMRF)

Rashtriya Uchchar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA)

**Source: PIB**

## ILO, UNICEF Report: Child labour rises to 160 million – first increase in two decades

### Why in the News?

According to the '**Child Labour: Global estimates 2020, trends and the road forward**' report by the **International Labour Organization (ILO)**

and **UNICEF**, the number of children in child labour has risen to 160 million worldwide, an increase of 8.4 million children in the last four years.

### Key Points

**Child Labour: Global estimates 2020, trends and the road forward** report warns that progress to end child labour has stalled for the first time in 20 years, reversing the previous downward trend that saw child labour fall by 94 million between 2000 and 2016.

### Key findings of the report:

The report points to a significant rise in the number of children aged 5 to 11 years in child labour, who now account for just over half of the total global figure.

The number of children aged 5 to 17 years in hazardous work has risen by 6.5 million to 79 million since 2016.

The report warns that globally, nine million additional children are at risk of being pushed into child labour by the end of 2022 as a result of the pandemic.

**The agriculture sector accounts for 70 percent of children in child labour (112 million) followed by 20 percent in services (31.4 million) and 10 percent in industry (16.5 million).**

Nearly 28 percent of children aged 5 to 11 years and 35 percent of children aged 12 to 14 years in child labour are out of school.

The prevalence of child labour in rural areas (14 percent) is close to three times higher than in urban areas (5 percent).

### Measures to improve the situation:

Adequate social protection for all, including universal child benefits.

Increased spending on free and good-quality schooling and getting all children back into school - including children who were out of school before COVID-19.

Promotion of decent work for adults, so families don't have to resort to children helping to generate family income.

An end to harmful gender norms and discrimination that influence child labour.

Investment in child protection systems, agricultural development, rural public services, infrastructure and livelihoods.

### Initiatives by the Government of India:

Child labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act 1986

National Policy on Child Labour (1987)

Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act 2015

The Right to Education Act, 2009

Initiatives like Operation Smile, Operation Muskaan

**Note:** Many NGOs like ChildFund, Bachpan Bachao Andolan, CARE India, Kailash Satyarthi Children Foundation etc. have been working to eradicate child labour in country.

**Source: ilo.org**

**India can save logistics fuel worth ₹311 lakh crore between 2020 and 2050: NITI Aayog, RMI India Report**

**Why in the News?**

**NITI Aayog, Rocky Mountain Institute (RMI) and RMI India's** new report '**Fast Tracking Freight in India: A Roadmap for Clean and Cost-Effective Goods Transport**' presents key opportunities for India to reduce its logistics costs.

### **Key Points**

Due to the rising demand for goods and services, freight transport demand is expected to grow rapidly in the future.

While freight transport is essential to economic development, it is plagued by high logistics costs and contributes to rising CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and air pollution in cities.

### **According to the report, India has the potential to:**

Reduce its logistics cost by **4% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP)**

Achieve 10 gigatonnes of cumulative CO<sub>2</sub> emissions savings between 2020 and 2050

Reduce nitrogen oxide (NO<sub>x</sub>) and particulate matter emissions by 35% and 28%, respectively, until 2050

### **Need to Make Freight Transportation Cost Effective:**

Freight transportation is a critical backbone of India's growing economy, it's important to make this transport system more cost-effective, efficient, and cleaner.

Efficient freight transport will also play an essential role in realising the benefits of existing government initiatives such as Make in India, Aatmanirbhar Bharat, and Digital India.

As India's freight activity grows five-fold by 2050 and about 400 million citizens move to cities, a whole system transformation can help uplift the freight sector.

This transformation will be defined by tapping into opportunities such as efficient rail-based transport, the optimisation of logistics and supply chains, and shift to electric and other clean-fuel vehicles.

### **Recommendations:**

Increasing the rail network's capacity

Improving warehousing and trucking practices

Promoting intermodal transport

Policy measures and pilot projects for clean technology adoption

Stricter fuel economy standards

### **Recent Initiatives:**

Dedicated Freight Corridor

Bharat Stage VI norms

FAME Scheme

Corporate Average Fuel Efficiency Regulations

E-Way Bill Integration with FASTag

**Source: PIB**

## **EIU's Global Liveability Index 2021**

### **Why in the News?**

**Auckland in New Zealand** has topped the EIU Global Liveability Index 2021.

### Key Points

#### About Global Liveability Index:

The Global Liveability Index is an annual assessment published by the London-based **Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU)**, ranking 140 global cities for their urban quality of life.

The **index** takes into account more than 30 qualitative and quantitative factors spanning five broad categories: stability (25%), healthcare (20%), culture and environment (25%), education (10%), and infrastructure (20%).

#### The 3 most liveable cities in 2021:

Auckland, New Zealand

Osaka, Japan

Adelaide, Australia

#### The 3 least liveable cities in 2021:

Damascus, Syria

Lagos, Nigeria

Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea

**Note: Austria's Vienna**, number one in both 2018 and 2019, has completely dropped out of the top 10 after being heavily affected by COVID, and now ranks 12.

**Source: Indian Express**

## WGI 2021 ranks India as 14th Most Charitable Country in the World

### Why in the News?

India is now ranked as the 14th most charitable country in the world as per a report released by the **World Giving Index 2021 (WGI)**.

In the index **Indonesia topped** the list followed by Kenya.

### Key Points

India has been recognised among the Top 20 most generous countries across the globe, an improvisation from its earlier 10-year global rank of 82.

As per the report, around 61 percent of Indians helped strangers, 34 percent volunteered for a good cause while 36 percent donated money.

#### Note:

The report suggests that the COVID-19 pandemic has further increased the 'giving' trends worldwide.

### About World Giving Index (WGI):

WGI is a global survey that has interviewed more than 1.6 million people since 2009.

It conducts surveys by asking three questions: have they helped a stranger, given money, or volunteered for a good cause in recent months.

It releases an annual report published by the Charities Aid Foundation (CAF), using data gathered by Gallup and ranks countries in the world according to how charitable they are.

The first report was produced in 2010 and this year marks the 10 year anniversary of WGI.

**Source: Indian Express**

## India maintains 43rd rank on IMD's World Competitiveness Index 2021

### Why in the News?

India maintained 43rd rank on an annual World Competitiveness Index 2021 released by the IMD (Institute for Management Development).

The IMD examined the impact of COVID-19 on economies around the world in 2021.

### Key Points

Rank 1: Switzerland

Rank 2: Sweden

Rank 3: Denmark

Rank 43: India

### India's Performance:

Among the **BRICS nations**, India is ranked second (43<sup>rd</sup>) after China (16<sup>th</sup>), followed by Russia (45<sup>th</sup>), Brazil (57<sup>th</sup>) and South Africa (62<sup>nd</sup>).

India has maintained its position for the past three years but in 2021, it had significant improvements in **government efficiency**.

India's improvements in the government efficiency factor are mostly due to relatively stable public finances and subsidies provided by the government to the private companies.

### Recent Steps Taken by India to Increase its Competitiveness:

The **Production-Linked Incentive (PLI)** Scheme in various sectors for enhancing India's manufacturing capabilities and exports.

The five pillars of '**Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan**' are Economy, System, Infrastructure, Vibrant Demography and Demand.

### About World Competitiveness Ranking:

The IMD World Competitiveness Yearbook, first published in 1989, is a comprehensive annual report and worldwide reference point on the competitiveness of countries.

The Yearbook provides extensive coverage of 64 economies.

The ranking is based on 334 competitiveness criteria selected as a result of comprehensive research using economic literature, international, national and regional sources and feedback from the government agencies, business community and academics.

### Factors:

The ranking measures the prosperity and competitiveness of 64 nations by examining four factors:

Economic performance

Government efficiency

Business efficiency

Infrastructure

**Source: Business Standard**

## Global Peace Index 2021: India ranked 135

### Why in the News?

According to the 15th edition of Global Peace Index 2021, India has been ranked 135 out of 163 countries which specifies 'Low State of Peace'

### Key Points

#### Findings:

**Rank 1:** Iceland

**Rank 2:** New Zealand

**Rank 3:** Denmark

**Rank 135:** India

Out of the 10 most peaceful countries in the world, 8 are from Europe.

Afghanistan is the world's least peaceful country for the 4<sup>th</sup> consecutive year.

The report points out that the average level of global peacefulness declined by 0.07 percent marking the 9th deterioration in the last thirteen years.

### About the Global Peace Index 2021:

This is the 15th edition of the Global Peace Index (GPI), which ranks 163 independent states and territories according to their level of peacefulness.

Produced by the **Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP)**, the GPI is the world's leading measure of global peacefulness.

The GPI covers 99.7 percent of the world's population, using 23 qualitative and quantitative indicators from highly respected sources, and measures the state of peace across **three domains:** the level of Societal Safety and Security, the extent of Ongoing Domestic and International Conflict, and the degree of Militarisation.

**Source:** [economicsandpeace.org](http://economicsandpeace.org)

## NTPC among top 50 at 'Great Place to Work' in India

### Why in News

**NTPC, a Maharatna PSU under the Ministry of Power** has been recognised as a Great Place to Work for the 15th year in a row by the **Great Place to Work (GPTW)** Institute.

NTPC is the only PSU to consistently feature in India's Top 50 Best Workplaces.

This year NTPC ranked 38<sup>th</sup>, up from 47th position last year.

### Key Points

#### About Great Place to Work Certification (GPWC):

Great Place to Work Certification is the most definitive 'Employer-of-Choice' recognition.

The Certification is recognized world over by employees and employers alike and is considered the 'Gold Standard' in identifying and recognizing Great Workplaces with High Trust and High-Performance Cultures.

It also won its first-ever recognition of India's Best Employers among Nation-Builders 2021.

**Note:** NTPC also won the **CII HR Excellence Role model award** in the month of March 2021, the highest award in the field of People Management in the country.

**Source:** PIB

## New Appointments

### Aashritha V Olety becomes India's 1st woman flight test engineer

#### Why in the News?

**Aashritha V Olety, an officer of the Indian Air Force (IAF),** has become the country's first woman flight test engineer.

#### Key Points

Aashritha V Olety, a native of Karnataka, has graduated as part of the 43rd Flight Test Course after completing a one-year course at the pilot school.

Olety will be responsible for evaluating aircraft and airborne systems before their induction into the armed forces.

**Note:** Excluding the medical wing in which women have been serving for decades, the army accounts for 6,807 women officers, the IAF 1,607 and the navy has 704 women officers. In percentage terms, women still form a small part of the military- 0.56% of the army, 1.08% of the air force and 6.5% of the navy.

### Justice (Retd) Arun Kumar Mishra takes charge as NHRC Chairman

#### Why in the News?

Justice Arun Kumar Mishra (Retd) took charge as the Chairman of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC).

#### Key Points

**Arun Kumar Mishra** retired from the Supreme Court in August 2020.

**About National Human Rights Commission (NHRC):** It is a statutory public body constituted on 12 October 1993 as per provisions of Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993.

### Jagjit Pavadia elected as president of International Narcotics Control Board

#### Why in the News?

Jagjit Pavadia, former Narcotics Commissioner of India, has been elected president of the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB).

She succeeds Cornelis P. De Johncheere.

#### Key Points

**Jagjit Pavadia** is the first Indian to be heading the Vienna-based organization and the second woman to hold this office.

She has been a member of the INCB since 2015. She was elected first vice-president of the Board in 2016.

**About International Narcotics Control Board (INCB):**

INCB is an independent, quasi-judicial expert body established by the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961 by merging two bodies: the Permanent Central Narcotics Board and the Drug Supervisory Body. Its headquarters is Vienna, Austria.

## Isaac Herzog elected president of Israel

### Why in the News?

Isaac Herzog, Veteran politician has been elected Israel's 11th president.

### Key Points

Isaac Herzog, former Labor leader will be the first Israeli President who is the son of a former president.

Herzog is currently the head of the Jewish Agency – a nonprofit that works with the government to promote immigration to Israel.

### Facts about Israel:

**Prime Minister:** Benjamin Netanyahu

**Capital:** Jerusalem

**Currency:** Israeli Shekel

**Source:** Indian Express

## Dr Patrick Amoth elected as Chairman of WHO Executive Board

### Why in the News?

Dr Patrick Amoth of Kenya has been elected as the Chairman of the World Health Organisation (WHO) Executive Board.

### Key Points

Dr Amoth is the acting Director-General (DG) for Health, Ministry of Health of Kenya.

He replaced Dr Harsh Vardhan, Union Health Minister as he completed his tenure as Chairman of WHO Executive Board on June 02.

### Facts about WHO (World Health Organization)

**Headquarters:** Geneva, Switzerland

**Founded:** 7 April 1948

**Director-General:** Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus

**Source:** The Economic Times

## Maldives Foreign Minister elected President of UNGA

### Why in the News?

**Maldives Foreign Minister Abdulla Shahid** was elected as President of the 76th session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA).

### Key Points

Abdulla Shahid will succeed Turkish diplomat Volkan Bozkir who was UNGA President for the 75th session.

According to the established rules of regional rotation, the President of the 76th session of the General Assembly was to be elected from the Group of Asia-Pacific States.

### **About United Nations General Assembly (UNGA):**

It is one of the six principal organs of the United Nations (UN), serving as the main deliberative, policy-making, and representative organ of the UN.

The UNGA is responsible for the UN budget, appointing the non-permanent members to the Security Council, appointing the Secretary-General of the United Nations, receiving reports from other parts of the UN system, and making recommendations through resolutions.

**Source: Indian Express**

## **Ranjitsinh Disale appointed as World Bank Education Advisor**

### **Why in the News?**

Ranjitsinh Disale, the first Indian teacher to receive the Global Teacher Prize 2020, has been appointed as the World Bank Education Advisor for the period June 2021 to June 2024.

The World Bank has appointed 12 advisors from world over and Disale is one of them representing India.

### **Key Points**

Ranjitsinh Disale is a primary teacher from Maharashtra's Solapur.

Disale was named the winner of the **Global Teacher Prize 2020** in recognition of his efforts to promote girls' education and trigger a quick-response (QR) coded textbook revolution in India.

### **Note:**

The World Bank has recently launched the Global Coach Program, a new initiative focused on accelerating learning by helping countries improve in-service teacher professional development (TPD) programs and systems.

**Source: NDTV**

## **Anup Chandra Pandey takes over as new Election Commissioner**

### **Why in the News?**

**Anup Chandra Pandey** joins the **Election Commission of India** as **second Election Commissioner** in a three-member body headed by Chief Election Commissioner Sushil Chandra and Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar.

### **Key Points**

Anup Chandra Pandey has been a 1984 batch Indian Administrative Service Officer.

During the span of about 37 years of distinguished Government of India service, Shri Pandey has worked in various Ministries & Departments at the Centre and his state cadre of Uttar Pradesh.

**Source: PIB**

## Microsoft names CEO Satya Nadella as chairman

### Why in the News?

Microsoft Corporation named Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Satya Nadella as its new chairman.

### Key Points

Satya Nadella, succeeds John Thompson, who will return to the role of lead independent director.

Nadella, the company's third CEO, will also be the third chairman in Microsoft's history, following Gates and Thompson.

**Facts about Microsoft:** Microsoft is an American multinational technology company.

**Founded:** April 4, 1975

**Founders:** Bill Gates, Paul Allen

**Headquarters:** United States

**CEO:** Satya Nadella

## Justice Sanjay Yadav takes oath as Chief Justice of Allahabad High Court

### Why in the News?

Uttar Pradesh Governor Anandiben Patel administered the oath of office and secrecy to Justice Sanjay Yadav at Raj Bhavan in Lucknow.

Earlier Justice Yadav was the acting Chief Justice of the Allahabad HC.

Justice Yadav also served as the deputy advocate general of Madhya Pradesh.

Justice Yadav was elevated as a judge of the High Court of Madhya Pradesh on March 2, 2007, and a permanent judge on January 15, 2010.

**Source:** Indian Express

## Amul's R S Sodhi conferred with Asia Pacific Productivity Champion award

### Why in the News?

The MD (Managing Director) of Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation (GCMMF or Amul), R.S. Sodhi, was conferred with the **regional award as Asia Pacific Productivity Champion from APO (Asian Productivity Organization), Tokyo, Japan.**

### Key Points

In the past 20 years, this is for the first time an Indian has received a prestigious award.

### About Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation (GCMMF)

It is an Indian dairy cooperative society, based at Anand in the Indian state of Gujarat. It is also known as Amul.

**Source:** The Hindu

## Naftali Bennett as Israel's new Prime Minister

### Why in the News?

Naftali Bennett, leader of the right-wing Yamina party, was sworn in as Israel's new Prime Minister.

### Key Points

Naftali Bennett succeeds Benjamin Netanyahu, who was forced out of office after 12 years.

Bennett will be Prime Minister until September 2023 as part of a power-sharing deal.

He will then hand power over to Yair Lapid, head of the centrist Yesh Atid party, for a further two years.

**Source: Indian Express**

## Antonio Guterres re-elected as UN Secretary-General

### Why in the News?

The UN General Assembly (UNGA) appointed Antonio Guterres as the UN Secretary-General for a second term beginning on January 1, 2022 and ending on December 31, 2026.

### Key Points

#### Appointment:

Under the United Nations Charter, the Secretary-General is appointed by the General Assembly upon the recommendation of the **Security Council**.

Each Secretary-General has the option of a second term if they can garner enough support from Member States.

#### About Antonio Guterres:

Antonio Guterres, the ninth Secretary-General of the United Nations, took over on January 1, 2017, and his first term ends on December 31 this year.

Former Prime Minister of Portugal, Mr. Guterres served as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees for a decade from June 2005 to December 2015.

#### Facts about United Nations:

**Formation:** 24 October 1945

**Headquarter:** New York, USA

**Membership:** 193 member states

#### The United Nations has six principal organs:

The General Assembly

The Security Council

The Economic and Social Council

The International Court of Justice

The UN Secretariat

The Trusteeship Council

#### Funds and Programmes:

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF)

United Nations Environment Programme (UN Environment)

World Food Programme (WFP)

United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)

### **Facts about UNSC (United Nations Security Council):**

**Formation:** 24 October 1945

**Membership:** 15 countries

**Permanent members:** 5 (China, France, Russia, United Kingdom and United States)

**Non-permanent members:** 10 including India

**Source: The Hindu**

### **Iran's new President-elect Ebrahim Raisi**

#### **Why in the News?**

Ebrahim Raisi has been elected as the next president of Iran.

#### **Key Points**

The 60-year-old, Ebrahim Raisi will take office in August, presenting himself as the best person to combat corruption and solve the economic problems Iran has experienced under the outgoing President, Hassan Rouhani.

He is the head of the country's judiciary and has ultra-conservative political views.

**Source: The Hindu**

## **Obituaries**

### **Former Mauritius Prime Minister Anerood Jugnauth passes away**

#### **Why in the News?**

The former Prime Minister of Mauritius, Anerood Jugnauth passed away at 91.

As a mark of respect, the Government of India has announced a day's state mourning on 05 June 2021 throughout the country.

#### **Key Points**

Anerood Jugnauth was the country's longest-serving Prime Minister with more than 18 years of tenure.

He was considered the father of the Mauritian economic miracle of the 1980s.

He also served as President of Mauritius from 2003-2012.

**Note:** Anerood Jugnauth was given India's second highest civilian honour **Padma Vibhushan**.

**Source: Indian Express**

### Assamese litterateur Lakshmi Nandan Bora passes away

#### Why in the News?

Padma Shri awardee and noted Assamese litterateur Lakshmi Nandan Bora passed away at 89.

#### Key Points

Lakshmi Nandan Bora won the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1988.

In 2008, he won the Saraswati Samman from KK Birla Foundation.

Lakshmi Nandan Bora was honoured by the Government of India in 2015 with Padma Shri, the fourth highest Indian civilian award.

**Source: The Hindu**

### National Award-winning director Buddhadeb Dasgupta passes away

#### Why in the News?

Bengali filmmaker and poet, Buddhadeb Dasgupta passed away at 77.

Buddhadeb Dasgupta had won the National Film Award for Best Feature Film a total of five times.

Some of his best-known works included projects like Bagh Bahadur, Lal Darja, Kaalpurush and Tahader Katha among more.

**Source: The Hindu**

### Dingko Singh, Asian Games gold-winning boxer, passes away

#### Why in the News?

Former Asian Games gold medalist boxer Dingko Singh passed at 47.

Dingko won the gold medal in 1998 at the 13th Asian Games, Bangkok.

He was also Manipur's first Asian Games gold medalist.

For his outstanding contribution, the Manipuri pugilist was bestowed the Arjuna award in 1998 and conferred with Padma Shri, India's fourth-highest civilian award, in 2013.

**Source: Indian Express**

### Environmentalist and organic farming proponent Radha Mohan passes away

#### Why in the News?

Noted environmentalist and **Padma Shri** awardee Professor Radha Mohan, who helped popularise organic farming techniques, died at 78.

Radha Mohan was awarded the Padma Shri along with his daughter Sabarmatee in 2020 for their contribution to the agriculture sector.

Back in 1990, the father-daughter duo founded '**Sambhav**', a social organisation aimed at educating farmers on organic and natural farming.

**Source: Indian Express**

### **Padma Shri awardee Dr Ashok Panagariya passes away**

Prominent neurologist and Padma Shri recipient Dr Ashok Panagariya passed away at 71.

One of India's leading neurologists, Ashok Panagariya was a recipient of the Padma Shri and the BC Roy Award.

**Note:** Ashok Panagariya's publisher announced that his memoir, "**Monk in a Merc**" will be released on June 28, 2021.

**Source: Indian Express**

### **Ramakrishna Math and Mission vice-president passes away**

Vice-President of Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission Swami Shivamayanandaji passed away.

Shivamayananda was born in Bihar on December 20, 1934.

He joined the order in Belur Math in 1959, received "Sanyas Diksha" from Swami Vireshwaranandaji Maharaj in 1969.

**Source: The Hindu**

### **Kannada actor Sanchari Vijay passes away**

National Award-winning actor Sanchari Vijay passed away.

Vijay Kumar Basavarajiah known by his stage name Sanchari Vijay, was an Indian actor known for his work in Kannada cinema.

Vijay was awarded the National Film Award for Best Actor at the 62nd National Film Awards.

He also received the Karnataka State Film Award for Best Actor and the Filmfare Critics Award for Best Actor – South for the performance.

**Source: The Hindu**

### **Milkha Singh, the legendary sprinter, passes away**

Milkha Singh also known as The Flying Sikh, was an Indian track and field sprinter who was introduced to the sport while serving in the Indian Army.

He won **four gold medals** at the **Asian Games**. He also won **gold** at the **Commonwealth Games** in Cardiff.

He was awarded the **Padma Shri**, in recognition of his sporting achievements.

**Source: The Hindu**

## Miscellaneous

### IBF renamed as Indian Broadcasting and Digital Foundation

#### Why in the News?

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

#### Key Points

**IBDF** will form a Self-Regulatory Body (SRB), as per the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021.

The name of the self-regulatory body is **Digital Media Content Regulatory Council (DMCRC)** for digital OTT platforms.

**DMCRC** is a second-tier mechanism at the appellate level and is similar to Broadcast Content Complaint Council (BCCC), which IBF had implemented for the linear broadcasting sector way back in 2011.

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

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

### DG NCC Mobile Training App 2.0

#### Why in the News?

Defence Secretary Dr Ajay Kumar launched **Directorate General (DG) National Cadet Corps (NCC) Mobile Training App Version 2.0**.

#### Key Points

##### About DG NCC Mobile Training App 2.0

The app will assist in conducting countrywide online training to NCC cadets during the COVID-19 pandemic conditions.

It is aimed at providing NCC-related basic information and entire training material on one platform.

**Note: DG NCC Mobile App Version 1.0** for training was launched by Raksha Mantri Rajnath Singh in 2020 in order to assist online cadet training.

### RDSO becomes the first Institution to be declared SDO under "One Nation One Standard" mission on BIS

#### Why in the News?

**RDSO (Research Design & Standards Organization)** of Indian Railways has become the first Institution to be declared **SDO (Standard Developing**

**Organization)** under "One Nation One Standard" mission on **BIS (Bureau of Indian Standards)** which is Institution under Department of Consumer Affairs.

RDSO took the initiative to seek recognition as a Standard Developing Organization (SDO) under the **BIS SDO Recognition Scheme**.

### Key Points

**RDSO**, Lucknow, which is the sole R&D Wing of the Ministry of Railways, is one of India's leading Standard formulating Body undertaking standardization work for the railway sector.

The **recognition is valid for 3 years** and will require renewal after completion of the validity period.

### About the BIS SDO Recognition Scheme:

To attain "Nation One Standard" vision of Govt. of India, Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS), the National Standards Body, has launched a scheme which provides for "Recognition of SDO".

Through this scheme, BIS aims at aggregating and integrating the existing capabilities and dedicated domain specific expertise available with various organizations in the country engaged in standards development in their specific sectors and enable convergence of all standard development activities in the country resulting in "One National Standard for One Subject".

### About BIS (Bureau of Indian Standards):

The Bureau of Indian Standards is the national Standards Body of India working under the aegis of Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution, Government of India. It was established by the Bureau of Indian Standards Act, 1986 which came into effect on 23 December 1986.

### Other Initiatives of BIS:

- Portal for Consumer Engagement
- BIS-Care App
- COVID-19 Standards
- Quality Control Orders

## Prime Minister launches M-Yoga App on 7th International Day of Yoga 2021

### Why in the News?

Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched '**WHO M-Yoga**' App on the occasion of **7<sup>th</sup> International Day of Yoga**.

The Prime Minister said the M-Yoga App will help in our 'One World, One Health' motto.

### Key Points

#### About M-Yoga App:

The App will provide videos of Yoga training and practice based on common Yoga protocol in many languages.

This mobile app will be immensely helpful in the promotion of Yoga and wellness among people around the world, especially during the ongoing pandemic.

### Background:

The **Ministry of AYUSH** and the **World Health Organization (WHO)** had jointly undertaken a project in mid-2019, focusing on **Mobile-Yoga**.

It envisaged the concept of the '**Be Healthy, Be Mobile**' under the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals to achieve Universal Health Coverage by 2030.

**Be Healthy, Be Mobile (BHBM) initiative** is a global partnership led by WHO which supports the scale up of mobile health (m-Health) technology within the scope of the National Health system to combat non-communicable diseases (NCDs).

**Source: PIB**

## National Helpline 155260 and Reporting Platform for preventing financial loss due to cyber fraud

### Why in the News?

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has operationalised the National Helpline 155260 and Reporting Platform to prevent financial loss due to cyber fraud.

The Helpline was soft launched on April 01, 2021.

### Key Points

#### About the Helpline and Reporting Platform:

The Helpline 155260 and Reporting Platform have been made operational by the **Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C)** under the Ministry of Home Affairs.

The **Citizen Financial Cyber Fraud Reporting and Management System** has been developed in-house by I4C to integrate Law Enforcement Agencies and Banks and Financial Intermediaries.

**Note:** Since its soft launch, in a short span of two months, Helpline 155260 has been able to save more than Rs.1.85 crore.

#### Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C) Scheme:

The I4C scheme was approved in October 2018, to deal with all types of cybercrimes in a comprehensive and coordinated manner.

#### Components of the I4C Scheme:

- National Cybercrime Threat Analytics Unit (TAU)
- National Cybercrime Reporting Portal
- Platform for Joint Cybercrime Investigation Team
- National Cybercrime Training Centre (NCTC)
- National Cybercrime Forensic Laboratory (NCFL) Ecosystem
- Cybercrime Ecosystem Management Unit
- National Cyber Crime Research and Innovation Centre

#### Other Initiatives to Tackle Cybercrime:

- Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-IN)
- Draft Personal Data Protection Bill, 2018
- Cyber Swachhta Kendra

#### Related International Convention:

The Convention on Cybercrime (**Budapest Convention**) is the first international treaty seeking to address Internet and computer crime by

harmonizing national laws, improving investigative techniques, and increasing cooperation among nations.

**Signatories:** 67

**Signed:** 23 November 2001

**Effective:** 1 July 2004

**Source:** PIB

## National Maritime Heritage Complex (NMHC) at Lothal, Gujarat

### Why in the News?

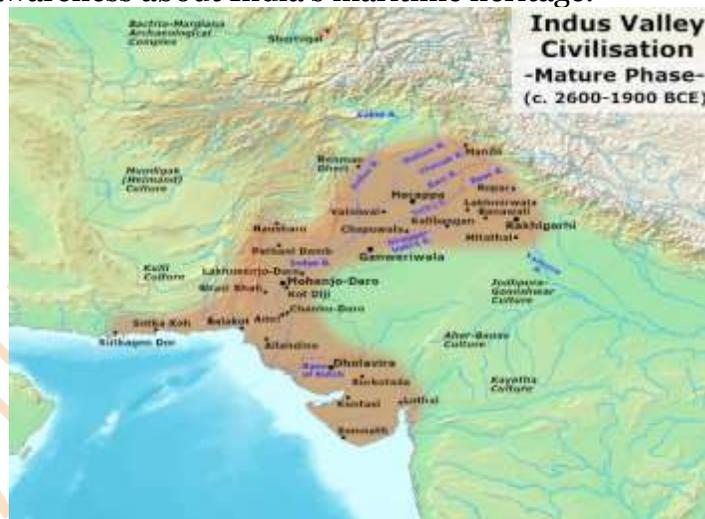
The Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways and Ministry of Culture signed a Memorandum of Understanding for '**Cooperation in Development of National Maritime Heritage Complex (NMHC)**' at Lothal, Gujarat.

### Key Points

National Maritime Heritage Complex (NMHC), a world-class facility is to be developed in the vicinity of the **Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) site of Lothal**, located about 80 kms away from Ahmedabad, Gujarat.

NMHC is to be developed as a **first of its kind in the country** dedicated to the legacy of Maritime Heritage of India.

NMHC would be developed as an international tourist destination, where the maritime heritage of India from ancient to modern times would be showcased and an edutainment approach using the latest technology would be adopted to spread awareness about India's maritime heritage.



### About Lothal:

Lothal was a city of the ancient **Indus Valley Civilization**, located in the Bhal region of the modern state of Gujarat. Construction of the city began around 2400 BCE.

The Lothal site has been nominated as a **UNESCO World Heritage Site**, and its application is pending on the **tentative list of UNESCO**.

**Source:** PIB

# Monthly Current Affairs

## May 2021

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

The Nation's first 'Drive in Vaccination Center' was inaugurated by MP Rahul Shewale in Mumbai.

This center has been set up in the parking lot of Kohinoor Square Tower at Dadar.

This first of its kind 'Drive in Vaccination Center' facility has been made available to the citizens at a time when people with disabilities are facing difficulties in getting to the vaccination center.

The center also provides transportation facilities to the citizens who do not have their own vehicles.

### Puducherry becomes 'Har Ghar Jal' UT

Puducherry has become 'Har Ghar Jal' UT by ensuring that every rural home in the Union Territory gets a household tap connection.

With this, the **UT becomes the fourth State/UT after Goa, Telangana and Andaman & Nicobar Islands** to provide assured tap water supply to every rural home under Union Government's flagship programme, Jal Jeevan Mission.

All 1.16 lakh rural households in Puducherry have tap water supply now.

**Note:** Further, the State of Punjab and the UTs of Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu have also crossed the milestone of covering 75% of rural homes with assured tap water supply.

**About JJM (Jal Jeevan Mission):** It is a flagship programme of the Union Government, which aims to provide tap water connection to every rural household of the country by 2024.

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

Jishnu Barua, Chief Secretary, Assam, launched a digital real-time **Flood Reporting and Information Management System (FRIMS)** in the state of Assam.

With the launch of FRIMS, Assam becomes the first Indian state to have a real-time digital flood reporting system.

FRIMS has been developed jointly by **Assam State Disaster Management Agency (ASDMA) and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)**.

### Madhya Pradesh government launches 'Mukhyamantri COVID Upchar Yojana'

Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh, Shivraj Singh Chouhan announced the launch of the 'Mukhyamantri COVID Upchar Yojana' (Chief Minister's Covid Treatment Programme).

**The scheme has been divided into three sections:**

Under the **first section**, hospitals run by state medical colleges, district and civil hospitals and community health centres will give free treatment to COVID-19 patients.

In the **second section**, 20 percent ICU/HDU and isolation beds will be reserved in hospitals run by private medical colleges to give free treatment.

In the **third section**, 20 percent beds will be reserved for free treatment in hospitals accredited under Ayushman scheme for economically weaker sections of the society holding Ayushman cards.

### Goa Maritime Symposium (GMS) – 2021

Towards fostering friendly relations with its maritime neighbours, Indian Navy hosted 'Goa Maritime Symposium, GMS-21' under the aegis of Naval War College, Goa on 11 and 12 May 21.

Owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, the event for the first time was hosted in virtual mode, with online participation of Naval representatives from 13 Indian Ocean Littoral countries, which included India, Bangladesh, Comoros, Indonesia, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritius, Myanmar, Seychelles, Singapore, Sri Lanka and Thailand.

The theme for GMS-21 was focused on “**Maritime Security and Emerging Non-Traditional Threats: A Case for Proactive Role for IOR Navies,**” with emphasis on capacity building amongst the IOR Navies to tackle emerging common maritime threats.

**Note:** Recently, the second edition of **Maritime India Summit 2021** was organised by the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, Government of India from March 2 to March 4, 2021.

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

Pinarayi Vijayan was sworn in as Kerala Chief Minister for a second time, after guiding the CPM-led Left Democratic Front government to a historic second successive term in the April-May 2021 election.

He was administered the oath by Governor Arif Mohammad Khan at the Central Stadium in Thiruvananthapuram.

Apart from Pinarayi Vijayan, 20 other ministers of the new cabinet of Kerala were also sworn in.

He has been serving as the Chief Minister of Kerala since 25 May, 2016.

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

AYUSH Department has launched a state-wide wellness programme 'AYUSH Ghar Dwar' for COVID-19 patients, in Solan district, Himachal Pradesh.

The Ayush Ghar Dwar program is being launched by AYUSH Vibhag Himachal Pradesh in collaboration with the Art of Living Organization.

The initiative aims to provide a Holistic Healthcare Approach through AYUSH to ensure not only physical but also mental, social and spiritual wellbeing to COVID patients through AYUSH.

## Haryana declares Black Fungus a notified disease

Haryana Health Minister Anil Vij has informed that black fungus has been declared a notified disease in the state.

If any cases of this disease are found, the doctors will have to report them to the concerned chief medical officer (CMO).

**About black fungus:** It, also known as mucormycosis, is caused by a fungus called mucor.

**Mucormycosis** mainly affects people on medication for other health problems that reduces their ability to fight environmental pathogens, according to the Indian Council of Medical Research.

## Malerkotla to be 23rd district of Punjab

Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh announced the creation of a new district of Malerkotla (23rd district of Punjab), carving the state's only Muslim-majority town from Sangrur district on the occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr.

Adjoining Amargarh and Ahmedgarh will also form part of Punjab's 23rd district.

**About Malerkotla:** It was established in 1454 by Sheikh Sadruddin-i-Jahan from Afghanistan, and subsequently the state of Malerkotla was established in 1657 by Bayazid Khan.

During the reorganisation of states in 1956, the territory of the erstwhile state of Malerkotla became part of the state of Punjab.

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

The Punjab government has decided to join the COVAX alliance for global sourcing and procurement of COVID vaccines at the best price, becoming the **first state in the country** to take such an initiative.

The decision to join COVAX alliance was taken during a Cabinet meeting, chaired by Chief Minister Amarinder Singh.

**About COVAX: COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access, abbreviated as COVAX,** is a worldwide initiative aimed at equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines directed by Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI), and the World Health Organization (WHO) and key delivery partner UNICEF.

It aims at accelerating the development and manufacture of COVID-19 vaccines and to guarantee fair and equitable access for every country in the world.

## Uttarakhand government announces 'Chief Minister Vatsalya Yojana'

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

### About the 'Chief Minister Vatsalya Yojana'

Under the scheme, the state government will make arrangements for their maintenance, education and training for employment up to the age of 21 years.

Such orphaned children of the state will be given a maintenance allowance of 3000 rupees per month.

The children will be given 5 percent horizontal reservation in government jobs of the state government.

## Exports of GI certified Gholvad Sapota for Maharashtra to UK begins

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

### About Ghovad Sapota (chikoo)

The fruit is known for its sweet and unique taste. The unique taste is derived from calcium rich soil of Gholvad village in Palghar district (Maharashtra).

Sapota is grown in many states- Karnataka, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh.

**Karnataka** is known to be the **highest** grower of the fruit, followed by Maharashtra.

### Recent Related News

First consignment of GI certified **Shahi Litchi from Bihar** was exported to the United Kingdom.

**Shahi litchi was the fourth agricultural product to get GI certification from Bihar in 2018, after Jardalu mango, Katarni rice and Magahi paan.**

India is the second largest producer of litchi in the world, after China.

Earlier, a consignment of **GI certified Baganapalli & Survarnarekha mangoes** sourced from farmers in Krishna & Chittor districts of Andhra Pradesh was exported to South Korea.

### **Geographical Indication (GI) Certification:**

Geographical indication (GI) is a name or sign used on certain products which corresponds to a specific geographical location or origin (e.g., a town, region, or country).

It is used for agricultural, natural and manufactured goods.

The Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999 seeks to provide for the registration and better protection of geographical indications relating to goods in India.

The Geographical Indications Registry is located at Chennai.

It is also a part of the World Trade Organisation's Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS).

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

### **Karnataka government launches online portal 'Akanksha' on CSR activities**

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

#### **Key Points**

Named as Akanksha, the portal will help the corporate sector, government and the donors to utilise CSR funds for Government programmes.

The portal will usher in transparency in the utilisation of CSR funds.

The portal will also help achieve the sustainable development goals set by the UN.

#### **About Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR):**

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

### **Assam Chief Minister appoints 'Guardian Ministers'**

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

#### **Key Points**

These guardians, each a minister of the Himanta Biswa Sarma Cabinet, have been given the responsibility of 2-3 districts to review implementation of all centrally sponsored schemes & the state's own priority programmes.

13 ministers will be responsible for the implementation of the government's policy decision, Administrative reforms and other welfare schemes for the public in the 34 districts.

## Important News: India

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

Union Minister of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare Shri Narendra Singh Tomar inaugurated 'The National Conference on Agriculture for Kharif Campaign-2021' on 30th April, 2021.

The conference was organized to interact with the States on challenges & strategies for effective crop management during the ensuing Kharif season.

Shri Tomar appreciated the efforts of farmers for the record production for food grains (303.34 million tonnes), which is over 1.96% higher than the previous year's output (297.50 Million Tonnes).

Agriculture and allied sectors registered a continuous growth in GDP contribution.

The share of agriculture in GDP increased from 17.8% in 2019-20 to 19.9% in 2020-21 as per Economic Survey 2020-21.

Shri Tomar announced the setting of higher production targets of food grains to 307 million tonnes for the year 2021-22.

### NCW launches WhatsApp helpline number for pregnant women

The National Commission for Women (**NCW**) has launched a WhatsApp helpline number for providing emergency medical assistance to pregnant women. The number is 9354954224.

Expectant mothers from across the country can reach out to the Commission through this number which will be functional round the clock.

**About National Commission for Women (NCW):** The National Commission for Women (NCW) is the statutory body of the Government of India, generally concerned with advising the government on all policy matters affecting women.

It was established on 31 January 1992 under the provisions of the Indian Constitution, as defined in the 1990 National Commission for Women Act.

The first head of the commission was Jayanti Patnaik.

Rekha Sharma is the current chairperson.

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

Minister of Petroleum & Natural Gas and Steel, Shri Dharmendra Pradhan remotely flagged off the first supply of UCO (Used Cooking Oil) based Biodiesel blended Diesel under the EOI Scheme from Indian Oil's Tikrikalan Terminal, Delhi.

To create an eco-system for collection and conversion of UCO into Biodiesel and developing entrepreneurship opportunities, Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas & Steel, along with Minister of Health & Family Welfare, Science & Technology and Earth Sciences, had initiated Expressions of Interest for **"Procurement of Bio-diesel produced from Used Cooking Oil"** on the occasion of **World Biofuel Day on 10th August 2019.**

Indian Oil has started constructing eight Biodiesels plants across Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, and Madhya Pradesh.

**Biodiesel** is an alternative fuel, similar to conventional or 'fossil' diesel. It can be produced from vegetable oils, animal fats, tallow and waste cooking oil.

A significant advantage of Biodiesel is its carbon-neutrality, i.e. the oilseed absorbs the same amount of CO<sub>2</sub> as is released when the fuel is combusted in a vehicle. Also, Biodiesel is rapidly biodegradable and completely non-toxic.

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

Minister for Road Transport & Highways and Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, Shri Nitin Gadkari stated that the Government has set a target of road construction of worth Rs.15 lakh crores in next two years.

The Ministry for Road Transport & Highways will achieve a target of 40 kilometres per day of highways construction in current fiscal.

Government is permitting 100% FDI (Foreign direct investment) in the road sector.

**National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP)** for 2019-2025 is the first of its kind and the government is committed to provide world class infra to its citizens and improving the quality of their lives.

Under the NIP, there are over 7,300 projects to be implemented at a total outlay of Rs. 111 lakh crore by year 2025.

NIP aims at improving project preparation and attracts investment into infrastructure like highways, railways, ports, airports, mobility, energy and agriculture and rural industry.

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

The Ministry of Labour and Employment has notified section 142 of the Social Security Code, 2020 which covers the applicability of Aadhaar.

The notification of section will enable the Ministry of Labour and Employment to collect Aadhar details for the database of beneficiaries under various social security schemes.

National Database for Unorganised Workers (NDUW) is at an advanced stage of development by the National Informatics Centre.

The section under the Social Security Code has been notified only for collection of data of workers including migrant workers. No benefit will be denied to workers for want of Aadhar.

**The Social Security Code, 2020** is a code to amend and consolidate the laws relating to social security with the goal to extend social security to all employees and workers either in the organised or unorganised or any other sectors.

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

In a concerted response to the second surge of COVID-19 infection in the country, Ministry of Ayush is launching a massive nationwide campaign to distribute its proven poly herbal Ayurvedic drugs AYUSH 64 and Sidha drug Kabasura Kudineer for the benefit of the vast majority of out of hospital COVID patients.

The multi stakeholder campaign being launched by Shri Kiren Rijiju, Minister of State (independent charge) for Youth Affairs and Sports and Minister of Ayush (additional charge) will ensure that medicines reach the needy in a transparent and efficient manner. The main collaborator in the campaign is Sewa Bharati.

**Note:** The Ministry has also set up an Interdisciplinary Committee for Inclusion of Ayurveda and Yoga Interventions in the 'National Clinical Management Protocol: COVID-19, which was chaired by Dr V M Katoch, former Director General ICMR.

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

The Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) has granted permission for emergency use of **anti-COVID-19 therapeutic application of the drug 2-deoxy-D-glucose (2-DG)**.

An anti-COVID-19 therapeutic application of the drug 2-deoxy-D-glucose (2-DG) has been developed by Institute of Nuclear Medicine and Allied Sciences (INMAS), a lab of **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)**, in collaboration with Dr Reddy's Laboratories (DRL), Hyderabad.

Clinical trial results have shown that this molecule helps in faster recovery of hospitalised patients and reduces supplemental oxygen dependence.

The drug comes in powder form in sachet, which is taken orally by dissolving it in water.

It accumulates in the virus infected cells and prevents virus growth by stopping viral synthesis and energy production. Its selective accumulation in virally infected cells makes this drug unique.

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

The armed forces (the Army, the Indian Air Force and the Navy) have launched operation "CO-JEET" to aid anti-COVID-19 efforts, like strengthening medical infrastructure and oxygen supply chains, as well as take measures to ensure mental wellbeing of people.

Deputy Chief of Integrated Defence Staff (Medical) Lieutenant General Dr Madhuri Kanitkar, who is the third woman to become a three-star general in the armed forces, is working round the clock to strategise and monitor steps to provide relief to COVID-19 patients.

"CO-JEET stands for co-workers of all the three services who will finally achieve 'Jeet' (victory) over COVID.

## India participates in the 3rd Arctic Science Ministerial 2021

The 3rd Arctic Science Ministerial Meeting (ASM3) entitled “**Knowledge for a sustainable Arctic**”, was **co-organized by the governments of Japan and Iceland** and took place on 8 and 9 May 2021 in Tokyo.

**ASM3** is the first Ministerial meeting being held in Asia.

Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister of Science and Technology, Health and Family Welfare, and Earth Sciences represented India and shared India’s vision and long-term plans for research, work, and cooperation in the Arctic region with the stakeholders.

The launch of **NISER** (NASA-ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar) satellite mission, in collaboration with the USA, is underway.

India’s contributions to the **Sustained Arctic Observational Network (SAON)** would continue.

**Note:** The first two meetings—**ASM1 and ASM2**—were held in the USA in 2016 and Germany in 2018, respectively.

Since 2013, India enjoys ‘Observer’ status in the **Arctic Council** with twelve other countries (Japan, China, France, Germany, UK, Italy, Switzerland, Poland, Spain, Netherlands, Singapore, and South Korea).

India’s engagement with the Arctic dates back to 1920 with the signing of the Svalbard Treaty in Paris.

Since July 2008, India has a permanent research station in the Arctic called **Himadari** at NyAlesund, Svalbard Area in Norway.

It has also deployed a multi-sensor moored observatory called **IndARC** in the Kongsfjorden fjord since July 2014.

## Centre releases Rs. 8923.8 crore to Panchayats in 25 States

The Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance released an amount of Rs. 8,923.8 crore to 25 States for providing grants to the Rural Local Bodies (RLBs).

The grants are meant for all the three tiers of Panchayati Raj Institutions – village, block and district.

The amount released is the first instalment of the ‘Untied Grants’ for the year 2021-22.

It may be utilised by the RLBs, among other things, for various prevention and mitigation measures needed to combat the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Note:** As per the recommendations of the 15<sup>th</sup> Finance Commission, the 1<sup>st</sup> instalment of untied grants was to be released to the States in the month of June, 2021.

In view of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic situation and at the recommendation of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj, the Ministry of Finance has decided to release the grant in advance of the normal schedule.

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

The report was released by NITI Aayog’s Vice Chairman Dr Rajiv Kumar, CEO Amitabh Kant.

The report identifies challenges in accelerating digital financial inclusion in India and provides recommendations for making digital services accessible to its 1.3 billion citizens.

**Key recommendations in the report include:**

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

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

**Formed:** 1 January 2015  
**Headquarters:** New Delhi  
**Chairperson:** Narendra Modi  
**Vice Chairperson:** Rajiv Kumar  
**CEO:** Amitabh Kant

### CBSE launches 'Dost For Life' mobile app for students

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) launched a 'Dost For Life' mobile application for students' psycho-social well-being of classes 9-12 during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The new app will simultaneously cater to students and parents from CBSE-affiliated schools in different geographies across the world.

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

The INTERPOL (International Criminal Police Organization) has launched a mobile application 'ID-Art' which will help identify stolen cultural property, reduce smuggling and increase the possibility of recovering stolen works and artefacts.

The app's users can immediately cross-check if an object is among the over 52,000 items registered as stolen in the Interpol's "Stolen Works of Art" database.

During the pilot phase, the app was successfully used in Italy and Netherlands.

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

Union Minister of Social Justice & Empowerment Dr Thaawarchand Gehlot launched a 6- month 'Community Based Inclusive Development (CBID) Program on rehabilitation of Divyangjan'.

This CBID course has been co-designed by **Rehabilitation Council of India and University of Melbourne, Australia** under the MoU signed between the Government of Australia and the Government of India.

The program has been designed to provide competency-based knowledge and skills among these workers to enhance their ability for successfully discharging their duties. These workers will be called '**Divyang Mitra**'.

**Note:** A memorandum of understanding (MoU) signed between the Government of Australia and the Government of India on 22nd November, 2018 for cooperation in the disability sector.

The Central Government has enacted the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 which envisions a society inclusive of persons with disabilities.

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

**National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR)** is providing Tele-Counselling to children through **SAMVEDNA (Sensitizing Action on Mental Health Vulnerability through Emotional Development and Necessary Acceptance)** - a Toll-Free Helpline (1800-121-2830) launched to provide psycho-social mental support for Children affected during COVID 19 Pandemic.

**Tele counselling is provided to the children under three categories:** Children who are in Quarantine/isolation/COVID Care centers, have COVID positive parents or family members and near ones, and have lost their parents due to COVID-19 Pandemic.

**Note:** SAMVEDNA was launched in September, 2020.

**NCPCR** is a statutory body and works under the aegis of Ministry of Women and Child Development, Govt. of India.

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

The Union Government decided to hike the DAP subsidy by 140 % to provide the fertilizer to farmers at an old rate despite international price rise.

The subsidy has been increased from Rs. 500 per bag to Rs. 1,200 per bag.

The actual price of a DAP bag is currently Rs. 2,400 which could be sold by Fertilizer companies at Rs. 1,900 after considering earlier subsidy of Rs. 500.

Despite the rise in international market prices, it will continue to be available at the older price of Rs. 1,200 per bag.

**About DAP (Di-ammonium Phosphate):** It is a preferred fertilizer in India because it contains both Nitrogen and Phosphorus which are primary macro-nutrients.

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

MyLab Discovery Solutions, the Pune-based company, has developed India's first self-use Rapid Antigen Test Kit 'CoviSelf' for COVID-19.

The Indian Council of Medical Research, ICMR has approved the 'CoviSelf' kit for the purpose of home testing for COVID-19.

The self-use test can be used by symptomatic individuals and immediate contacts of confirmed cases as per ICMR guidelines.

**Note:** Last year, MyLab's indigenous RT PCR test was the first to win approval from the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) for COVID testing in the country.

### Airline company GoAir rebrands as 'Go First'

After 15 years, Wadia Group-owned GoAir has rebranded itself as 'Go First' as the airline focuses on an ultra-low-cost business model.

The Go First as ULCC (ultra-low-cost carrier) would operate single aircraft type across its fleet, which currently has both Airbus A320 and A320Neos (new engine option) planes in operation.

**About Go First:** Go First, founded as GoAir, is an Indian ultra-low-cost airline based in Mumbai, Maharashtra. It is owned by the Indian business conglomerate Wadia Group. It commenced operations in November 2005.

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

The Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MTA) inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Microsoft to support the digital transformation of schools such as Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS) and Ashram Schools, among others under the Ministry at an online event 'Empowering Youth For Success'.

Microsoft will make Artificial intelligence (AI) curriculum available to tribal students in both English and Hindi at all EMRS schools under the Ministry to skill educators and students in next-generation technologies including Artificial Intelligence.

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

Mahratta Chamber of Commerce Industries and Agriculture (MCCIA), in association with the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), launched India's first Agriculture Export Facilitation Center (AEFC) in Pune, Maharashtra.

Dr. G.R. Chintala, Chairman, NABARD, inaugurated the center in a virtual program organized by MCCIA.

The center aims to boost Maharashtra's agricultural and food exports by disseminating need-based information, providing timely guidance and organizing training courses for all the stakeholders.

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

The Central Government has brought changes in the existing **Customs (Import of Goods at Concessional Rate of Duty) Rules, IGCR 2017** to boost trade facilitation.

The **Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs** has introduced changes through the **Customs (Import of Goods at Concessional Rate of Duty) Amendment Rules, 2021**.

The **IGCR, 2017** lay down the procedures and manner in which an importer can avail the benefit of a concessional Customs duty on import of goods required for domestic production of goods or providing services.

**One major change** that accommodates the needs of trade and industry is that the imported goods have been permitted to be sent out for 'job work'.

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

**International Museum Day** is celebrated every year on **18 May**.

The objective of International Museum Day, as declared by **International Council of Museums(ICOM)**, is to raise awareness about the fact that, "Museums are an important means of cultural exchange, enrichment of cultures and development of mutual understanding, cooperation and peace among peoples."

The theme for International Museum Day 2021 is '**The Future of Museums: Recover and Reimagine**'.

On this occasion, The Ministry of Culture (MoC), Government of India organised a series of panel discussions.

**Two panel discussions were organised with the following themes:**

Re-imagining Museum & Culture Study Programs to Create New Pathways to the Future.

The many Shades of Online Interaction & Engagement and What it Means for Museums.

**Note:** The **National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA), New Delhi**, announced the launch of the **NGMA's Audio-Visual Guide App** on the occasion of International Museum Day 2021.

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

Prime Minister Narendra Modi released the 8<sup>th</sup> instalment of financial benefit of Rs 2,06,67,75,66,000 to 9,50,67,601 beneficiary farmers under Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) scheme.

For the first time, the farmers of **West Bengal** would be getting the benefit of this scheme.

**About Pradhan Mantri Kisan Sammann Nidhi (PM-KISAN):** It is an initiative by the government of India in which all farmers will get up to ₹6,000 per year as minimum income support.

**Note:** On 24 February 2019, Narendra Modi launched the scheme in Uttar Pradesh's Gorakhpur by transferring the first instalment of ₹2,000 each to over one crore farmers.

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

The Cabinet Secretary, Shri Rajiv Gauba chaired a meeting of the **National Crisis Management Committee (NCMC)** in view of the Cyclonic Storm 'Tauktae' in the Arabian Sea.

Director General of the **India Meteorological Department (IMD)** briefed the committee about the latest status of the cyclone.

The **National Disaster Response Force (NDRF)** informed that they have deployed/made available 79 teams in the affected states and 22 additional teams have also been kept in readiness.

**Facts about India Meteorological Department (IMD):** It is an agency of the Ministry of Earth Sciences of the Government of India. It is the principal agency responsible for meteorological observations, weather forecasting and seismology.

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

Union Minister of Rural Development, Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, Panchayati Raj and Food Processing Industries, Narendra Singh Tomar launched **National Mobile Monitoring Software (NMMS)** app and **Area officer monitoring** app.

The NMMS app permits taking real time attendance of workers at MGNREGA worksites along with geotagged photographs, which will increase citizen oversight of the programme besides potentially enabling processing payments faster.

Area Officer Monitoring app facilitates them to record their findings online along with time stamped and geo-coordinate tagged photographs for all the schemes of Deptt of Rural Development- MGNREGA, PMAYG, PMGSY.

**About MGNREGA:** Mahatma Gandhi Employment Guarantee Act 2005 later renamed as the "Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act" (MGNREGA), is an Indian labour law and social security measure that aims to guarantee the 'right to work'.

This act was passed in September 2005 under the UPA government of Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh.

It aims to enhance livelihood security in rural areas by providing at least 100 days of wage employment in a financial year to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work.

## 1st Phase of MCA21 Version 3.0 launched

Minister of State for Finance and Corporate Affairs launched the first phase of the Ministry of Corporate Affairs' (MCA) **MCA21 Version 3.0 (V3.0)**.

It comprises revamped website, new email services for MCA Officers and two new modules, namely, e. Book and e. Consultation.

### **About MCA21 Version 3.0 (V3.0):**

The MCA21 V3.0 is going to be implemented in **two phases**.

The **second** and final phase shall be launched from October 2021 onwards.

The MCA21 V3.0 in its entirety will not only improve the existing services and modules, but will also create new functionalities like e-adjudication, compliance management system, advanced helpdesk, feedback services, user dashboards, self-reporting tools and revamped master data services.

### **Note:**

MCA21 has been part of **Mission Mode projects of the Government of India**.

It will help in improving **Ease of Doing Business** in India.

India ranked 63rd out of 190 countries in Ease Doing Business 2020: World Bank Report.

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

The Ministry of Women and Child Development (WCD) will set up One-Stop Centres (OSC), aimed at supporting women affected by violence in public and private spaces, in foreign missions in collaboration with the Ministry of External Affairs.

The first 10 OSCs will be introduced in Australia, Canada, Singapore, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, UAE, and Saudi Arabia.

### **Key Points**

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

### **About One-Stop Centres (OSC):**

It is a central government sponsored scheme for addressing the problem of violence against women. It was launched in April 2015.

It is a subscheme of the umbrella scheme for National Mission for Empowerment of Women including Indira Gandhi Matritav Sahyaog Yojana.

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

### **Funding:**

It is funded through Nirbhaya Fund and the central government provides 100% financial assistance to the state governments /Union Territories administrations.

**Nirbhaya Fund** was established in 2013. It is administered by the Department of Economic Affairs (DEA) of the Ministry of Finance (MoF) of the Government of India.

**Indian Legislative Framework to Prevent Violence Against Women:**

The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961

Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005

The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO), 2012

The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal) Act, 2013

### Defence Minister launches SeHAT OPD Portal

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh launched the '**Services e-Health Assistance & Tele-consultation (SeHAT)**' OPD Portal.

The Portal will help the Armed Forces in providing tele-medicine services.

**Key Points**

It is an online medical consultation service for the armed forces personnel and ex-servicemen to ensure hassle-free health services for them.

Tele-medicine services will be provided by defence services doctors who are on regular duties.

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

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

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

### Ayush Clinical Case Repository Portal and Ayush Sanjivani App

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

**Key Points**

**About the Ayush Clinical Case Repository Portal:**

It will serve as a platform to support both Ayush practitioners and the general public.

This portal aims at aggregating information about clinical outcomes achieved by Ayush practitioners on a large scale.

**About the third version of Ayush Sanjivani App:**

The third version of Ayush Sanjivani App will facilitate a significant study regarding the efficacy of selected Ayush interventions, including **Ayush 64 and Kabasura Kudineer medicines** in the management of asymptomatic and mild to moderate COVID 19 patients.

First version was launched in May 2020.

It is developed by the Ministry of Ayush and the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.

**Ayush 64** is a poly-herbal formulation developed by the Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences. Ayush 64 is useful in the treatment of asymptomatic, mild and moderate COVID-19 infection. Initially the drug was developed for **Malaria** in the year 1980.

**Kabasura Kudineer** is a traditional formulation used by Siddha practitioners. It is useful in the treatment of common respiratory health.

#### **Related Initiatives:**

AYUSH Health and Wellness Centres

**National Ayush Mission (NAM):** Government of India is implementing the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of NAM through States/UTs for development and promotion of AYUSH system of medicine.

Recently, Government notification listed out specific surgical procedures by a postgraduate medical student of Ayurveda.

### **Traceability Provision in the new IT Rules 2021**

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

#### **Key Points**

##### **Traceability Provision:**

Traceability Provision is a part of the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021.

As per guidelines, significant social media intermediaries providing messaging services must identify the first originator of the information based on an order by the court or competent authority.

**According to WhatsApp,** Requiring messaging apps to 'trace' chats is the equivalent of asking to keep a fingerprint of every single message sent on WhatsApp, which would **break end-to-end encryption and fundamentally undermines people's right to privacy.**

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

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

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

### **IBF renamed as Indian Broadcasting and Digital Foundation**

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

### Key Points

**IBDF** will form a Self-Regulatory Body (SRB), as per the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021.

The name of the self-regulatory body is **Digital Media Content Regulatory Council (DMCRC)** for digital OTT platforms.

**DMCRC** is a second-tier mechanism at the appellate level and is similar to Broadcast Content Complaint Council (BCCC), which IBF had implemented for the linear broadcasting sector way back in 2011.

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

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

## Important News: World

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

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Vladimir Putin agreed to establish a new annual India-Russia 2+2 dialogue, involving the External Affairs Minister and Defence Ministers of the two nations.

New Delhi's move to launch the 2+2 dialogue with Moscow is apparently aimed at striking a balance between India's growing strategic convergence with the United States in the Indo-Pacific region and its long-standing defence partnership with Russia.

**Note:** Russia now has become part of a small group of countries with whom India has 2+2 dialogue of foreign and defence ministers. **India has such mechanisms with the US, Japan and Australia.**

### 23rd ASEAN-India Senior Officials' Meeting

Secretary (East) in the Ministry of External Affairs Riva Ganguly Das co-chaired the 23rd ASEAN-India Senior Officials' Meeting 2021 with Permanent Secretary of Thailand Thani Thongphakdi.

During the Meeting, the status of ongoing ASEAN-India cooperation was reviewed under the whole spectrum of political-security, economic, socio-cultural and developmental cooperation.

The Meeting also deliberated on the steps to implement the ASEAN-India Plan of Action 2021-2025 and discussed ways to further strengthen the ASEAN-India Strategic Partnership.

The ASEAN Senior Officials welcomed India's proposal to celebrate the year 2022 as ASEAN-India Friendship Year as it marks the 30th anniversary of ASEAN-India sectoral partnership, 25th anniversary of dialogue partnership, 20th anniversary of Summit-level partnership and 10 years of Strategic Partnership.

**Facts about Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN):** It is considered one of the most influential groupings in the region, and India and several other countries including the US, China, Japan and Australia are its dialogue partners.

**The 10 member countries of ASEAN** are Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Brunei, Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar and Cambodia.

**Headquarters:** Jakarta, Indonesia

**Founded:** 8 August 1967

## India-UK Virtual Summit

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Hon'ble Boris Johnson, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom held a Virtual Summit on May 04, 2021.

An ambitious '**Roadmap 2030**' was adopted at the Summit to elevate bilateral ties to a '**Comprehensive Strategic Partnership**'.

The Roadmap will pave the way for a deeper and stronger engagement over the next ten years in the key areas of people to people contacts, trade and economy, defence and security, climate action and health.

The two Prime Ministers launched an '**Enhanced Trade Partnership**' (ETP) to unleash the trade potential between the 5th and 6th largest economies of the world and by setting an ambitious target of more than doubling bilateral trade by 2030.

A new India-UK '**Global Innovation Partnership**' was announced at the Summit that aims to support the transfer of inclusive Indian innovations to select developing countries, starting with Africa.

India and the UK launched a '**Comprehensive Partnership on Migration and Mobility**' that will facilitate greater opportunities for the mobility of students and professionals between the two countries.

## S Jaishankar participates in G7 Foreign Ministers' Meeting

External Affairs Minister (EAM) S Jaishankar joined the G7 Foreign and Development Ministers Meeting in London.

The minister participated in discussions with the other foreign ministers via videolink instead to focus on new ways to ensure fairer access to vaccine stockpiles and increase support for the global vaccine distribution scheme known as COVAX.

**Note:** The United Kingdom has invited Prime Minister Narendra Modi to attend the G7 Summit as a guest, along with Australia, South Korea and South Africa. The G7 Summit is to be held on June 11-13, 2021.

## India-EU Leaders' Meeting

At the invitation of the President of the European Council Mr. Charles Michel, Prime Minister Narendra Modi participated in the India-EU Leaders' Meeting on 08 May 2021.

The meeting was held in a hybrid format with the participation of leaders of all the 27 EU Member States as well as the President of the European Council and the European Commission.

This is the first time that the EU hosted a meeting with India in the EU+27 format.

They exchanged views on three key thematic areas: **i) foreign policy and security; ii) COVID-19, climate, and environment; and iii) trade, connectivity, and technology.**

India and the EU launched an ambitious and comprehensive '**Connectivity Partnership**' which is focused on enhancing digital, energy, transport and people-to-people connectivity.

Coinciding with the Leaders' Meeting, an **India-EU Business Roundtable** was organized to highlight the avenues for cooperation in climate, digital and healthcare.

A finance contract of **Euro 150 million** for the **Pune Metro Rail Project** was signed by the Ministry of Finance, Government of India, and **European Investment Bank.**

India-EU Leaders Meeting has set a significant milestone by providing a new direction to the Strategic Partnership and giving a fresh impetus for implementing the ambitious **India-EU Roadmap 2025** adopted at the **15th India-EU Summit held in July 2020.**

**Note: European Union (EU)** has recently joined **India's International Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure-CDRI.**

**Facts about the European Union (EU):**

**Headquarters:** Brussels, Belgium

**Founded:** 1 November 1993

**Members Countries:** 27

The **United Kingdom** became the first member state to leave the EU on 31 January 2020.

In 2012, the EU was awarded the **Nobel Peace Prize.**

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

Shri Apurva Chandra, Secretary, Labour and Employment chaired the 1st BRICS Employment Working Group (EWG) Meeting held on 11-12 May 2021 in Sushma Swaraj Bhawan, New Delhi in virtual format.

The prime agenda for the discussions were Promoting Social Security Agreements amongst BRICS Nations, Formalization of labour markets, Participation of women in labour force and Gig and platform workers – Role in labour market. Apart from representatives of member nations i.e Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, the representatives of International Labour Organization (ILO) and International Social Security Agency (ISSA) also made valuable interventions and suggestions on the agenda issues.

**Note:** The **13th BRICS Summit** will be held under India's Chairship in 2021, and it will be the third time India will host the BRICS Summit after 2012 and 2016.

The theme for India's Chairship for 2021 would be '**BRICS @ 15: Intra-BRICS Cooperation for Continuity, Consolidation, and Consensus**'.

**Facts about BRICS:**

**Formation:** 2009

**Countries:** Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa

### KP Sharma Oli reappointed as Nepal Prime Minister

President Bidya Devi Bhandari has reappointed CPN-UML Chairman KP Sharma Oli, 69, as Prime Minister of Nepal.

The president had asked the Opposition parties to come up with the support of majority lawmakers to form a new government after Oli lost the vote of confidence in the House.

Oli's appointment came shortly after the Office of President said that no two parties or more than two parties came to lay claim to forming a coalition government by the given deadline that expired.

**Note:** Oli previously served as prime minister from 11 October 2015 to 3 August 2016 and again from 15 February 2018 to 13 May 2021 as the first elected prime minister under the new constitution.

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

Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare chaired the 33<sup>rd</sup> meeting of Health Ministers of Commonwealth countries.

The theme of the meeting was "**Commonwealth Response to COVID-19: Ensuring Equitable Access to Vaccines and Building Resilience for Health Systems and Emergencies**".

**Note:** WHO-led initiative '**Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator**' has proven to be a ground-breaking global collaboration which is expediting development, production, and equitable access to COVID-19 tests, treatments, and vaccines.

**COVAX, the vaccine pillar of ACT Accelerator**, aims to deliver at least two billion vaccines by the end of 2021, covering 20% of the most vulnerable population in about 92 Low and Middle-Income countries.

## Italy hosts G20 Global Health Summit 2021

The Global Health Summit took place in Rome on 21 May, 2021. The Summit was a special event of the G20 Presidency, organized by **Italy (which holds the G20 Presidency in 2021) in partnership with the European Commission** and is co-chaired by the President of the Council of Minister Mario Draghi and the President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen.

At the summit, G20 countries agreed to the **Rome Declaration**, which reaffirms continued multilateral support for preparedness, prevention, detection, and response to the pandemic, as well as appropriate and sustainable funding for collaborative global response efforts, especially the Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator.

### Facts about G20:

**Formation:** 26 September 1999

**Members:**

20

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

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

## India-Israel agreement on Agriculture cooperation

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

### Key Points

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

### INDO-ISRAEL Agricultural Project Centres of Excellence:

Centers of Excellence established under Indo-Israel Agriculture Action Plan (IIAP) have become epicentres of transformation in the horticulture sector.

This new work programme will further strengthen the bilateral relations and mutual cooperation between the two countries in the field of agriculture for the benefit of the farming community.

### INDO-ISRAEL Villages of Excellence:

This is a new concept aimed at creating a model ecosystem in agriculture across eight states, alongside 13 Centers of Excellence within 75 villages.

The program will promote the increase of net income and better the livelihood of the individual farmer, transforming traditional farms into modern-intensive farms based on IIAP standards.

The program will focus on: (1) Modern Agriculture infrastructure, (2) Capacity Building, (3) Market linkage.

### Indo-Israel Bilateral Cooperation:

The strategic cooperation between the two countries began during the Sino-India War of 1962.

India is Israel's third largest trade partner in Asia.

India and Israel have had bilateral relations since 1993 in the agricultural sector.

Israeli companies have invested in India in energy, renewable energy, telecom, real estate, water technologies, and are focusing on setting up R&D centers or production units in India.

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

## 74th World Health Assembly

### Why in News

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

### Key Points

The Board called for further efforts to ensure fair and equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines through the COVAX Facility.

The Board recommended that the 74th World Health Assembly must consider the report on mental health preparedness and response for the COVID-19 pandemic. It also recommended endorsing the updated comprehensive Mental Health Action Plan for the period of 2013 to 2030.

The Board has recommended that the 74th World Health Assembly should adopt a decision to present a road map for the global action plan for prevention and control of non-communicable diseases till the year 2030.

### Facts about World Health Assembly:

**Founded:** 1948

**Headquarters:** Geneva, Switzerland

**Parent organization:** World Health Organization

**Membership:** 194 Countries

## WHO and Switzerland launch first 'WHO BioHub Facility'

### Why in the News?

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

### Key Points

Switzerland supports the WHO BioHub initiative in its initial phase by providing the necessary infrastructure of a Swiss biosafety laboratory in Spiez.

The facility will serve as a centre for the safe receipt, sequencing, storage and preparation of biological materials for distribution to other laboratories, in order to inform risk assessments, and sustain global preparedness against these pathogens.

Following results from the pilot project, the BioHub will expand from SARS-COV-2 and its variants to other pathogens, and connect partners with other repositories and laboratory networks in 2022.

### About Pathogen:

In biology, a pathogen in the oldest and broadest sense, is any organism that can produce disease. A pathogen may also be referred to as an infectious agent, or simply a germ.

Typically, the term is used to describe an infectious microorganism or agent, such as a virus, bacterium, protozoan, prion, viroid, or fungus.

## Important News: Economy

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

The Ministry of Finance has decided to provide an additional amount of upto Rs 15,000 crore to States as interest free 50 year loan for spending on capital projects.

The Department of Expenditure has issued fresh guidelines in this regard on the “**Scheme of Financial Assistance to States for Capital Expenditure**” for the financial year 2021-22.

**Capital expenditure** creates employment, especially for the poor and unskilled, has a high multiplier effect, enhances the future productive capacity of the economy, and results in a higher rate of economic growth.

**Note:** The “Scheme for Special Assistance to States for Capital Expenditure” was launched in 2020 to provide financial assistance for the states.

Under the Scheme, financial assistance is provided to the State Governments in the form of 50-year interest free loan. An amount not exceeding Rs.12,000 crore was earmarked for the scheme for the financial year 2020-21, and a sum of Rs.11,830.29 crore was released to the States.

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

TRIFED has now entered into a collaborative project titled “**Sustainable Livelihoods for Tribal Households in India**” with The LINK Fund.

TRIFED and The LINK Fund have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to work together towards Tribal Development and employment generation.

The MoU was signed by Shri Pravir Krishna, Managing Director TRIFED, and Tony Kalm, CEO and Co-founder, The LINK Fund.

As a part of this association, both the organizations will also work together to create women-centered infrastructure and innovation and entrepreneurship.

**The LINK Fund** is a practitioner-led fund that is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland and works to end extreme poverty and mitigate the effects of climate change.

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

As a special dispensation, the Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance at the recommendation of the Ministry of Home Affairs has released in advance of the normal schedule the 1<sup>st</sup> instalment of the Central Share of the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) for the year 2021-22 to all the States.

An amount of Rs. 8873.6 crore has been released to the States.

**Note:** Normally, the first instalment of SDRF is released in the month of June as per the recommendations of the Finance Commission. Up to 50% of the amount released i.e. Rs.4436.8 crore can be used by the States for COVID-19 containment measures.

### Finance Minister Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman participates in Governor's Seminar as part of Asian Development Bank's annual meeting 2021

Union Minister for Finance and Corporate Affairs and Asian Development Bank's (ADB) Governor for India Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman participated in the Governor's Seminar on "**Cooperation for a Resilient Future**", held as part of ADB's annual meeting 2021 on May 03, 2021.

The virtual seminar was attended by delegates from 68 member nations of the ADB. The Finance Minister mentioned that India has been at the forefront of various initiatives aiming at the same through setting up of the SAARC COVID-19 emergency fund, and leading by example in global initiatives of Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator (ACT-A) and COVAX.

#### **Facts about Asian Development Bank (ADB):**

**Headquarters:** Mandaluyong, Philippines

**President:** Masatsugu Asakawa

**Founded:** 19 December 1966

**Membership:** 68 countries

India was a founding member of ADB in 1966 and is now the bank's fourth-largest shareholder.

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

The Codex Committee on Spices and Culinary Herbs (CCSCH) has finalised and recommended quality standards for **4 spices; cloves, oregano, basil, and ginger**, during its fifth session held virtually from 20<sup>th</sup> -29<sup>th</sup> April 2021.

The committee forwarded these four new standards to the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) for adoption at final step 8, as full -fledged Codex standards.

**Note:** Earlier, Ms Rita Teatota, IAS (retd.), Chairperson, Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) virtually inaugurated the 5<sup>th</sup> edition of CCSCH on 20<sup>th</sup> April 2021.

**About CCSCH & CAC:** To develop and expand worldwide standards for spices and culinary herbs, and to consult with other international organisations in the standards development process **Codex Committee on Spices and Culinary**

**Herbs (CCSCH)** was formed in 2013 with support of more than a hundred countries with India as the host country and Spices Board as the Secretariat for organising the sessions of the committee.

Set up in 1963, the **Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC)** is an intergovernmental body established jointly by the UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and the World Health Organisation (WHO), within the framework of the Joint Food Standards Programme to protect the health of consumers and ensure fair practices in the food trade.

## LIC becomes 3<sup>rd</sup> strongest and 10<sup>th</sup> most-valuable insurance brand globally

State-owned insurance company **Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC)** has emerged as the 3<sup>rd</sup> strongest and the 10<sup>th</sup> most valuable insurance brand globally.

According to a '**Insurance 100 2021**', the annual report on the most valuable and strongest insurance brands by **London-based consultancy firm Brand Finance**, the total value of the world's top 100 most valuable insurance brands dipped 6 percent from \$462.4 billion in 2020 to \$433.0 billion in 2021.

Brand Finance's report stated that LIC's brand value increased 6.8 percent to \$8.65 billion in 2021.

### **Top valuable insurance brands:**

**1st Position-** Ping An Insurance, China

**2nd Position-** China Life Insurance, China

**10th Position-** Life Insurance Corporation of India

### **Top strongest insurance brands:**

**1st Position-** Poste Italiane, Italy

**2nd Position-** Mapfre, Spain

**3rd Position-** Life Insurance Corporation of India

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

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, has given its in-principle approval for strategic disinvestment along with transfer of management control in IDBI Bank Ltd.

The extent of respective shareholding to be divested by GoI and LIC shall be decided at the time of structuring of transaction in consultation with RBI.

Government of India (GoI) and LIC together own more than 94% of equity of IDBI Bank (GoI 45.48%, LIC 49.24%).

LIC is currently the promoter of IDBI Bank with Management Control and GoI is the co-promoter.

**About Industrial Development Bank of India (IDBI):** It was established in 1964 by an act to provide credit and other financial facilities for the development of the fledgling Indian industry. It is a development finance institution and a subsidiary of Life Insurance Corporation.

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

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has decided to provide a term liquidity facility of ₹ 50,000 crore to ease access of funds for emergency medical services.

Under the liquidity scheme, banks can support entities including vaccine manufacturers, medical facilities, hospitals and patients.

**About the scheme:** Term Liquidity Facility of Rs. 50,000 crore with tenure of up to 3 years, at repo rate, to ease access to emergency health services, for ramping up COVID-related health infrastructure & services.

Banks can give fresh lending support to a variety of stakeholders under this facility. This lending facility will be available up to March 31, 2022. Banks will be provided incentives to provide credit under this facility.

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

**Fitch Ratings** has estimated the GDP (Gross domestic product) of the Indian economy to grow 9.5 percent in 2021-22 (April 2021 to March 2022). Fitch in March 2021 had expected an 12.8% GDP growth forecast for FY22.

**S&P Global Ratings** has lowered the GDP growth forecast of the Indian economy to 9.8 percent for the financial year 2021-22 (FY22). S&P in March 2021 had expected an 11% GDP growth forecast for India for FY22.

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

Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) were signed between the **Oil and Gas PSUs-Indian Oil, BPCL, HPCL, ONGC and GAIL**, and **Shri Badrinath Utthan Charitable Trust** for Construction and Redevelopment of **Shri Badrinath Dham, Uttarakhand as a Spiritual Smart Hill Town**.

As per the MoUs, the Oil & Gas PSUs will be contributing Rs. 99.60 crore in the first phase of the developmental activities, including river embankment work, building all-terrain vehicular path, building bridges, beautifying existing bridges, establishing gurukul facilities with accommodation, creating toilet and drinking water facilities, installing streetlights, mural paintings etc.

**Note:** Badrinath is one of the Char Dham - a set of four pilgrimage sites in India. The other Dhams are Dwaraka, Puri and Rameswaram.

## RBI joins Network for Greening the Financial System

**The Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has joined the Central Banks and Supervisors **Network for Greening the Financial System (NGFS)** as a Member on April 23, 2021.

The Reserve Bank expects to benefit from the membership of NGFS by learning from and contributing to global efforts on Green Finance which has assumed significance in the context of climate change.

**Note:** Launched at the Paris One Planet Summit on December 12, 2017, the NGFS is a group of central banks and supervisors willing to share best practices and contribute to the development of environment and climate risk management in the financial sector, while mobilizing mainstream finance to support the transition towards a sustainable economy.

### RBI sets up an advisory group to assist RRA 2.0

The Reserve Bank of India has set up a **Regulations Review Authority (RRA 2.0)**, initially for a period of one year from May 01, 2021.

The RRA will review the regulatory prescriptions internally as well as by seeking suggestions from the RBI regulated entities and other stakeholders on their simplification and ease of implementation.

The RRA has constituted an Advisory Group, representing members from regulated entities, including compliance officers, to support the RRA in achieving the objective set forth in the terms of reference of RRA 2.0.

**The composition of the Group is as under:**

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

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

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

The United Nations, in its mid-year update of the **World Economic Situation and Prospects (WESP)** which was first released in January 2021, projected that the Indian economy would grow at 10.1 percent in the calendar year 2022, nearly double the 5.9 percent growth forecast for the country in the January report.

The mid-year update said that India will register a 7.5 percent growth rate in calendar year 2021.

**Global economy** is projected to grow by 5.4% in 2021.

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

The Government of India has released Rs. 5,968 Crore to 15 States for the implementation of Jal Jeevan Mission in the financial year 2021-22.

This is the first tranche of the four to be released in this financial year.

Out of the Central fund allocated under Jal Jeevan Mission, 93% of the fund is to be utilized on developing water supply infrastructure, 5% on support activities and 2% on water quality monitoring & surveillance activities.

**Note: Goa, Telangana, Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Puducherry** have become 'Har Ghar Jal' State/ UT.

**About JJM (Jal Jeevan Mission):** It was announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 15th August, 2019, with the aim to provide assured tap water supply to every rural home by 2024.

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

India received USD 83 billion in remittances in 2020, a drop of just 0.2 percent from 2019, according to the 'Resilience COVID-19 Crisis Through a Migration Lens' report released by World Bank.

In 2019, India had received USD 83.3 billion in remittances.

Officially recorded remittance flows to low- and middle-income countries reached USD 540 billion in 2020, just 1.6 percent below the 2019 total of USD 548 billion.

### Top 3 Countries with Remittance Inflows in 2020

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

### Top 3 Countries with Remittance Outflows in 2020

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

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

## Government of India's SWAMIH completes first residential project

Union Minister for Finance & Corporate Affairs Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman handed over possession to homebuyers as Government of India's **Special Window for Affordable & Mid-Income Housing (SWAMIH)** completed its first residential project.

**The residential project - Rivali Park, located in suburban Mumbai, was the first housing project in India to have received funding under the SWAMIH Fund.**

**Rivali Park Wintergreens** is the first investment by the Fund and is also the first project to get completed.

The project is **Rivali Park Wintergreens** developed by CCI Projects Pvt Ltd (CCIPPL), an associate company of Cable Corporation of India Ltd.

**About SWAMIH:** The SWAMIH Fund was launched by Smt. Sitharaman in November 2019.

The Fund so far has given its final approval to 72 projects that will complete 44,100 homes, while 132 projects have received preliminary approval, which will complete an additional 72,500 homes.

The Fund is targeting to complete an aggregate of 1,16,600 homes.

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

The meeting of the Central Board of Directors of RBI was held under the Chairmanship of Governor Shaktikanta Das.

The Board approved the transfer of 99,122 crore rupees as surplus to the Central Government for the accounting period of **nine months ended March 31, 2021 (July 2020-March 2021)**.

**Note:** The RBI had transferred Rs 57,128 crore to the government for the accounting year 2019-20.

### Facts about RBI:

**Headquarters:** Mumbai

**Established:** 1 April 1935

**Governor:** Shaktikanta Das (25<sup>th</sup> Governor)

**Deputy Governors:** Mahesh Kumar Jain, Dr. Michael Debabrata Patra, M. Rajeshwar Rao, T. Rabi Sankar

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

Long working hours led to 745 000 deaths from stroke and ischemic heart disease in 2016, a 29 percent increase since 2000, according to the latest estimates by the **World Health Organization (WHO)** and the **International Labour Organization (ILO)** published in the **Journal 'Environment International'**.

This study is the first global analysis of the loss of life and health associated with working long hours.

The study concludes that working 55 or more hours per week is associated with an estimated 35% higher risk of a stroke and a 17% higher risk of dying from ischemic heart disease, compared to working 35-40 hours a week.

Further, the number of people working long hours is increasing, and currently stands at 9% of the total population globally. This trend puts even more people at risk of work-related disability and early death.

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

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

### Key Points

**FDI equity inflow** grew by 19% in the F.Y. 2020-21 (US\$ 59.64 billion) compared to the previous year F.Y. 2019-20 (US\$ 49.98 billion).

**'Computer Software & Hardware'** has emerged as the top sector during F.Y. 2020-21.

**Gujarat** is the **top recipient state** during the F.Y. 2020-21 of the total FDI Equity inflows followed by **Maharashtra** and **Karnataka**.

In terms of **top investor countries**, **Singapore** is at the apex, followed by the **U.S.A** and **Mauritius** for the F.Y. 2020-21.

### About Foreign Direct Investment (FDI):

**FDI** is an investment in the form of a controlling ownership in a business in one country by an entity based in another country.

It is different from **Foreign Portfolio Investment (FPI)** where the foreign entity merely buys stocks and bonds of a company. FPI does not provide the investor with control over the business.

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

**Government Route:** In this, the foreign entity has to take the approval of the government. It is administered by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

**Automatic Route:** In this, the foreign entity does not require the prior approval of the government or the RBI.

### Government Measures to promote FDI:

Measures taken by the Government on the fronts of FDI policy reforms, investment facilitation and ease of doing business have resulted in increased FDI inflows into the country.

Launch of schemes attracting investments, such as, National technical Textile Mission, Pradhan Mantri Kisan SAMPADA Yojana, Production Linked Incentive Scheme etc., and the initiatives under the Atmanirbhar Bharat to encourage investments in different sectors.

## Important News: Defense

## Seven Indian Navy Ships deployed for Operation Samudra Setu II

In support of the nation's fight against Covid-19 and as part of operation '**Samudra Setu II**', 7 Indian Naval ships viz. **Kolkata, Kochi, Talwar, Tabar, Trikand, Jalashwa** and **Airavat** have been deployed for shipment of liquid medical oxygen-filled cryogenic containers and associated medical equipment from various countries.

INS Kolkata and INS Talwar, missions deployed in Persian Gulf, were the first batch of ships that were immediately diverted for the task and entered the port of Manama, Bahrain.

The second batch of ships comprising Kochi, Trikand and Tabar missions deployed in Arabian sea have also been diverted to join the national effort.

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

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

NATO has launched Multinational Military Exercise 'DEFENDER-Europe 21' in Albania with thousands of military forces from the United States and other countries in the first such large-scale drills since World War II in the Western Balkans.

**DEFENDER-Europe** is an annual large-scale U.S. Army-led, multinational exercise, defensive in nature and focused on deterring aggression, which this year focuses on building operational readiness and interoperability with NATO and a greater number of allies and partners over a wider area of operations than ever before.

Around 28,000 U.S., allied and partner forces from 26 nations will conduct nearly simultaneous operations across more than 30 training areas in more than a dozen nations from the Baltics and Africa to the critical Black Sea and Balkan regions.

**NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization)** is an international alliance that consists of 30 member states from North America and Europe. It was established at the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty on 4 April 1949.

## Indian Army launches first Green Solar Energy Harnessing Plant in Sikkim

The Indian Army launched the first Green Solar Energy Harnessing Plant in North Sikkim to harness renewable energy for its troops.

The Green Solar Energy plant with a capacity of 56 KVA, at an altitude of 16,000 ft, will use vanadium-based battery technology.

The project has been accomplished in collaboration with IIT, Mumbai.

A team of faculty from IIT, Mumbai, led by Prof Prakash Ghosh and troops, finished the project.

**Note:** In January 2021, Vanadium was discovered in Arunachal Pradesh. This was the first discovery of Vanadium in India.

India consumes 4% of global vanadium production in the world.

**Vanadium** is a hard, silver-grey metallic element. Vanadium is found in over 60 different minerals including vanadinite, carnotite, roscoelite and patronite.

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

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

The Indian Navy was represented by INS Sharda, an Offshore Patrol Vessel (OPV) with a Chetak helicopter and the Indonesian Navy was represented by KRI Sultan Hasanudin, a 90m Corvette.

The exercise, aimed at improving interoperability and understanding between both the friendly navies, are regularly conducted by the Indian Navy with units of friendly foreign countries.

**Note:** The last PASSEX between Indian Navy and Indonesian Navy was conducted on March 13, 2021 between INS Kalpeni, IN Dornier and KRI Sultan Iskandar Muda.

**Garuda Shakti** is a bilateral exercise between special forces of armies of India and Indonesia.

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

In order to mitigate the criticality of inadequate availability of specialised medical manpower, veteran defence doctors have come forward answering the call of the nation to provide free online consultation services on the e-Sanjeevani platform.

**'Ex-Defence OPD'** was launched on 07 May 2021 in a phased manner by Defence Secretary Dr Ajay Kumar and Surgeon Vice Admiral Rajat Datta, Director General of Armed Forces Medical Services.

Initially available for Uttar Pradesh, it was extended to Rajasthan on 10 May and Uttarakhand on 11 May.

After the successful roll out in 3 states, **Ex-Defence OPD, now renamed as 'Defence National OPD'**, has been rolled out pan India on 14 May 2021.

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

## INS Rajput decommissioned

The Indian Navy's first destroyer INS Rajput was decommissioned at Naval Dockyard, Visakhapatnam after serving the nation for 41 glorious years on 21 May 2021.

INS Rajput was commissioned on 04 May 1980, at Poti, Georgia (erstwhile USSR), as the lead ship of the Rajput Class Destroyers of the Indian Navy with Capt (later Vice Admiral) Gulab Mohanlal Hiranandani as the first Commanding Officer.

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

## Science and Technology

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

The Department of Telecommunications (DoT), Government of India, approved, permissions to Telecom Service Providers (TSPs) for conducting trials for use and applications of 5G technology.

The applicants TSPs include Bharti Airtel Ltd., Reliance Jio Infocomm Ltd., Vodafone Idea Ltd. and MTNL.

These TSPs have tied up with original equipment manufacturers and technology providers which are Ericsson, Nokia, Samsung and C-DOT.

The experimental spectrum is being given in various bands which include the mid-band (3.2 GHz to 3.67 GHz), millimeter wave band (24.25 GHz to 28.5 GHz) and in the Sub-Gigahertz band (700 GHz).

The TSPs are encouraged to conduct trials using **5Gi technology** in addition to the already known 5G Technology.

**International Telecommunications Union (ITU)** has also approved the 5Gi technology, which was advocated by India, as it facilitates much larger reach of the 5G towers and Radio networks.

The **5Gi technology** has been developed by IIT Madras, Centre of Excellence in Wireless Technology (CEWiT) and IIT Hyderabad.

### ISRO develops 3 cost-effective ventilators, oxygen concentrator

The Indian Space Research Organisation's **Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC)** has developed three different types of ventilators and an oxygen concentrator.

“Based on designs, features and specifications, the names are **Prana, VaU and Svasta**. All three are user-friendly, fully automated and with touch-screen specifications, meeting all safety standards.

Prana is meant to deliver respiratory gas to the patient by automated compression of an Ambu bag, Svasta is designed to work without electric power, and the VaU is a low-cost ventilator equivalent to commercially available high-end ventilators.

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

SpaceX will launch a satellite DOGE-1 to the Moon in 2022 funded entirely with the cryptocurrency 'Dogecoin'.

Canadian company Geometric Energy Corporation will lead the lunar mission.

The satellite, dubbed DOGE-1, will be launched aboard a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket in the first quarter of 2022.

The "DOGE-1 Mission to the Moon" will be "the first-ever commercial lunar payload in history paid entirely with" Dogecoin.

**About Dogecoin:** It is a cryptocurrency created by software engineers Billy Markus and Jackson Palmer. It was introduced on December 6, 2013.

**About Space Exploration Technologies Corp. (SpaceX):** It is an American aerospace manufacturer and space transportation services company headquartered in Hawthorne, California. SpaceX was founded in 2002 by Elon Musk.

### Iran unveils its most powerful supercomputer 'Simorgh'

Iran has unveiled its most powerful supercomputer 'Simorgh' developed domestically by Tehran's Amirkabir University of Technology (AUT).

The supercomputer, named Simorgh after a mythical Persian bird, has a performance capacity of 0.56 petaflops at the moment and will reach one petaflops in two months.

**Note:** Work on the next supercomputer 'Maryam' has already started, and it will have 100 times the capacity of 'Simorgh'.

### Antibody detection kit 'DIPCOVAN'

#### Why in News?

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

#### Key Points

The DRDO's Defence Institute of Physiology and Allied Sciences (DIPAS) laboratory has developed the DIPCOVAN kit, which can detect spike as well as nucleocapsid (S&N) proteins of SARS-CoV-2 virus with a high sensitivity of 97 percent and specificity of 99 percent.

It will be commercially launched by DRDO's industry partner — Delhi-based Vanguard Diagnostics.

### Recycling Carbon technology by Bangalore startup receives TDB National Award 2021

**A Bangalore based startup 'Breathe Applied Sciences'** has received the National Award 2021 from Technology Development Board (TDB) for developing a commercial solution for conversion of CO<sub>2</sub> to chemicals and fuels.

#### Key Points

Breathe Applied Sciences, a startup incubated at Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research (JNCASR) developed efficient catalysts and methodologies for the conversion of CO<sub>2</sub> to methanol and other chemicals.

The research was carried out by Prof. Sebastian C Peter and his group from the New Chemistry Unit at JNCASR. He is also a co-founder and director of

Breathe Applied Sciences which was started from the generous funding from DST Nano Mission.

**About Technology Development Board (TDB):** It is a statutory body established by Government of India under Technology Development Board Act, 1995, to promote development and commercialization of indigenous technology and adaptation of imported technology for much wider application.

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### Award and Honors

### The Japanese Government awarded the "Order of the Rising Sun" to a Japanese teacher, Shyamala Ganesh

Shyamala Ganesh, a Bengaluru-based Japanese teacher, was recently awarded the "Order of the Rising Sun" by the Japanese government.

Shyamala is a Japanese instructor at the septuagenarian institution as well as the Ohara School of Ikebana in Bengaluru's RT Nagar.

**About 'Order of the Rising Sun':** It is conferred on persons with achievements in international relations, promotion of Japanese culture, environmental preservation, welfare or achievements in their fields. It was constituted by Japanese Emperor Meiji in 1875.

### Laureus World Sports Awards 2021

Japan's Naomi Osaka has been named Sportswoman of the Year at the Laureus World Sports Awards 2021, with fellow tennis player Rafael Nadal Sportsman of the Year.

**Laureus award winners:**

<b>World Sportswoman of the Year Award</b>	: Naomi Osaka
<b>World Sportsman of the Year Award</b>	: Rafael Nadal
<b>World Team of the Year Award</b>	: Bayern Munich
<b>World Breakthrough of the Year Award</b>	: Patrick Mahomes
<b>World Comeback of the Year Award</b>	: Max Parrot
<b>Sport for Good Award</b>	: Kickformore by Kickfair
<b>Lifetime Achievement Award</b>	: Billie Jean King
<b>Athlete Advocate of the Year Award</b>	: Lewis Hamilton
<b>Sporting Inspiration Award</b>	: Mohamed Salah
<b>Sporting Moment of the Year Award</b>	: Chris Nikic

**About the Laureus World Sports Awards:** It is an annual award ceremony honouring individuals and teams from the world of sports along with sporting achievements throughout the year. It was established in 1999 by Laureus Sport for Good Foundation founding patrons Daimler and Richemont.

### IREDA bags “Green Urja Award”

Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Ltd. (IREDA) has been conferred with “Green Urja Award” for being the Leading Public Institution in Financing Institution for Renewable Energy this year by Indian Chamber of Commerce (ICC).

The award was received by Shri Pradip Kumar Das, Chairman & Managing Director (CMD), IREDA from Dr. Ajay Mathur, Director General, International Solar Alliance.

IREDA gets the award for the pivotal and developmental role it plays in Green Energy Financing.

**About Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Limited (IREDA):**

It is a Mini Ratna (Category – I) Government of India Enterprise under the administrative control of Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE).

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

Dr. Tahera Qutbuddin, a professor of Arabic Literature at the University of Chicago, recently became the first person of Indian-origin to win the 15<sup>th</sup> Sheikh Zayed Book Award.

The Mumbai-born professor won the honour for her book '**Arabic Oration: Art and Function**', which was published by Brill Academic Publishers of Leiden in 2019.

**About Sheikh Zayed Book Award:** The Sheikh Zayed Book Award is a literary award begun in the UAE. The first award was in 2007. The award is considered to be the Nobel Prize of the Arab world.

## Shakuntala Haraksingh Thilsted of Indian descent wins World Food Prize 2021

Dr. Shakuntala Haraksingh Thilsted, a global nutrition expert of Indian descent has won the prestigious 2021 World Food Prize for her groundbreaking research in developing holistic, nutrition-sensitive approaches to aquaculture and food systems.

Thilsted, who is a native of Trinidad and Tobago and a citizen of Denmark, was born in 1949 in the Caribbean island of Trinidad in the small village of Reform.

**About the World Food Prize:** It was created by Nobel Peace Prize laureate Norman Borlaug in 1986 to recognize scientists and others who have improved the quality and availability of food.

## Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank receives 'International Invincible Gold Medal' 2021

'International Invincible Gold Medal' 2021 has been conferred on Union Education Minister Dr Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank.

Dr. Nishank has been recognised for his extraordinary commitment and outstanding service to humanity through his writings, social and public life.

The award will be formally presented to Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank on Guru Purnima this year (July 24, 2021).

The decision was made after due deliberations by a high-powered committee constituted under the leadership of **Maharshi Organisation's worldwide president Dr Tony Nader.**

## Mexico's Andrea Meza wins the Miss Universe 2020 title

26-year-old Andrea Meza from Mexico has won the Miss Universe 2020 crown. She was crowned by the former Miss Universe Zozibini Tunzi.

**India's Adline Castelino** became the third runner-up.

**Miss Universe 2020** was the 69th edition of the Miss Universe competition. The competition was held on May 16, 2021 at Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino in Hollywood, Florida, United States.

## Nagaland conservationist Nuklu Phom gets prestigious Whitley Awards 2021

An environmentalist from Nagaland's remote Longleng district, Nuklu Phom, has won Whitley Awards 2021, also known as the Green Oscar.

The award recognises Phom's efforts at establishing a '**Biodiversity Peace Corridor**' in Nagaland.

Nuklu Phom was the only Indian to win the prestigious annual award this year after a gap of three years.

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

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

The Union Culture Minister Prahlad Singh Patel stated that six Indian cultural heritage sites have been added to the UNESCO World Heritage Sites. The submissions were made by Archaeological Survey of India, which is responsible for the conservation and preservation of Indian monuments.

### The sites on the tentative list are:

Satpura Tiger Reserve, Madhya Pradesh  
Iconic riverfront of the historic city of Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh  
Hire Benkal, Megalithic site, Karnataka  
Maratha Military Architecture, Maharashtra  
Bhedaghat-Lametaghat in Narmada Valley, Madhya Pradesh  
Temples of Kanchipuram, Tamil Nadu

With the addition of these six sites, UNESCO has 48 proposals in the tentative list of India.

“As per Operational Guidelines, 2019, it is mandatory to put any monument/site on the Tentative List (TL) before it is considered for the final nomination dossier.

**Note:** Presently, there are **38 World Heritage Sites located in India**. India has the sixth largest number of sites in the world. Among these 38 UNESCO Heritage sites of India, the list includes **30 cultural sites, 7 natural sites, and 1 mixed site**.

## NBA creates Kareem Abdul-Jabbar social justice champion award

The National Basketball Association (NBA) announced the social justice champion award, naming it after Hall of Famer Kareem Abdul-Jabbar to recognize players who are making strides in the fight for social justice.

Each NBA team will nominate one player for consideration; from there, five finalists will be selected and ultimately one winner.

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

Bharat Ratna Professor C.N.R. Rao has received the Eni International Award 2020 for research into renewable energy sources and energy storage, also called the Energy Frontier award.

This is considered to be the Nobel Prize in Energy Research.

### Key Points

The Energy Frontiers award has been conferred for his work on metal oxides, carbon nanotubes, and other materials and two-dimensional systems.

The Eni Awards 2020 will be presented on 14 October 2021, during an official ceremony held at the Quirinal Palace in Rome, attended by the President of the Italian Republic, Sergio Mattarella.

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

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

### **Key Points**

Amartya Sen won the award for his research on famines and his theory of human development, welfare economics and the underlying mechanisms of poverty have contributed to the fight against injustice, inequality, disease and ignorance.

The award comprises a Joan Miro sculpture representing and symbolising the Award, a diploma, an insignia and a cash prize of 50,000 Euros.

### **Note:**

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

## **New Appointments**

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

Sanjay Kumar Mohanty has taken over the charge of new Member (Operations & Business Development) Railway Board (Ministry of Railways) and Ex. Officio Secretary to the Government of India.

Shri Mohanty was General Manager, South Eastern Railway prior to his elevation to the post of Railway Board Member.

Shri Mohanty worked in various important posts in Indian Railways viz. Principal Executive Director (Traffic Transportation)/Railway Board, Senior Deputy General Manager & Chief Vigilance Officer in East Coast Railway, Divisional Railway Manager in Khurda Road Division etc.

### **T Rabi Sankar appointed as the 4<sup>th</sup> Deputy Governor of RBI**

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) executive director T Rabi Sankar has been appointed as the 4<sup>th</sup> Deputy Governor of RBI for a period of three years.

Sankar currently serves as the executive director in charge of payments and settlement.

He succeeds B P Kanungo as the deputy governor, who retired on April 2 after getting a one year extension in his position.

**Note:** Other three deputy governors are Mahesh Kumar Jain, Michael Patra and Rajeshwar Rao.

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

In West Bengal, TMC chief Mamata Banerjee was sworn-in as the Chief Minister of the state for the third consecutive term.

Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar administered her oath of office and secrecy at a simple ceremony held at the Raj Bhavan in Kolkata.

In the 2021 West Bengal elections, the TMC secured 213 out of the 292 Assembly seats, while the BJP emerged as the second-largest party with 77 seats.

**Note:** Ms. Banerjee has become the second woman in the country to be sworn in as Chief Minister of any state consecutively for three terms after former Chief Minister of Delhi, Sheila Dixit.

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

The Hon'ble President of India has authorized Justice (Retired) Prafulla Chandra Pant, Member, National Human Rights Commission, NHRC, India, to act as its Chairperson w.e.f. 25th April, 2021.

Prior to his appointment as Member, NHRC on 22 April, 2019, he was a Judge of the Supreme Court of India from 13th August, 2014 to 29th August, 2017.

He held the position of Chief Justice of the High Court of Meghalaya from September 20, 2013 to August 12, 2014.

**About National Human Rights Commission of India (NHRC):** It is a statutory public body constituted on 12 October 1993 under the Protection of Human Rights Ordinance of 28 September 1993. It was given a statutory basis by the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993.

### **MK Stalin takes oath as Tamil Nadu Chief Minister**

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

### **N Rangasamy takes oath as Puducherry Chief Minister**

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

Mr Rangasamy has become Chief Minister for the fourth time.

### **Himanta Biswa Sarma sworn in as new Assam Chief Minister**

Senior BJP leader Himanta Biswa Sarma was sworn in as the 15th Chief Minister of Assam.

Governor Jagdish Mukhi administered him the oath of office.

Along with Mr. Sarma, 13 ministers also took oath. 10 ministers from the BJP, while 2 ministers from Asom Gana Parishad and 1 from UPPL are included in the Himanta Biswa Sarma ministry.

A writer and sports administrator, Shri Sarma is also holding the post of Convenor of the North East Democratic Alliance, NEDA.

## Ujjwala Singhania takes over as 38th National President FICCI FLO

Ujjwala Singhania has been appointed as the 38th National President of **FICCI Ladies Organization (FLO)**, the oldest women-led & women-centric business chamber of Southeast Asia.

**About FLO:** It was established in 1983, as a division of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) which is the apex body of industry and commerce in India.

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

Prior to being promoted as ED, Jose J. Kattoor was heading Bengaluru Regional Office of the Reserve Bank as Regional Director for Karnataka.

As Executive Director, Shri Kattoor will look after the Human Resource Management Department, Corporate Strategy and Budget Department and Rajbhasha Department.

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

Vice President, United States, Kamala Harris swore Bill Nelson in as the 14th NASA administrator.

Nelson currently serves on the NASA Advisory Council.

**Facts about NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration):** It is an independent agency of the U.S. federal government responsible for the civilian space program, as well as aeronautics and space research.

**Formed:** July 29, 1958

**Headquarters:** Washington, D.C.

**Administrator:** Bill Nelson

## Martin Griffiths appointed UN humanitarian chief

The UN chief, Antonio Guterres, has appointed veteran British diplomat Martin Griffiths, a seasoned negotiator with wide global experience, as the new Chief at the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

Griffiths is currently serving as the UN special envoy for Yemen.

**About United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA):** It is a United Nations body established in December 1991 by the General Assembly to strengthen the international response to complex emergencies and natural disasters.

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

Narinder Batra has been re-elected as the president of the International Hockey Federation (FIH). This will be Batra's second term.

Batra became the first non-European president of the FIH in 2016.

Narinder Batra is also the president of the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) and an International Olympic Committee (IOC) member.

**Facts about FIH (International Hockey Federation):**

**Headquarters:** Lausanne, Switzerland

**Founded:** 7 January 1924

### **Former Atomic Energy Commission chairman Srikumar Banerjee passes away**

Srikumar Banerjee, former chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, passed away at 70.

He retired as chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission and secretary of the Department of Atomic Energy in 2012.

Banerjee also served as the director of the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) for six years till 2010.

He was a recipient of many awards in his career, including the Padma Shri in 2005 and the Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Award in 1989.

### **Martha Koome appointed Kenya's first woman chief justice**

Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta has appointed Court of Appeal Judge Martha Koome as the East African country's first woman chief justice and head of the judiciary.

Koome was appointed as a judge in 2003 and served on the African Union Committee on the Rights and Welfare of Children between 2005 and 2010.

### **Subodh Kumar Jaiswal takes charge as Director of CBI**

Subodh Kumar Jaiswal took charge as the Director of Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

He has been appointed as Director for a period of two years.

**Key Points**

Subodh Kumar Jaiswal, a 1985 batch IPS officer of Maharashtra cadre, was selected by a high-powered committee led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and comprising Chief Justice of India NV Ramana and Congress Lok Sabha leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury.

Mr Jaiswal also worked as director general of Central Industrial Security Force (CISF).

**Appointment of CBI Director:**

The Director of the CBI is appointed as per section 4A of the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act of 1946.

**Appointment Committee:** The Central Government shall appoint the Director of CBI on the recommendation of a three-member committee consisting of the Prime Minister as Chairperson, the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha and the Chief Justice of India or Judge of the Supreme Court nominated by him.

**The Delhi Special Police Establishment (Amendment) Act, 2014** made a change in the composition of the committee related to the appointment of the Director of CBI.

It states that where there is no recognized leader of opposition in the Lok Sabha, then the leader of the single largest opposition party in the Lok Sabha would be a member of that committee.

### Himanta Biswa Sarma elected to BWF Council member

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

**Key Points**

**Himanta Biswa Sarma** is an Indian politician and the **current Chief Minister of Assam**.

Sarma is also the Vice President of Badminton Asia.

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

**Facts about Badminton World Federation (BWF):**

It is the international governing body for the sport of badminton recognised by the International Olympic Committee.

**Headquarters:** Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

**Founded:** 5 July 1934

**Membership:** 194 member associations

## Reports and Indices

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

The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) has recommended for the second year in a row that the US Government put India on a list 'Country of Particular concern (CPC)' for the worst violations of religious freedoms in 2020.

The annual report of the USCIRF also recommended to redesignate 10 nations as "countries of particular concern".

These are Burma (Myanmar), China, Eritrea, Iran, Nigeria, North Korea, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan.

In addition to India, USCIRF in its non-binding report recommended the State Department to add three more countries to the list: Russia, Syria and Vietnam.

The recommendations of USCIRF are non-binding to the US Government.

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

New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Arden topped the Fortune's list of the world's 50 'Greatest Leaders' 2021.

CEO of Serum Institute of India, **Adar Poonawalla** is the only Indian among the top 10 names on the list. He is placed in the **10th spot**.

#### **Top 10 Fortune's list of the World's 50 'Greatest Leaders' 2021:**

Jacinda Ardern  
mRNA Pioneers  
Dan Schulman  
Dr. John Nkengasong  
NBA Rescuers  
Jessica Tan  
Justin Welby  
Stacey Abrams  
Reshorna Fitzpatrick  
Adar Poonawalla

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

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

**1 rank:** Iceland

**2 rank:** Finland

**3 rank:** Norway

**140 rank:** India

Afghanistan was at the last position of 156.

In South Asia, Bangladesh was the top performer with a global ranking of 65, followed by Nepal at 106.

**Note: India** has been ranked 112 in WEF's Global Gender Gap Report 2020.

The Global Gender Gap Index benchmarks the evolution of gender-based gaps among four key dimensions (Economic Participation and Opportunity, Educational Attainment, Health and Survival, and Political Empowerment).

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

In this special edition of GWEC's 16<sup>th</sup> annual flagship report ahead of the crucial COP26 conference in November 2021, the Global Wind Report 2021 highlights wind power's role.

2020 was the best year in history for the global wind industry with 93 GW of new capacity installed.

Today, there is now 743 GW of wind power capacity worldwide, helping to avoid over 1.1 billion tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> globally.

**India** is the world's fourth-largest onshore wind market by cumulative installations with nearly 38 GW of capacity.

The government has set an **ambitious target of 175 GW of installed renewable energy capacity by 2022**, which calls for current wind capacity to nearly double within the next two years, totaling 60 GW of onshore wind and 5 GW of offshore wind.

## Schemes

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

The Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MoFPI) has issued detailed operational scheme guidelines for 'Production Linked Incentive Scheme for Food Processing Industry' (PLISFPI).

Union Minister for Food Processing Industries Shri Narendra Singh Tomar launched an online portal for the beneficiaries.

As a part of Prime Minister's announcement of Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan, Government of India has approved a new Central Sector Scheme namely 'Production Linked Incentive Scheme for Food Processing Industry' for implementation during 2021-22 to 2026-27 with an outlay of Rs. 10,900 crore.

Ministry of Food Processing Industries is inviting applications for availing sales based incentives and grants for undertaking Branding & Marketing activities abroad under the scheme from three categories of Applicants:

**Category-I:** Applicants are large entities who apply for Incentive based on Sales and Investment Criteria. Applicants under this category could undertake Branding & Marketing activities abroad also and apply for grant under the scheme with a common application.

**Category-II:** SMEs Applicants manufacturing innovative/ organic products who apply for PLI Incentive based on Sales.

**Category-III:** Applicants applying solely for grant for undertaking Branding & Marketing activities abroad.

## Odisha's Gopabandhu Sambadika Swasthya Bima Yojana

Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik declared working journalists of the state as frontline COVID-19 warriors.

As many as 6,944 working journalists of the state have been covered under the **Gopabandhu Sambadika Swasthya Bima Yojana.**

**About Gopabandhu Sambadika Swasthya Bima Yojana:** It is a Health Insurance Scheme for Journalists. Under this scheme, all the working journalists will get an insurance coverage of Rs. 2 lakh per annum. The insurance coverage will be applicable for cashless treatment in all Public/ Private Hospitals.

Odisha govt. has also announced an ex-gratia of Rs 15 lakh for the next of kin of journalists who die of COVID-19 while performing their duty under Gopabandhu Sambadika Swasthya Bima Yojana.

This scheme was made operational by the Odisha state government from 1 June 2018.

## Van Dhan Yojana in Tribal Clusters

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

### Key Points

A dedicated team from TRIFED along with the NITI Aayog team will work out the follow-up-plan for the implementation of the Van Dhan Yojana in each of the 39 Tribal Aspirational Districts.

These include districts in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Odisha, Telangana and Tripura.

As a part of this association, a special focus will be on these aspirational districts where tribal population constitutes more than 50%.

Under the expansion plan of tribal development program, an additional 9900 VDVKs subsumed into 659 VDVK Clusters spread out in these tribal aspirational districts are envisaged.

### About Van Dhan Yojana:

The Ministry of Tribal Affairs and TRIFED launched the Van Dhan scheme in 2018.

The Van Dhan Vikas Yojana is a programme for value addition, branding & marketing of Minor Forest Produces by establishing Van Dhan Kendras to facilitate creation of sustainable livelihoods for the forest-based tribes.

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

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

### Key Points

The proposed National Mission on biomass will contribute to the **National Clean Air Programme (NCAP).**

It would further support the energy transition in the country and targets to move towards cleaner energy sources.

It aims to address the issue of air pollution due to farm stubble burning and to reduce carbon footprints of thermal power generation.

**Structure:**

The Mission would have a Steering Committee headed by Secretary (Power) comprising of all stakeholders including representatives from Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas, Ministry of New & Renewable Energy etc.

**NTPC (National Thermal Power Corporation Limited)** will play a larger role in providing logistic and infrastructure support in the proposed National Mission.

**Other Initiatives to reduce Air Pollution:**

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

**About Biomass:**

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

## Important Days

### May 01, International Labour Day

May 01 is the International Day of Workers or International Labour Day dedicated to workers across the world.

The day, also called May Day, is also observed as a public holiday in many countries.

Labour Day in India is celebrated as Antarrashtriya Shramik Diwas.

Labour Day has its origins in the labour union movement in the United States in the 19th Century. In 1889, the Marxist International Socialist Congress adopted a resolution for a great international demonstration in which they demanded that the workers should not be made to work for more than 8 hours a day.

### May 03, World Press Freedom Day

This year's World Press Freedom Day theme is "**Information as a Public Good**".

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

### World Asthma Day

World Asthma Day (WAD) (May 5, 2021) is organized by the Global Initiative for Asthma, (GINA), a World Health Organization collaborative organization founded in 1993.

This year's World Asthma Day theme is "**Uncovering Asthma Misconceptions**".

**About Asthma:** It is a condition of chronic disease which hinders the respiratory system, causing difficulty in breathing. This can make breathing difficult, can trigger frequent coughs and wheeze.

**Note:** For this year only, World Asthma Day will be held on Wednesday, May 5. Starting in 2022, World Asthma Day will be held on the first Tuesday in May.

### May 07, World Athletics Day

World Athletics Day is celebrated every year on May 7 to spread awareness among the youths regarding the importance of fitness and boost their participation in athletics.

This day was introduced by the **International Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF)** as a social responsibility project 'Athletic for a better World'.

This day was introduced by the then President of IAAF Primo Nebiolo in the year 1996.

IAAF, an international governing body for the field of athletics and sports, organizes and sponsors World Athletics Day.

### May 08, World Migratory Bird Day

The theme for this World Migratory Bird Day is **Sing, Fly, Soar – Like a bird!**

**World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD)** is an annual awareness-raising campaign highlighting the need for the conservation of migratory birds and their habitats.

All these activities can also be undertaken at any time of the year because of countries or regions observing the peak of migrations at different times, but the main days for the international celebrations on the **second Saturday in May and in October**.

World Migratory Bird Day was initiated in 2006 by the Secretariat of the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA) in collaboration with the Secretariat of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS).

The AEWA and the CMS are the two international wildlife treaties administered by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

### May 08, World Thalassaemia Day

**World Thalassaemia Day** is observed on May 8 every year, to mark attention towards Thalassaemia, a blood disorder characterized by abnormal formation of haemoglobin.

This year's theme is **“Addressing Health Inequalities Across the Global Thalassaemia Community”**.

In India, every year over 10,000 children are diagnosed with Thalassaemia. Thalassaemia patients are mostly children who go through painful blood transfusions for several years in their life. A blood stem cell transplant is the only curative intervention available for a transfusion-free status with a normal life span for Thalassaemia patients.

### May 08, World Red Cross Day

The **World Red Cross Day** is celebrated to commemorate the principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

The theme of the World Red Cross Day 2021 is **Together we are #unstoppable!** World Red Cross Day is also known as World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day. The first **Red Cross Day** was celebrated on May 8, 1948.

Red Cross Day is the birth anniversary of Henry Dunant, the founder of International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). Henry Dunant was also the recipient of the first Nobel Peace Prize.

### May 11, National Technology Day

This year the theme of the National Technology Day 2021 is “Science and Technology for a Sustainable Future”.

On May 11, 1998, India successfully fired an Operation Shakti missile at the Indian Army's Pokhran Test Range in Rajasthan.

This made India the sixth country to join the nuclear club of nations.

Based on these immense breakthrough achievements by the engineers, scientists and technicians of the country, Atal Bihari Vajpayee announced May 11 as National Technology Day in 1999.

### May 12, International Nurses Day

International Nurses Day (IND) is an international day observed around the world on 12 May (the anniversary of Florence Nightingale's birth) of each year, to mark the contributions that nurses make to society.

The theme for the 2021 is **Nurses: A Voice to Lead - A vision for future healthcare.**

### May 21, Anti-Terrorism Day

The Anti-Terrorism Day is observed to spread the message of peace and humanity.

Anti-Terrorism Day is observed every year on May 21, the death anniversary of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi.

In 1991, on this day he was assassinated by the LTTE.

**Note:** In 2020, India ranked eighth on the Global Terrorism Index (GTI), one spot behind Pakistan.

The United Nations observes **International Day of Remembrance and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism on 21st August.**

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

In 2001, the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) adopted the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity and in December 2002, the UN General Assembly declared 21 May to be the World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development.

The Day will provide us with an opportunity to deepen understanding of the values of Cultural Diversity and to learn to “live together” better.

### UN Global Road Safety Week (UNGRSW) 2021

The **6th UN Global Road Safety Week**, held **17-23 May 2021**, highlights the benefits of low-speed urban streets.

The **theme** of UN Global Road Safety Week 2021 is ‘**Streets for Life #Love30**’.

The Week will be the occasion to garner policy commitments at national and local levels to deliver **30 km/h** speed limits in urban areas; generate local support for such low speed measures in order to create safe, healthy, green and liveable cities; and officially launch the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021-2030 and its Global Plan.

**Note:** It is a biennial global road safety campaign hosted by WHO (World Health Organisation).

The first UN Global Road Safety Week was celebrated in 2007.

### May 17, World Telecommunication and Information Society Day

World Telecommunication and Information Society Day (WTISD) has been celebrated annually every 17 May since 1969 to mark the founding of ITU (International Telecommunication Union) and the signing of the first International Telegraph Convention in 1865.

The theme of WTISD 2021 is "**Accelerating Digital Transformation in challenging times**".

### May 15, International Day of Families

The International Day of Families is observed on the 15 May every year.

The Day was proclaimed by the UN General Assembly in 1993 and reflects the importance the international community attaches to families.

The theme of 2021 is "**Families and New Technologies**".

### May 22, International Day for Biological Diversity

The International Day for Biological Diversity (or World Biodiversity Day) is a United Nations–sanctioned international day for the promotion of biodiversity issues. It is currently held on May 22.

This year 2021 the theme is "**We are part of the solution**".

## May 29, International Day of UN Peacekeepers

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

### Key Points

The **theme** of 2021 is “**The road to a lasting peace: Leveraging the power of youth for peace and security.**”

The International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers was established by the General Assembly in 2002.

### Dag Hammarskjold Medal Award:

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

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

## May 31, World No Tobacco Day

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

### Key Points

The theme of World No Tobacco Day 2021 is “**Commit to quit.**”

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

### About National Tobacco Control Programme (NTCP):

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

## Books and Authors

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

'Another Dozen Stories' by Satyajit Ray is translated from Bengali to English by Indrani Majumdar and it was released on May 2, 2021, the 100 birth anniversary of Satyajit Ray, one of the greatest filmmakers.

Aimed for kids aged nine years and above, the book is a collection of 12 magical, bizarre and spooky stories.

Actress Sharmila Tagore has penned the foreword of the book.

The book was published by Penguin India.

**Note:** Another book by Satyajit Ray will also be released by Penguin India. Titled '3 Rays: Stories from Satyajit Ray', the book is a collection of Satyajit Ray's previously unpublished autobiographical writings, stories, poems, illustrations, fiction, and non-fiction works. '3 Rays' is expected to be out on May 10, 2021.

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

A book titled "Sikkim: A History of Intrigue and Alliance" written by Preet Mohan Singh Malik, Former diplomat, has been released.

It was published by HarperCollins India.

The book's objective is to clarify and establish the primacy of strategic issues that lay behind India's decision to accept the demand that Sikkim be merged with India.

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

Veteran author, Ruskin Bond, will release the book 'All Time Favourites For Children' on his 87th birthday on May 19, 2021.

It is published under the Puffin imprint of Penguin Books.

It is Classic Collection of 25+ most-loved, great stories by famous award-winning author (Illustrated, must-read fiction short stories for kids).

Ruskin Bond is an Indian author of British descent.

He was awarded the Sahitya Academy Award in 1992. He was awarded the Padma Shri in 1999 and the Padma Bhushan in 2014.

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

#### Why in News?

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

#### Key Points

**Shivshankar Menon** is an Indian diplomat, who served as **National Security Adviser of India** under Prime Minister of India Manmohan Singh. He had previously served as the Foreign Secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs.

In the book, he addresses the changes in India's foreign policy: since independence to the present day, and the many challenges faced as the nation seeks to find its way in the increasingly complex world of Asian geopolitics.

The book is published by Penguin Random House India.

## Sports

### F1 Portuguese Grand Prix 2021

**British Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes)** won the F1 Portuguese Grand Prix 2021 held at Algarve International Circuit in Portimao, Portugal.

**Max Verstappen** (Red Bull) got second position and **Valtteri Bottas** (Mercedes) got third position.

**Note:** This was Hamilton's 97th career Formula 1 victory.

### Mark Selby becomes World Snooker Champion for 4th time

In Snooker, English professional player Mark Selby has become the World Snooker Champion for the 4th time.

Selby won the Championship defeating Shaun Murphy by 18-15 victory at Crucible Theatre, England.

Selby won the Championship title in 2014, 2016, 2017 also.

### Sri Lanka Thisara Perera announces retirement from international cricket

Sri Lanka all-rounder and former captain, Thisara Perera announced his retirement from international cricket.

Thisara Perera, who made his international debut in 2009, has featured in 6 Tests, 166 ODIs and 84 T20Is in his 12-year-long international career.

Perera has hit 2,338 runs and picked up 135 wickets in ODI cricket while he managed 51 wickets and 1204 runs in T20I cricket.

Thisara Perera was also part of Sri Lanka's 2014 T20 World Cup-winning team.

### F1 Spanish Grand Prix 2021

**British Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes) won the F1 Spanish Grand Prix 2021** held at Circuit de Barcelona-Catalunya, Spain.

**Max Verstappen** (Red Bull) got second position and **Valtteri Bottas** (Mercedes) got third position.

**Note:** Lewis Hamilton claimed the 100th pole position of his career in Spanish Grand Prix 2021.

### 2021 Madrid Open (Tennis)

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

**List of winners:**

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

## 2021 Italian Open (Tennis)

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

### List of winners:

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

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

## Manchester City wins 2020-21 Premier League Title

In the English Premier League, Manchester City was crowned Premier League champions for the third time in four seasons after defeating Manchester United. Manchester City has now won three Premier League titles and eight major trophies under Guardiola, who last year signed a new two-year contract to remain at the club until 2023.

**About Premier League:** It, often referred to as the English Premier League (The Football Association Premier League Limited), is the top level of the English football league system.

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

The 2022 FIFA under-17 Women's World Cup will be held in India from October 11 to 30, 2022.

India was set to host the 2021 U-17 Women's World Cup before it was cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Council also approved dates for the FIFA U-20 Women's World Cup Costa Rica 2022 (10-28 August 2022), as well as the FIFA Arab Cup 2021, taking place between 19 and 25 June 2021.

**Facts about FIFA (Federation Internationale de Football Association):**

**Founded:** 21 May 1904

**Headquarters:** Zurich, Switzerland

**Membership:** 211 national associations

**President:** Gianni Infantino

## Obituaries

### Former Attorney General Soli Sorabjee passes away

Former Attorney General of India and renowned jurist Soli Sorabjee passed away. Serving as a legal professional for nearly seven decades, Sorabjee occupied the highest office of the attorney general of India twice – first from 1989-90 and then from 1998-2004.

He was awarded with Padma Vibhushan.

From 1998-2004, he was also the Chairman of the UN sub-committee on the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights.

### TV journalist Rohit Sardana passes away

Television journalist Rohit Sardana, who was an executive editor and TV news anchor with the Aaj Tak channel of the India Today Group, passed away.

Sardana was a recipient of the 2018 Ganesh Vidyarthi Puraskar Award.

### Sitar Maestro Pandit Debu Chaudhuri passes away

Pandit Devabrata (Debu) Chaudhuri performed across the world for over six decades, winning several honours, including the Padmabhushan, the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award for his contribution in the field of music.

He was also an educationist and author.

### Former Jammu and Kashmir Governor Jagmohan passes away

Former Union Minister and Former Governor of Jammu and Kashmir Jagmohan passed away.

A civil servant, Jagmohan also served as Lieutenant Governor of Delhi and Goa. He was nominated to the Rajya Sabha once and represented New Delhi in Lok Sabha thrice.

He was honoured with Padma Shri in 1971, Padma Bhushan in 1977 and Padma Vibhushan in 2016.

### **Dr. Philipose Mar Chrysostom Mar Thoma Valiya Metropolitan passes away**

Dr. Philipose Mar Chrysostom Mar Thoma Valiya Metropolitan, one of India's well-known religious leaders and the oldest serving Bishop passed away at 103.

An outstanding religious leader and a humanitarian, Dr. Philipose, was awarded the Padma Bhushan by President Ram Nath Kovind in 2018.

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

Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) chief and former union minister Chaudhary Ajit Singh passed away.

Ajit Singh was a seven-time Member of Parliament from Baghpat, Uttar Pradesh and served as Union Minister for Civil Aviation, Agriculture and Food Processing Industries in different governments.

He had served in the governments of VP Singh, PV Narasimha Rao, Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Manmohan Singh.

Ajit Singh, the son of former Prime Minister Chaudhary Charan Singh, began his political career as a Rajya Sabha member in 1986.

### **Veteran music composer Vanraj Bhatia passes away**

The 93-year-old Padma Shri awardee, who scored the music for Shyam Benegal classics like 'Ankur' and 'Bhumika' and TV series 'Yatra' and 'Bharat Ek Khoj', passed away.

Among the awards he won the National Award for Best Music for Govind Nihalani's TV series 'Tamas' and also the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award.

He received India's fourth-highest civilian honour, the Padma Shri in 2012.

### **Olympian and former India hockey coach MK Kaushik passes away**

Maharaj Krishan Kaushik was a member of the India national field hockey team and coach of the Indian hockey team.

He was a member of the team when it won the gold medal at the 1980 Summer Olympics in Moscow.

In 1998, he received the Arjuna Award.

For his coaching contribution to Indian hockey he received the Dronacharya Award in 2002.

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

Referred to as the 'Iron Lady' in Kerala politics, legendary Communist KR Gowri Amma passed away at 102.

She was a member of the world's first democratically elected Communist government cabinet led by Communist legend E.M.S. Nampoothiripad in 1957.

In her long career she was a State Minister for 16 years in six cabinets of both the Communists and the Congress.

She was the first revenue minister of Kerala.

### **Eminent Assamese writer Homen Borgohain passes away**

Eminent writer, veteran journalist, Homen Borgohain passed away.

Homen Borgohain was awarded the Sahitya Akademi Award in the Assamese language for his novel Pita Putra in 1978, but he returned his Sahitya Akademi award in 2015 in protest against the lack of tolerance being created in the Indian society.

He was the president of Asom Sahitya Sabha from 2001-2002.

### **Former Rajasthan Chief Minister Jagannath Pahadia passes away**

Veteran Congress leader and former Rajasthan Chief Minister Jagannath Pahadia passed away at the age of 89.

Pahadia was the Chief Minister of Rajasthan in 1980-1981 and also a former governor of Haryana and Bihar.

### **Former Indian Medical Association chief Dr KK Aggarwal passes away**

Former national president of the Indian Medical Association (IMA) and Padma Shree awardee Dr KK Aggarwal died.

Dr Aggarwal was awarded Padma Shree in 2010. He was also awarded the Dr BC Roy award in 2005.

He was currently president of the Heart Care Foundation of India.

### **Noted Tamil writer Ki Rajanarayanan passes away**

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

### **Distinguished mathematician Padma Bhushan Prof. M S Narasimhan passes away**

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

### **Times Group chairperson Indu Jain passes away**

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

### **Noted environmentalist Sunderlal Bahuguna passes away**

Environmentalist and Chipko Movement pioneer Sunderlal Bahuguna passed away at 94. He was awarded Padma Vibhushan in 2009.

**About Chipko Movement:** It was a forest conservation movement in India. It began in 1973 in Uttarakhand, then a part of Uttar Pradesh (at the foothills of Himalayas) and went on to become a rallying point for many future environmental movements all over the world.

### **India's first Dronacharya awardee coach OP Bhardwaj passes away**

India's first Dronacharya awardee coach OP Bhardwaj (Om Prakash Bhardwaj) passed away.

In 1985, he was awarded the Dronacharya Award, India's highest award in the field of coaching of sports and athletics.  
Bhardwaj was India's national boxing coach from 1968 to 1989 and also served as a national selector.

## Miscellaneous

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

Reliance Industry Limited's (RIL) technology wing Jio Platforms and e-learning startup Byju's have made it to the 'TIME100 Most Influential Companies', which is a new list and an expansion of the TIME100 franchise.

The list comprises companies across various sectors including health care, entertainment, transportation, technology and more. According to the magazine, the list has been prepared after evaluation of key factors including relevance, impact, innovation, leadership, ambition and success.

The magazine has listed RIL's Jio Platform for "leading digital transformation" in India.

The magazine has credited Byju's for expanding e-learning in India. The company founded by Byju Raveendran has seen a sharp rise in popularity in 2020 as demand for online learning rose in the middle of the pandemic.

Byju's has also been credited for getting a foothold in markets outside India including the US, UK, Indonesia, Mexico, and Brazil.

**Note:** Even in India, Byju's is aggressively expanding and recently acquired Aakash Educational Services, a leading test-prep school, for almost \$1 billion.

### Guru Tegh Bahadur's 400th Prakash Purab

The auspicious occasion of Guru Tegh Bahadur's 400th Prakash Purab was celebrated on May 1, 2021.

He was the 9th of the 10 Gurus that founded the Sikh religion. He was also considered to be the leader of Sikhs from 1665 until his demise in 1675.

**Note:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Sis Ganj Gurudwara in Delhi and offered prayers on the 400th birth anniversary of Guru Teg Bahadur.

The gurudwara was built by Sikhs at the site where the ninth guru was beheaded by the Mughals in 1675.

### Microsoft to retire Internet Explorer in 2022

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

#### Key Points

The future of Internet Explorer on Windows 10 is in Microsoft Edge.

Internet Explorer-based websites and applications will continue to work on the new Microsoft Edge (Internet Explorer) mode until 2029.

**Microsoft Edge** is a more secure, faster, and modern internet browser that will replace Internet Explorer on certain versions of Windows 10.

**Internet Explorer (IE)**, launched in 1995 by Microsoft, is a series of web browsers that operate on Windows.

## Vesak Global Celebrations 2021

### Why in News

Prime Minister Narendra Modi delivered a keynote address on the occasion of Vesak Global Celebrations on Buddha Purnima (VESAK - 2565th Buddha Purnima Diwas)

**The International Buddhist Confederation (IBC)** and Ministry of culture have been organising the event in a grand manner every year and are working together to promote the Teachings and philosophy of Bhagwan Buddha.

### Key Points

#### About Buddha Purnima:

It is celebrated to mark the birth of Gautam Buddha, the founder of Buddhism.

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

#### About International Buddhist Confederation (IBC):

IBC is the biggest religious Buddhist confederation.

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

#### About Gautam Buddha:

Gautam Buddha was born as Siddhartha Gautama in circa 563 BCE, in Lumbini and belonged to the Sakya clan.

He attained Bodhi (enlightenment) under a pipal tree at Bodhgaya, Bihar.

He gave his first sermon in the village of Sarnath, near Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh.

This event is known as **Dharma Chakra Pravartana**.

He died at the age of 80 in 483 BCE at Kushinagara, Uttar Pradesh. The event is known as **Mahaparinirvana**.

#### About Buddhism:

Buddhism started in India over 2,600 years ago.

The main teachings of Buddhism are encapsulated in the basic concept of four noble truths or ariya-sachchani and eight-fold path or ashtangika marg.

#### UNESCO's Heritage Sites related to Buddhism:

Buddhist Monuments at Sanchi, Madhya Pradesh

Archaeological Site of Nalanda Mahavihara at Nalanda, Bihar

Ajanta Caves, Aurangabad, Maharashtra.

Mahabodhi Temple Complex at Bodh Gaya, Bihar

## Mohali International Hockey stadium renamed after Balbir Singh Senior

### Why in the News?

The Mohali International Hockey Stadium was renamed after the legendary Balbir Singh Senior on the occasion of his first death anniversary (May 25).

### Key Points

The stadium would be known as “**Olympian Balbir Singh Senior International Hockey Stadium**”.

Balbir was part of the Indian teams that won gold at the 1948 London Olympics, Helsinki 1952 and Melbourne 1956.

In 1957, Singh was the first sports personality to be honoured with the Padma Shri award.

## Monthly Current Affairs April 2021

### Important News: State

#### Maithri Aquatech sets up the 'World's First Mobile Water from Air Kiosk and Water Knowledge Centre' in the smart city Visakhapatnam

This initiative is supported by GVMC (Greater Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation) and project SEWAH (Sustainable Enterprises for Water and Health) - an alliance between USAID (United States Agency for International Development) and SWN (Safe Water Network).

The kiosk will provide clean, mineral-enriched potable water harvested from the air by making use of Maithri Aquatech's own MEGHDOOT solution as a source to generate water with no dependency on scarce groundwater as well as surface water resources.

**Maithri Aquatech** is a Hyderabad-based company. The company has developed an innovative solution called **MEGHDOOT** which can generate water by harvesting the moisture in the air.

#### 'Anandam: The Center for Happiness' in IIM Jammu

Union Minister of Education **Ramesh Pokhriyal** inaugurates 'Anandam: The Center for Happiness' at **Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Jammu** virtually.

Lieutenant Governor, Jammu and Kashmir, Shri Manoj Sinha; Founder, Art of Living Foundation, Sri Sri Ravi Shankar virtually attended the occasion.

It aligns with the **National Education Policy 2020** that aims to transform India's education system by 2021.

'**Anandam: The Center for Happiness**' will be divided into five broad categories, namely, Counselling, Holistic wellness, Elective courses on Happiness Development, Research and Leadership & Faculty Development.

## Uttar Pradesh government approves scheme offering affordable rental housing for urban migrants and poor

The Uttar Pradesh government will start the **Affordable Rental Housing and Complexes (ARHC) scheme** for poor people living in cities and a proposal to this effect was approved by the state cabinet presided over by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.

**About ARHC scheme:** It has been launched by the government of India through the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs under the 'self-reliant India' campaign.

**Note:** The scheme will be implemented under **two models** in the state.

**Model one** involves converting vacant houses funded by the central or state government into an ARHC through an agreement.

Under the **second model**, ARHC will be built, operated and maintained by public/private entities on their available vacant land.

## Maharashtra government declares Amboli as biodiversity heritage site

The Maharashtra government declared an area at **Amboli in Western ghats in Sindhudurg district**, where a rare freshwater fish species was discovered, as a biodiversity heritage site.

Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray's son Tejas Thackeray, who is a wildlife researcher, and his team had discovered the new freshwater fish species - **Schistura Hiranyakeshi** near Amboli in Sawantwadi tehsil of Sindhudurg district.

The discoveries of the freshwater fish species were published in the **International Journal of Ichthyology** in the October 2020 edition by Tejas Thackeray and co-authors.

**Other Biodiversity Heritage Site in Maharashtra:**

Glory of Allapalli in Gadchiroli district, Landor Khori Park in Jalgaon, Ganesh Khind in Pune, Myristica Swamp Vegetation in Sindhudurg district

## Andhra Pradesh Governor Biswabhusan Harichandan receives 'Kalinga Ratna' award 2021

Venkaiah Naidu, Vice President of India presented the 'Kalinga Ratna' award for the year 2021 to Andhra Pradesh Governor Biswa Bhusan Harichandan for literary works.

The award was presented during the 600th Birth Anniversary of Adikabi Sarala Das and 40th Annual Celebrations of Sarala Sahitya Sansad during the programme held at Sarala Bhawan in Cuttack.

The Kalinga Ratna award carried a silver statue of Goddess Saraswati and a copper plaque.

### Ghaziabad Municipal Corporation in Uttar Pradesh lists at BSE

Ghaziabad Municipal Corporation in Uttar Pradesh listed itself at BSE (Bombay Stock Exchange) and successfully raised Rs. 150 Crores by issuing Municipal Bond on Private Placement Basis using BSEBOND.

This is the **first ever green bond** issuance by any Municipal Corporation in the country.

**Note:** Ghaziabad Municipal Corporation is the **second Municipal Corporation** to raise funds in the state of Uttar Pradesh.

Earlier, **Lucknow Municipal Corporation** had listed itself at BSE.

**About BSE Limited:** It, formerly known as the **Bombay Stock Exchange Ltd.**, is an Indian stock exchange located at Dalal Street, Mumbai. Established in 1875, it is Asia's oldest stock exchange.

### Rajasthan becomes first state to provide health insurance for all its residents

The state began the registration for **Chiranjeevi Health Insurance Scheme**, announced by Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot in the state budget 2021-22.

Rajasthan has become the first state in the country, where each family will get health insurance of Rs 5 lakh each year.

**Facts about Rajasthan:**

**Governor:** Kalraj Mishra

**Capital:** Jaipur

**Chief Minister:** Ashok Gehlot

### India's first farm-based solar power plant comes up in Rajasthan

The first farm-based solar power plant under the Prime Minister's Kisan Urja Suraksha Evum Utthan Mahabhiyan (PM-KUSUM) scheme has come up in Jaipur district's Kotputli tehsil with a provision for production of 17 lakh units of electricity every.

Rajasthan Renewable Energy Corporation Limited (RRECL) commissioned the first of India's farm based solar power projects under the KUSUM Scheme.

A 1 MW project established on 3.5 acres of farmland in Bhaloji village, Kotputli tehsil in Jaipur, it is also the first of 623 farm based solar projects selected by RRECL

for generating 722 MW capacity in Rajasthan under the first phase of Kusum scheme.

**About Pradhan Mantri Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Utthaan Mahabhiyan (PM-KUSUM) Yojana:** It was launched by the Government of India to increase the income of farmers and provide sources for irrigation and de-dieselising the agricultural sector.

The scheme was launched by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) in 2019 for setting up solar pumps and other new power plants across the country.

## Rs 110 crore ROPAX Jetty Project to come up on river Dhamra in Odisha

Ministry of Ports, Shipping & Waterways has accorded administrative approval for sanction of Rs 50.30 crore for developing all-weather ROPAX (Roll-on/Roll-off Passenger) Jetty and allied infrastructure connecting **Kaninali in Bhadrak district & Talachua in Kendrapada district, Odisha** under the **Sagarmala initiative**.

The Government of Odisha will fund another 50% cost of the project.

This project will reduce travel time for passengers from 6 hours by road to 1 hour by waterway.

Kaninali in Bhadrak district and Talachua in Kendrapada district, are located on the northern and southern banks of **River Dhamra** respectively.

The project will facilitate indirect employment opportunities to locals around Dhamra River and reduce road distance of ~200 km from Talachua to Dhamra.

## Ladakh Ignited Minds: A Centre of Excellence and Wellness (An Indian Army initiative in partnership with HPCL)

As part of the Indian Army's sustained initiative to secure a better future for Ladakhi youth, the Leh based Corps of Indian Army, signed an MoU with corporate partner **Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL)** and executing agency **National Integrity and Educational Development Organisation, (NIEDO)** at Leh.

The project Ladakh Ignited Minds: A Centre of Excellence and Wellness has been conceptualized to secure a better future for the youth of UT of Ladakh and is a full-time residential program to mentor and guide them for a period of twelve months for entrance examinations of various Medical and Engineering Colleges spread across in India.

The program under the aegis of Indian Army will be executed by Kanpur based NGO, National Integrity & Educational Development Organisation (NIEDO). Army would oversee the overall operations to include administration and logistics with requisite funding support through Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL).

**Facts about Ladakh:**

**Union territory established:** 31 October 2019

**Capital** Leh, Kargil

**Lieutenant Governor:** Radha Krishna Mathur

**Central Farm Machinery Training & Testing Institute, Budni (Madhya Pradesh) tests the first-ever electric Tractor in the Institute**

The institute received the application for an electric tractor under Confidential Test initially.

Accordingly, the institute has tested the tractor & released the Draft Test Report in February 2021. After the release of the draft test report, the manufacturer has requested for conversion of the nature of the test from “Confidential to Commercial” and the competent authority has accepted the request of the manufacturer. Accordingly, the Test Report was released as a Commercial Test Report.

The Institute has obtained the NABL Certificate of Accreditation for CMVR Test Laboratory on 30<sup>th</sup> March 2021.

**Important News: India**

**MoU signed towards execution of planned actions in time bound manner in 132 cities under National Clean Air Programme (NCAP)**

In the presence of Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Shri Prakash Javadekar the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed by representatives of State Pollution Control Boards, Urban Local Bodies and Institutes of Repute for 132 identified cities for implementation of city specific action plans under National Clean Air Programme (NCAP).

**A National Knowledge Network** comprising leading air quality specialists has also been constituted as a technical advisory group to support activities under NCAP.

**About National Clean Air Programme (NCAP):** It is a long-term, time-bound, national level strategy to tackle air pollution problem across the country in a comprehensive manner with targets to achieve 20% to 30% reduction in Particulate Matter concentrations by 2024 (with 2017 as base year).

## AYUSH Ministry in collaboration with Vinoba Seva Pratishthan organizes 'Ayurveda Parav'

In a bid to promote Ayurveda as the mainstream treatment for the prevalent lifestyle related diseases, Vinoba Seva Pratishthan (VSP), in collaboration with the Ministry of AYUSH, has successfully organized 'Ayurveda Parav' in Bhubaneswar from 26<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> March 2021.

The 3-days event was inaugurated by **Padma Vibhushan Dr Raghunath Mohapatra**, Hon'ble Member of Rajya Sabha along with **Shri Naba Kishore Das**, Hon'ble Minister of Health & Family Welfare, Govt. of Odisha and **Shri Trilochan Majhi**, Director of AYUSH, Govt. of Odisha.

During this Parav, nearly 25 research papers were presented by experts and researchers.

## The Road Transport and Highways Ministry published the draft rules regarding concession in motor vehicle tax against scrapped vehicles

Under the draft rules, people will get 25 percent concession on the purchase of personal vehicles with vehicle scrappage certificate while on the purchase of commercial vehicles, the tax relief will be 15 percent.

In case of personal vehicles, the tax concessions will be available up to 8 years while for commercial vehicles, it will be up to 15 years.

The rules are proposed to come into force from October 01, 2021.

**Note:** Recently, Minister for Road Transport and Highways, Shri Nitin Gadkari announced the "**Vehicle Scrapping Policy**".

## Atal Innovation Mission launches 'AIM-PRIME', in partnership with BMGF & Venture Center

Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), NITI Aayog launched **AIM-PRIME (Program for Researchers on Innovations, Market-Readiness & Entrepreneurship)**, an initiative to promote and support science-based deep-tech startups & ventures across India.

In this regard, AIM has joined hands with **Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF)** to launch this nationwide program which will be implemented by **Venture Center** - a non-profit technology business incubator.

The first cohort of the program is open to technology developers (tech start ups/scientists/ engineers/ clinicians) with strong science-based deep tech business ideas.

**About Atal Innovation Mission (AIM):** It is a flagship initiative set up by the NITI Aayog to promote innovation and entrepreneurship in the country and was setup in 2016.

### Ministry of Labour & Employment set up Expert Committees for suggesting standards under the OSH & WC Code, 2020

The Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions (OSH & WC) Code, 2020 has been enacted after amalgamating thirteen different labour legislations and to simplify the laws regulating the Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions in establishments.

The Expert Committees for Factories and Dock Works are constituted under **Chairmanship of Dr. R. K. Elangovan**, DG, DGFASLI, Mumbai.

The other two Expert Committees for the Building & Other Construction Works and the Fire Safety are constituted under **Chairmanship of Shri P.L.N. Murthy**, VP & Head Domestic Operations, L&T Hydrocarbon, Chennai and **Shri D. K. Shami**, Fire Advisor to the Government of India, MHA respectively.

### Labour Bureau launches two of the five All-India Surveys

The **five surveys** are the All-India Survey of Migrant Workers, All-India Survey on Domestic Workers, All-India Survey on Employment generated in Transport Sector, All-India Survey of Employment Generated by Professionals and All-India Quarterly Establishment based Employment Survey (AQEES).

These surveys have been developed and designed by the Labour Bureau under the technical guidance of an expert group **chaired by Prof S. P. Mukherjee** and **co-chaired by Dr Amitabh Kundu**.

The **first surveys** to be launched are the **All-India Survey of Migrant Workers** and **All-India Quarterly Establishment based Employment Survey (AQEES)**.

**Note:** The Labour Bureau is being aided by **Broadcast Engineering Consultants India Limited**, a Government of India Enterprise under the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting to provide the IT support.

### Union Education Minister Shri Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' launches the "MyNEP2020" Platform of NCTE Web Portal

The platform seeks to invite suggestions/inputs/membership from the stakeholders for preparing draft for development of **National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST)** and **National Mission for Mentoring Program membership (NMM)**.

The “MyNEP2020” platform will be operational from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 to 15<sup>th</sup> May 2021. For preparing the documents on above two major recommendations of NEP 2020, NCTE (National Council for Teacher Education) will work in close consultation with individuals/organizations.

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### Jal Jeevan Mission deploys first-of-its-kind sensor-based IoT devices to monitor rural drinking water supply systems

The Ministry of Jal Shakti has decided to take the digital route to use sensor-based IoT devices to effectively monitor the implementation of Jal Jeevan Mission in more than six lakh villages.

For this, National Jal Jeevan Mission in collaboration with Tata Community Initiatives Trust (TCIT) and Tata Trusts recently completed pilot projects in several remote villages of five States i.e. Uttarakhand, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Himachal Pradesh.

**The Internet of Things (IoT)** based remote monitoring provides near real-time information without any manual intervention by using sensors.

**Note:** The aim of **Jal Jeevan Mission** is to provide piped water to all the rural households by 2024. It was launched on 15 August 2019. It comes under the Ministry of Jal Shakti, Government of India.

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### TRIFED launches "Sankalp se Siddhi"- Village and Digital Connect Drive

It is a 100-day drive which was started from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021.

The main aim of this drive is to activate the Van Dhan Vikas Kendras in villages.

The Ministry of Tribal Affairs in a statement said that 100 villages in each region and 1500 villages in the country will be covered in the next 100 days.

The visiting teams will also identify locations and potential Van Dhan Vikas Kendras for TRIFOOD and Scheme of Fund for Regeneration of Traditional Industries (SFURTI).

**Facts about Tribal Cooperative Marketing Federation of India (TRIFED):**

**Founded:** 1987

**Headquarters:** New Delhi

**Parent agency:** Ministry of Tribal Affairs

**Managing Director:** Pravir Krishna

### Harsh Vardhan, Union Health & Family Welfare Minister approves the "National Policy for Rare Diseases 2021"

The Rare Diseases Policy aims to lower the high cost of treatment for rare diseases with increased focus on indigenous research with the help of a National Consortium to be set up with the Department of Health Research, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare as convener.

The policy also envisages creation of a **national hospital based registry** of rare diseases.

A provision for financial support up to **20 lakhs under the Umbrella Scheme of Rashtriya Arogya Nidhi** is proposed for treatment of those rare diseases that

require a one-time treatment (diseases listed under Group 1 in the rare disease policy).

Beneficiaries for such financial assistance would not be limited to BPL families, but the benefit will be extended to about 40% of the population, who are eligible under Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana.

### **Union Minister of Health & Family Welfare, Dr Harsh Vardhan launches the Integrated Health Information Platform (IHIP)**

The Integrated Health Information Platform is the next generation highly refined version of the presently used **Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP)**.

In addition to tracking 33 diseases now as compared to the earlier 18 diseases, it shall ensure near-real-time data in digital mode.

This is the world's biggest online disease surveillance platform. It is in sync with the National Digital Health Mission and fully compatible with the other digital information systems presently being used in India.

### **Union Minister for Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare Shri Narendra Singh Tomar launches "Madhukranti portal" and Honey Corners of NAFED**

**"Madhukranti portal"** is an initiative of National Bee Board (NBB), Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare under National Beekeeping & Honey Mission (NBHM).

This portal is being developed for online registration to achieve a traceability source of Honey and other beehive products on a digital platform.

The technical and banking partner for development of this digital platform is Indian Bank.

**Note:** 70 FPOs of Beekeeper/honey producers, including 65 by NABARD & others and 5 by NAFED in Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan & West Bengal, have been formed.

**Honey production** has increased from 76,150 MTs (2013-14) to 1,20,000 MTs (2019-20).

**Export of honey** has increased from 28378.42 MTs (2013-14) to 59536.74 MTs (2019-20).

**About NAFED (National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Ltd.):** It is an apex organization of marketing cooperatives for agricultural produce in India. It was established on the auspicious day of Gandhi Jayanti on 2nd October 1958.

### **Minister of State for Education addresses at consultation meeting of Education Ministers of E9 countries**

Minister of State for Education, Shri Sanjay Dhotre addressed at the consultation meeting of Education Ministers of E9 countries on **E9 initiative: Scaling up digital learning to accelerate progress towards SDG4** on 6<sup>th</sup> April, 2021.

The initiative aims to accelerate recovery and advance the **SDG4 (Sustainable Development Goal 4)** agenda by driving rapid change in education systems in three of the 2020 Global Education Meeting priorities: **(i) support to teachers; (ii) investment in skills; and (iii) narrowing of the digital divide.**

**About E9:** The E9 is a forum of nine countries, which was formed to achieve the goals of **UNESCO's Education for All (EFA)**

The "E" stands for education and the "9" represents the following **nine countries:** Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Nigeria, and Pakistan.

The E9 Initiative was launched in 1993 at the EFA Summit in New Delhi, India.

### Harsh Vardhan launches Tribal Health Collaborative 'Anamaya'

Dr Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare along with Shri Arjun Munda, Union Minister of Tribal Affairs launched 'Anamaya', the Tribal Health Collaborative.

A multi-stakeholder initiative supported by **Piramal Foundation and Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF)**, 'Anameya' will converge efforts of various Government agencies and organisations to enhance the health and nutrition status of the tribal communities of India.

The Ministry will undertake several activities such as: setting up of the National Council on Tribal Health, establishment of a Health Cell and Tribal Health Action Plan and so on.

**Note:** Recently, the '**Tribal TB Initiative**' was launched by both the Ministries to fulfil the Prime Minister's goal of '**TB MuktBharat**' by 2025, five years ahead of the global deadline.

### Prime Minister Narendra Modi chairs the meeting of the High Level Committee to commemorate 400th Birth Anniversary (Prakash Purab) of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur

The High Level Committee was constituted by the Union Government earlier on October 24, 2020, to approve policies, plans and programs related to the commemoration of the 400th birth anniversary of Guru Tegh Bahadur along with supervision of the events.

The High Level Committee has 70 members including the Prime Minister as Chairman.

**About Guru Tegh Bahadur:** Guru Tegh Bahadur is the ninth of the ten Gurus who founded the Sikh religion. He was the head of the followers of Sikhism. He was born on 1 April 1621.

**Note: Prime Minister Narendra Modi** interacted with students, teachers and parents during '**Pariksha Pe Charcha 2021**' via video conferencing on 7th April 2021.

## Supreme Court-appointed committee submits report on farm laws

The three-member committee appointed by the Supreme Court has submitted its report on farm laws.

**Note:** On January 12, 2021, the Supreme Court stayed the implementation of the three farm laws and formed a four-member committee of experts to listen to the grievances of the farmers on the farm laws and the views of the government and make recommendations.

**The members of the committee:** Noted agricultural economist Ashok Gulati, Anil Ghanwat of the Shetkari Sanghatana, Pramod Kumar Joshi of the International Food Policy Research Institute and former Rajya Sabha member Bhupinder Singh Mann.

**Note:** The 4<sup>th</sup> member, Bhupinder Singh Mann who is also the national president of the Bhartiya Kisan Union, stepped down from the committee.

### 3 Farm laws are:

The Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, 2020  
Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Act, 2020  
Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act, 2020

## 'Tika Utsav'; aim to vaccinate maximum eligible people

Prime Minister, Narendra Modi announced a special initiative vaccination festival, 'Tika Utsav' with an aim to vaccinate maximum number of eligible people against the coronavirus.

The Utsav started on 11 April, 2021, the birth anniversary of Mahatma Jyotiba Phule and will continue till the birth anniversary of Babasaheb Ambedkar on 14 April, 2021 to ensure the maximum vaccination coverage of people aged above 45.

Mr. Modi urged citizens to imbibe these four principles which include '**Each One, Vaccinate One**', '**Each One, Treat One**', '**Each One, Save One**', and '**Micro Containment Zones**'.

**Note:** Recently, Drugs Controller General of India (DGCI) has given approval to use vaccines- **Covishield** from Serum Institute of India (SII) based on the Oxford AstraZeneca vaccine and **Covaxin** from Bharat Biotech.

## Government of India to soon roll out Unique Land Parcel Identification Number (ULPIN) system in country

**Government of India** will soon roll out a Unique Land Parcel Identification Number (**ULPIN**) system in the country allotting distinct IDs for each land parcel.

Pilot testing has been successfully carried out in 11 States namely Bihar, Haryana, Jharkhand, Odisha, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Sikkim, Andhra Pradesh and Goa.

**Unique Land Parcel Identification Number (ULPIN)** - 14 digits Alpha-numeric unique ID for each land parcel based on Geo reference coordinate of vertices of international standard and compliance of Electronic Commerce Code Management Association standard and Open Geospatial Consortium standards.

**Note:** Government of India, in 2008-09, had launched **Digital India Land Records Modernization Programme (DILRMP)** - erstwhile National Land Records Modernization Programme to digitize and modernize land records and develop a transparent and **Integrated Land Information Management System (ILIMS)** in the country.

### **NITI Aayog launches Online Dispute Resolution Handbook**

NITI Aayog in association with Agami and Omidyar Network India and with the support of ICICI Bank, Ashoka Innovators for the Public, Trilegal, Dalberg, Dvara, NIPFP launched the first-of-its kind **Online Dispute Resolution (ODR)** handbook in India.

**ODR** is the resolution of disputes outside courts, particularly of small and medium-value cases, using digital technology and techniques of alternate dispute resolution (ADR), such as negotiation, mediation, and arbitration.

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

**Formed:** 1 January 2015  
**Headquarters:** New Delhi  
**Chairperson:** Narendra Modi  
**Vice Chairperson:** Rajiv Kumar  
**CEO:** Amitabh Kant

### **CSIR adopts 295 Atal Tinkering Labs established by Atal Innovation Mission nationwide**

Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), NITI Aayog's flagship 295 Atal Tinkering Labs (ATLs) were officially adopted by **Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)** across the country in an ambitious step towards inculcating scientific research and innovation culture among students.

CSIR with their 36 labs have adopted 295 ATLs and their students across the country.

This partnership with CSIR is a crucial landmark achievement for Atal Innovation Mission spurring STEM research and innovation collaborations with public and private organizations playing a pivotal role.

## Launch of India Energy Dashboards Version 2.0 by NITI Aayog

The India Energy Dashboards Version 2.0 was launched by Dr Rajiv Kumar (Vice Chairman, NITI Aayog), Dr V K Saraswat (Member, NITI Aayog), Shri Amitabh Kant (CEO, NITI Aayog) and Dr Rakesh Sarwal (Additional Secretary, NITI Aayog).

**India Energy Dashboards (IED)** is an endeavour to provide single-window access to the energy data for the country.

Energy data published/provided by Central Electricity Authority, Coal Controller's Organisation, and Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas is compiled in the Dashboards.

**The key features** of the enhanced version, India Energy Dashboards Version 2.0, are: The IED provides time series data from FY 2005-06 until FY 2019-20, IED provides data at sub-yearly frequencies as well.

API linked data from Saubhagya, UJALA, PRAAPTI, and Vidyut PRAVAH has been incorporated in the portal.

**Note:** NITI Aayog launched the **India Energy Dashboards Version 1.0** in May 2017.

## Justice Chandrachud inaugurates Judgments & Orders portal and e-filing 3.0 module

Dr Justice Dhananjaya Y. Chandrachud, Judge, Supreme Court of India and Chairperson, e-Committee of the Supreme Court inaugurated a Judgments and Orders Portal for searching past judgments and orders and an e-Filing 3.0 module to allow electronic filing of court documents.

The initiatives developed by Pune based e-Courts project team are aimed to strengthen the legal system.

**The Judgments and Orders search portal** is a repository of judgments pronounced by various High Courts in the country. It provides facility to search judgements and final orders based on multiple search criteria.

**The e-filing 3.0 module**, introduced by the e-Committee of the Supreme Court, allows electronic filing of court documents. With the introduction of the new module, there will be no need for lawyers or clients to visit the court premises for filing of a case.

**Note:** The judgment search portal has data today of 38 million cases available, We have data of 106 million cases which are being disposed of & are available & the total number of 141 million orders.

## The National Regulator grants permission for restricted use in emergency situations to Sputnik-V vaccine

**The National Regulator, Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI)** approved Russian Covid-19 vaccine Sputnik V for restricted use in emergency situations in India.

Hyderabad-based M/s Dr. Reddy's Laboratories Ltd. had applied for the grant of permission to import and market Gam-COVID-Vac combined vector vaccine, popularly called Sputnik-V, developed by M/s Gamaleya Institute, Russia.

**Note:** Two vaccines have been approved for Emergency Use Authorisation by the DCGI. These are "Covishield" manufactured by Serum Institute of India and "Covaxin" manufactured by Bharat Biotech International.

### **NITI Aayog launches 'Poshan Gyan', a digital repository on nutrition information**

NITI Aayog, in partnership with Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and Centre for Social and Behaviour Change, Ashoka University, launched Poshan Gyan, a national digital repository on health and nutrition.

The Poshan Gyan repository was conceptualized as a resource, enabling search of communication materials on 14 thematic areas of health and nutrition across diverse languages, media types, target audiences and sources.

Content for the repository was sourced from the Ministries of Health and Family Welfare and Women and Child Development and developmental organizations.

**Note:** The portal highlights the "Theme of the Month" (in line with the Ministries of Health and Family Welfare and Women and Child Development guidelines to promote key topics) and the "Most Downloaded Media" (as a way to learn about the materials that are most preferred by audiences).

### **Dr Harsh Vardhan launches 'Aahaar Kranti'**

Union Minister for Science and Technology, Earth Sciences and Health and Family Welfare, Dr Harsh Vardhan has launched "Aahaar Kranti", a mission dedicated to spreading awareness about nutrition and accessible to all locally available nutritious food, fruits, and vegetables in India.

Aahaar Kranti has been launched as a public movement on the first day of Ma Annapurna's Chaitra Navaratri.

Vijnana Bharati (Vibha), 'Global Indian Scientists and Technocrats' Forum (GIST), Vigyan Prasar, and Pravasi Bharatiya Academic and Scientific Sampark (PRABHASS) have come together to launch the mission "Aahaar Kranti", with the motto of '**Uttam Aahaar- Uttam Vichaar**' or 'Good Diet-Good Cognition'.

The 'Aahaar Kranti' movement is designed to address the peculiar problem being faced by India and the world- hunger and diseases in abundance.

**Note:** On this occasion, a monthly (English and Hindi) newsletter 'Aahaar Kranti' has also been launched, which is being published by Vigyan Prasar.

## Microsoft India and Ministry of Agriculture signed an MoU to develop rural areas

Microsoft has come forward to start a pilot project in selected **100 villages in 10 districts of 6 states (Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Haryana, Rajasthan, and Andhra Pradesh)** to develop farmer interface for smart and well-organized agriculture, including post-harvest management and distribution.

For this project, Microsoft has joined in with its local partner, CropData.

This project will reduce the input costs for farmers and make farming easy.

The government aims to increase the income of farmers by removing the bottleneck of inconsistent information. A major initiative, in this regard, is the creation of **Agri-Funds based on the National Farmers Database.**

**Note: Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar** recently launched a 'National Nursery Portal' developed by the National Horticulture Board to connect nursery operators with consumers.

## India holds National Dialogue on UN Food Systems Summit 2021

**The first National Level Dialogue on Agri-Food Systems-Advancing Equitable Livelihoods was conducted on 12 April 2021.**

The National Dialogue was facilitated by the Inter departmental Group constituted by Department of Agriculture Cooperation & Farmers Welfare and the representatives from UN Agencies in Delhi.

**Note: The United Nations Secretary General** has called for the **first ever UN Food Systems Summit** to be held in **September 2021** to strategize the actions for positive change in Agri-food systems in the World to realize the vision of the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.**

The Summit 2021 is planned to be essentially participatory and consultative and needs the game changing ideas from the experiences through the National, Sub-national (State) and independent consultation for the **five Action Tracks** related to **safe and nutritious food, sustainable consumption patterns, nature-positive production, advance equitable livelihoods, and resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress.**

## Shri Piyush Goyal chairs the first meeting of National Startup Advisory Council

Minister of Railways, Commerce & Industry, Consumer Affairs and Food & Public Distribution Shri Piyush Goyal chaired the first meeting of National Startup Advisory Council (NSAC).

In his inaugural address, Shri Goyal said that this council shall act as the guiding light for many budding startup entrepreneurs in India.

The Minister said that it is our collective responsibility to realise the objectives of 'Startup India: The Way Ahead', which was launched by the Prime Minister in January 2021.

**About National Startup Advisory Council:** The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) had constituted the National Startup Advisory Council to advise the Government on measures needed to build a strong ecosystem for nurturing innovation and startups in the country to drive sustainable economic growth and generate large scale employment opportunities.

## “Hydrogen Economy – New Delhi Dialogue 2021”

**The Energy Forum (TEF and the Federation of Indian Petroleum Industry (FIPI)**, under the aegis of Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, Government of India, has organized a Hydrogen Roundtable titled “Hydrogen Economy New Delhi Dialogue-2021” recently in April 2021.

Union Petroleum and Natural Gas & Steel Minister Shri Dharmendra Pradhan addressed the Hydrogen Economy- New Delhi Dialogue.

**The objective of the Roundtable** is to understand the progress of the Hydrogen ecosystem across continents and contribute to creating synchrony among the think tanks, Governments and the industry to join forces for developing innovative and sustainable technologies at attractive costs.

**Note:** India will spend \$200 million over the next 5 to 7 years to promote the use of hydrogen.

The Government of India recently announced the **National Hydrogen Mission** in the Union Budget 2021 for making a hydrogen roadmap for the country. Work is going on a pilot project on **Blue Hydrogen, Hydrogen CNG (H-CNG) and Green Hydrogen**.

## Ministry of Tourism signs MoUs with Online Travel Companies to strengthen hospitality and tourism industry

The Ministry of Tourism signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **Online Travel Companies- Cleartrip and Ease My Trip**.

**The primary objective** of this MoU is to provide extensive visibility to accommodation units which have self-certified themselves on **SAATHI (System for Assessment, Awareness & Training for the Hospitality Industry) on the OTA platform (Online travel agencies)**.

The MoU also outlines both parties to encourage Units to register on **NIDHI (National Integrated Database of Hospitality Industry)** and thereby on **SAATHI** and encourage local tourism Industry with appropriate safeguards for curbing spread of COVID-19.

## New Regulatory Regime for 8 Medical Items under Drugs and Cosmetics Act

The Union Ministry of Health & Family Welfare had earlier notified the following medical items to be regulated under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act which was to come into effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 (under Medical Devices Rules 2017): **All Implantable Medical Devices; CT scan equipment; MRI equipment; Defibrillators; PET Equipment; Dialysis Machine; X-Ray Machine; and Bone marrow cell separator.**

Accordingly, as per order the importers/manufacturers are required to take import/manufacturing licence from Central Licencing Authority or State Licencing Authority, as the case may be, for import/manufacture of above devices, w.e.f. 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2021.

Transition time of 6 months allowed for ensuring supply chain continuity and access while implementing their regulatory order under Medical Devices Rules (2017).

## Dr. Harsh Vardhan addresses the Next Gen Health Summit 'Re-Imagine Healthcare'

Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare addressed the Next Gen Health Summit 'Re-Imagine Healthcare', organized by the **IMC Chamber of Commerce and Industry.**

He focused on Ayushman Bharat program, Ayushman Bharat-Health and Wellness Centres, Fit India Movement, Swachh Bharat, Eat Right India programs.

**About IMC Chamber of Commerce and Industry:** Indian Merchants' Chamber is an organization of India, representing interests of Indian trade, commerce, and industry. It was organized originally during the days of the British Raj to promote trade, commerce, and industry by Indian entrepreneurs.

**Founded:** 7 September 1907

**Headquarters:** Mumbai

**Note:** Dr. Harsh Vardhan also addressed the **5<sup>th</sup> Global Forum on TB Vaccine.**

The Global Forum on TB Vaccines is the world's largest gathering of stakeholders striving to develop and deploy new vaccines to prevent Tuberculosis (TB).

## 551 PSA Oxygen Generation Plants to be set up in public health facilities across the country through PM CARES

In line with Prime Minister's direction of boosting availability of oxygen to hospitals, the PM CARES Fund has given in-principle approval for allocation of funds for installation of 551 dedicated **Pressure Swing Adsorption (PSA) Medical Oxygen Generation Plants** inside public health facilities in the country.

These dedicated plants will be established in identified Government hospitals in district headquarters in various States/UTs.

The procurement will be done through the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

**Note:** The PM CARES Fund had earlier this year allocated Rs.201.58 crores for installation of additional 162 dedicated Pressure Swing Adsorption (PSA) Medical Oxygen Generation Plants inside public health facilities in the country.

### Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology announces #FOSS4GOV Innovation Challenge

The Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology announced a **#FOSS4GOV Innovation Challenge** to accelerate adoption of Free and Open Source Software (FOSS) In Government.

The #FOSS4GOV Innovation Challenge calls upon FOSS innovators, technology entrepreneurs and Indian Startups to submit implementable open source product innovations in CRM and ERP with possible applications for Govtech in Health, Education, Agriculture, Urban Governance etc.

To increase awareness about the usage of FOSS in governance and Government functioning, and adoption of FOSS, a virtual roundtable discussion '**Free and Open Source Software (FOSS) in Government**' was organized by the **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology in collaboration with Omidyar Network India.**

**Note:** India is well positioned to become a vibrant hub for Free and Open Source Software (FOSS) innovations, due to the large number of 4G data subscribers in India, 96% of whom access the digital world via open-source based mobile operating systems (primarily Android).

Some of India's largest-government projects (including Aadhaar) and many technology start-ups have also been built using FOSS.

Acknowledging the huge potential of FOSS, the Government of India had issued a **Policy on Adoption of Open Source Software in 2015.**

### India's Organic food products exports rise by more than 50 percent in 2020-21 despite COVID-19 challenges

India's export of Organic food products rose by 51% in terms of value (USD Million), to USD 1040 million (Rs 7078 crores) during financial year 2020-21 compared to the previous fiscal (2019-20).

In terms of quantity, the exports of organic food products grew by 39% to 888,179 metric tonne (MT) during FY 2020-21 compared to 638,998 MT shipped in 2019-20.

Oil cake meal has been a major commodity of the organic product exports from the country followed by oil seeds, fruit pulps and purees, cereals & millets, spices & condiments, tea, medicinal plant products, dry fruits, sugar, pulses, coffee, essential Oil etc.

India's organic products have been exported to 58 countries including USA, European Union, Canada, Great Britain, Australia, Switzerland, Israel, South Korea.

**Note:** Organic products are currently exported from India only if they are produced, processed, packed and labelled as per the requirements of the National Programme for Organic Production (NPOP).

The NPOP has been implemented by APEDA since its inception in 2001 as notified under the Foreign Trade (Development and Regulations) Act, 1992.

### Cabinet approves agreement between the India and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland on Customs Cooperation and Mutual Administrative Assistance in Customs Matters

The Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, has approved the signing and ratification of an Agreement between the Government of Republic of India and the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland on Customs Cooperation and Mutual Administrative Assistance in Customs Matters.

**Impact:** The Agreement will help in the availability of relevant information for the prevention and investigation of Customs offences. The Agreement is also expected to facilitate trade and ensure efficient clearance of goods traded between the countries.

**Background:** The Agreement would provide a legal framework for sharing of information and intelligence between the Customs authorities of the two countries and help in the proper application of Customs laws, prevention and investigation of Customs offences and the facilitation of legitimate trade.

### High quality online Yoga training programmes offered by the Ayush Ministry's Yoga Institute

The quality online Yoga training programmes offered by the **Morarji Desai National Institute of Yoga (MDNIY)** under the Ministry of Ayush, which are health-promotive and anxiety-relieving, provide useful support to the common people to balance their daily lives in the changed scenario.

Since the Common Yoga Protocol (CYP) is considered among the best Yoga course for beginners, much of the current training programmes of MDNIY are devoted to CYP.

The MDNIY presently streams Common Yoga Protocol (CYP) training programmes on their social media platforms on a daily basis.

The elementary training course is called the “**Yoga Volunteer Training (YVT) Course**”, since this course, apart from imparting Yoga learning, also gives the learner an opportunity to be endorsed as a “**Yoga Volunteer**”.

## 1 Lakh Portable Oxygen Concentrators to be procured from PM CARES fund

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has sanctioned the procurement of 1 Lakh Portable Oxygen Concentrators from the PM CARES Fund.

The decision was taken at a high-level meeting chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi to discuss the measures needed to improve Liquid Medical Oxygen (LMO) Supply for COVID management.

In addition to the earlier sanctioned 713 PSA plants under PM CARES Fund, 500 new Pressure Swing Adsorption (PSA) oxygen plants have been sanctioned under PM CARES Fund.

These 500 PSA plants will be established with transfer of the indigenous technology developed by **DRDO and CSIR** to the domestic manufacturers.

## Important News: World

### S Jaishankar attends Heart of Asia conference in Tajikistan

During his three-day bilateral visit to Tajikistan, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar attended the **9th Ministerial Conference of Heart of Asia - Istanbul Process (HoA-IP)** on Afghanistan in Dushanbe, Tajikistan on March 30, 2021.

Jaishankar asserted that for a durable peace in Afghanistan, every stakeholder should work towards genuine ‘double peace’ mechanism, which includes peace both within and around Afghanistan.

**Note:** The 9th Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process ministerial conference is part of the Istanbul Process - a regional initiative on security and cooperation for a stable and peaceful Afghanistan - that was launched on November 2, 2011, in Turkey. India co-hosted the 6th Heart of Asia Ministerial Conference in Amritsar, Punjab in December 2016.

**Facts about Tajikistan:**

**Capital:** Dushanbe

**Currency:** Tajikistani somoni

**President:** Emomali Rahmon

## MOS Telecom Shri Sanjay Dhotre represents India at the World Summit on Information Society Forum 2021

The World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Forum 2021 represents one of the world's largest annual gathering of the 'ICT for development' community, is co-organized by International Telecommunications Union (ITU), UNESCO, UNDP and UNCTAD.

Shri Dhotre underscored the role of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) for modernization and transformation of the industry, promotion of inclusive economic growth and stimulation of the national economies to meet the larger objectives of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

**Note:** The 2021 WSIS Forum will provide an opportunity to serve as a platform to track the achievements of WSIS Action Lines in collaboration with the UN Agencies involved and provide information and analyses of the implementation of WSIS Action Lines since 2005.

## Iran, China sign a 25-Year 'Strategic Cooperation Pact'

Iran and China signed a 25-year "Strategic Cooperation Pact" in the latest expansion of Beijing's flagship trillion-dollar Belt and Road Initiative.

China is Iran's leading trade partner and was one of the biggest buyers of Iranian oil. The agreement, signed in Tehran by Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif and his Chinese counterpart, Wang Yi.

**Note:** Iran's foreign ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said that the pact had first been proposed during a visit to Tehran by Chinese President Xi Jinping in January 2016.

## India takes part in 2nd Sherpas meeting of G7, guest countries

The 2nd meeting of the Sherpas of G7 and guest countries was held on March 30, 2021.

India's representative (Sherpa) Suresh Prabhu attended the meeting.

The priority issues under the UK's G7 Presidency agenda were discussed, including preparations for the COP26 Summit and global health cooperation.

**Note:** The United Kingdom has invited Prime Minister Narendra Modi to attend the G7 Summit as a guest, along with Australia, South Korea and South Africa.

The G7 Summit is to be held on June 11-13, 2021.

**Facts about G7:** The heads of government of the member states, as well as the representatives of the European Union, meet at the annual G7 Summit.

**Founded:** 1975

**Members:** United Kingdom, United States, Japan, France, Germany, Canada, Italy.

## Foreign Ministers of BIMSTEC grouping finalised a major Master plan for transport connectivity for the Bay of Bengal region

On 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021, External Affairs Minister (EAM) S. Jaishankar virtually addressed the 17th BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting held from Colombo, Sri Lanka.

The meeting also endorsed **three MoUs/agreements** relating to convention on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal matters, cooperation between diplomatic and training academies and establishment of BIMSTEC Technology Transfer Facility in Colombo.

**Note:** The study conducted by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) in 2007 and 2014, identified 166 connectivity projects at an estimated cost of USD 50 billion out of which 65 projects were identified as priority projects.

**About BIMSTEC** (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation):

**Headquarters:** Dhaka, Bangladesh

**Founded:** 6 June 1997

**Member:** Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand

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**Headquarters:** Dhaka, Bangladesh

**Founded:** 6 June 1997

**Member:** Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand

## India hosts first meeting of BRICS Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors

This was the first meeting of the BRICS Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors under India Chairship on April 6, 2021.

The meeting was jointly chaired by Union Minister for Finance & Corporate Affairs, Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman and Governor, Reserve Bank of India, Shri. Shaktikanta Das.

The Finance Minister talked about thematic priorities for New Development Bank for discussion during 2021 and the issues of membership expansion.

**Note:** The theme of BRICS this year is - "**BRICS@15: Intra BRICS Cooperation for Continuity, Consolidation, and Consensus**".

The **13th BRICS Summit** will be held under India's Chairship in 2021, and it will be the third time India will host the BRICS Summit after 2012 and 2016.

**Facts about BRICS:**

**Formation:** 2009

**Countries:** Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa

## Russia registers World's first COVID-19 vaccine 'Carnivac-Cov' for animals

According to agricultural regulator Rosselkhoznadzor, Russia has registered the world's first vaccine for animals 'Carnivac-Cov' against COVID-19, after tests showed it generated antibodies against the virus in dogs, cats, foxes and mink.

**Note:** Russia already has three coronavirus vaccines for humans: Sputnik V, EpiVacCorona and CoviVac.

## India-Netherlands Virtual Summit

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Mark Rutte, Prime Minister of the Netherlands held a Virtual Summit on 9 April 2021.

The two Prime Ministers agreed on instituting a '**Strategic Partnership on Water**' to further deepen the Indo-Dutch cooperation in the water related sector, and upgrading the Joint Working Group on water to Ministerial-level.

The leaders also exchanged views on regional and global challenges such as climate change, terrorism and Covid-19 pandemic and agreed to leverage the emerging convergences in new areas like Indo-Pacific Supply Chains and Global Digital Governance.

**Facts about Netherlands:**

**Capital:** Amsterdam

**Currency:** Euro

**Prime Minister:** Mark Rutte

## India-Seychelles high level virtual event

Prime Minister Narendra Modi participated in a high level virtual event with the President of the Republic of Seychelles Wavel Ramkalawan on April 8, 2021 to inaugurate a range of Indian projects in Seychelles.

### **Indian projects in Seychelles:**

- A) Joint e-inauguration of the new Magistrates' Court Building in Seychelles;
- B) Handing over of a Fast Patrol Vessel to Seychelles Coast Guard;
- C) Handing over of a 1 MW Solar Power Plant;
- D) Inauguration of 10 High Impact Community Development Projects (HICDPs).

**Note:** Seychelles occupies a central place in the Prime Minister's vision of 'SAGAR' - 'Security and Growth for All in the Region'.

Seychelles was the First African country to receive the Made in India COVID-19 vaccines.

### **Facts about Seychelles:**

**Capital:** Victoria

**President:** Wavel Ramkalawan

**Currency:** Seychellois rupee

## Raisina Dialogue-2021

The 6th edition of the prestigious Raisina Dialogue was jointly organised by the Ministry of External Affairs and the Observer Research Foundation.

It is being held from 13 to 16 April 2021.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi delivered a video address at the Inaugural Session of the Raisina Dialogue in virtual format, along with Chief Guests H.E. Paul Kagame, President of Rwanda and H.E. Mette Frederiksen, Prime Minister of Denmark.

The theme for the 2021 Edition is "**#ViralWorld: Outbreaks, Outliers and Out of Control**".

**Note:** External Affairs Minister **S Jaishankar** stressed on South-South cooperation, humanitarian assistance, disaster resistance in the virtual meeting of Raisina Dialogue 2021.

**About the Raisina Dialogue:** It is India's flagship conference on geopolitics and geoeconomics, held annually since 2016.

## USA announces withdrawal of American troops from Afghanistan

US President Joe Biden has formally announced his decision to withdraw American troops from Afghanistan before September 11, 2021, the 20th anniversary of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre.

**Note:** The U.S. and its NATO allies had signed a deal with the Taliban in February 2020 to withdraw their troops from Afghanistan if the Taliban met certain preconditions.

**NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization)** is an international alliance that consists of 30 member states from North America and Europe. It was established at the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty on 4 April 1949.

**Facts about Afghanistan:**

**President:** Ashraf Ghani

**Capital:** Kabul

**Currency:** Afghan afghani

## Italy launches first ever mega food park & food processing unit in India

The pilot project “The Mega Food Park” was launched with the signing of a Letter of Intent between the ICE Office in Mumbai and Fanidhar Mega Food Park, in Gujarat.

Ambassador of Italy to India, Vincenzo de Luca, and the Ambassador of India to Italy, Neena Malothra were part of the launch.

**The project aims** to create synergy between agriculture and industry of the two countries and focuses on the research and development of new and more efficient technologies in the sector.

**Note: Mega Food Park** is a scheme of the Ministry of Food Processing, Government of India with the aim of establishing a "direct linkage from farm to processing and then to consumer markets" through a network of collection centres and primary processing centres. A sanction of 42 food parks has been planned.

## India and Germany sign agreement on ‘Cities combating plastic entering the marine environment’

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, Government of India and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH India on behalf of the German Federal Ministry of Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety signed an agreement on Technical Cooperation titled ‘Cities Combating Plastic Entering the Marine Environment’.

This project is envisaged under the contours of the Joint Declaration of Intent regarding cooperation in the field of ‘**Prevention of Marine Litter**’ signed between Republic of India and Federal Republic of Germany in 2019.

The project, aimed at enhancing practices to prevent plastic entering the marine environment, will be undertaken at the national level, select states (**Uttar Pradesh, Kerala and Andaman & Nicobar Islands**) and in the cities of **Kanpur, Kochi and Port Blair** for a period of three and a half years.

This project will support the **Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban's** implementation with special focus on preventing plastic litter entering the rivers and water bodies at source.

**Note:** It is estimated that 15-20% of all plastics are entering oceans via rivers of which 90% are contributed by 10 of the world's most polluting rivers. Two of these river systems are located in India, namely Ganga and Brahmaputra.

## India elected to 3 bodies of UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

India has been elected by acclamation to three bodies of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) for a three-year term beginning January 1, 2022.

Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ)

Executive Board of the UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women)

Executive Board of the World Food Programme (WFP)

### Facts about United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC):

**Parent organization:** United Nations

**Headquarters:** New York, United States

**Formation:** 26 June 1945

**President:** Munir Akram

## Singapore becomes first country to ratify RCEP trade agreement

Singapore has become the first country to complete the official process for ratification of the **Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP)** agreement.

**Note: RCEP agreement** was signed by all 10 ASEAN members and key partners including China, South Korea, Japan, Australia and New Zealand at the 4th RCEP leader's summit in November 2020.

The RCEP agreement will enter into force after six ASEAN member states and three ASEAN FTA partners have ratified it.

All participating countries are targeting to bring the agreement into force on January 1, 2022.

**About Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP):** It is a proposed free trade agreement (FTA) between the ten member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) (Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam) and its five FTA partners (Australia, China, Japan, New Zealand and South Korea).

## Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative: Australia announces Rs 8.12 crore grant under its partnership with India

As India and Australia increase engagement under the Indo-Pacific vision, Australia has announced an Rs 8.12 crore grant under the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI).

To apply for the grant, the company or organization should be located in either India or Australia and have partners in either of the 2 countries. Up to \$350,00 is anticipated to be available for allocation in 2020-21. All applications will be assessed on a competitive basis.

**Note:** The Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative was proposed by PM Narendra Modi at the East-Asia Summit in November 2019.

In June 2020, after the virtual summit of Indian and Australian PMs, foreign ministers of both countries, Marise Payne and S Jaishankar, signed a joint declaration on "Shared Vision for Maritime Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific."

**Facts about Australia:**

**Capital:** Canberra

**Currency:** Australian dollar

**Prime Minister:** Scott Morrison

## Prime Minister Narendra Modi addresses Leaders' Summit on Climate

Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the Leaders' Summit on Climate at the invitation of the President of U.S.A. Joseph R. Biden, which was held virtually on 22-23 April 2021.

The theme of the summit was "**Our Collective Sprint to 2030**".

India's ambitious renewable energy target is 450 Gigawatts by 2030.

India's per capita carbon footprint is 60 percent lower than the global average.

PM Modi announced the launch of **India-US climate and clean energy Agenda 2030 partnership**, which can be a template of green collaborations to help developing countries access to affordable green finance and clean technologies.

The Summit was a part of a series of global meetings focusing on climate issues, being held in the run up to COP26 in November 2021.

**Note:** The US has joined the **India-Sweden climate initiative**, the Leadership Group for Industry Transition, LeadIT.

## Dr. Harsh Vardhan chairs the "Reaching Zero" Forum on Malaria Elimination

Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare chaired the "Reaching Zero" forum on malaria elimination to celebrate World Malaria Day.

**Every year, 25<sup>th</sup> April is observed as 'World Malaria Day'.**

This year's theme for the day is "**Reaching the Zero Malaria target.**"

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been among the 18 Global leaders who endorsed the Malaria Elimination roadmap of Asia Pacific Leaders Malaria Alliance at the

East Asia Summit held in Malaysia in 2015. It was then that the alliance leadership set the goal of ensuring that the Region becomes free of malaria by 2030.

Government's efforts have resulted in 84.5% reduction in malaria cases and 83.6% reduction in deaths in 2020 compared to 2015.

In 2020, as many as 116 districts in the Country reported zero malaria cases.

### **Australia-India-Japan Trade Ministers' Joint Statement on launch of Supply Chain Resilience initiative**

The Trade Ministers of India, Japan and Australia formally launched the Supply Chain Resilience initiative in a Trilateral Ministerial Meeting held virtually on 27.04.2021.

Mr. Dan Tehan, Australia's Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment, Mr. Piyush Goyal, India's Minister for Commerce and Industry, and Mr. Kajiyama Hiroshi, Japan's Minister for Economy, Trade and Industry held a Ministerial videoconference.

The Ministers launched the Supply Chain Resilience Initiative (SCRI). The Ministers instructed their officials to implement the following as initial projects of SCRI and further develop the Initiative: (i) sharing of best practices on supply chain resilience; and (ii) holding investment promotion events and buyer-seller matching events to provide opportunities for stakeholders to explore the possibility of diversification of their supply chains.

The Ministers decided to convene at least once a year to provide guidance to the implementation of the SCRI as well as to consult on how to develop the Initiative.

### **UK becomes first country to announce regulation of use of self-driving vehicles at slow speeds on motorways**

Britain's transport ministry said that it was working on specific wording to update the country's highway code for the safe use of self-driving vehicle systems. It added that the ministry will start with Automated Lane Keeping Systems (ALKS) - which use sensors and software to keep cars within a lane, allowing them to accelerate and brake without driver input.

According to the government, the use of ALKS would be restricted to motorways, at speeds under 60 km per hour. The UK government wants to be at the forefront of rolling out autonomous driving technology and the transport ministry forecasts by 2035 around 40% of new UK cars could have self-driving capabilities, creating up to 38,000 new skilled jobs.

## **Important News: Economy**

## Finance Minister Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman attends 6th Annual Meeting of Board of Governors of New Development Bank

Union Minister of Finance & Corporate Affairs and India's Governor in New Development Bank (NDB), Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman attended the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of Board of Governors of New Development Bank on March 30, 2021. The meeting was also attended by Governors/Alternate Governors of Brazil, China, Russia and South Africa.

This year's Annual Meeting theme was “**New Development Paradigms: The Evolution of Infrastructure**”.

**Note:** Sitharaman mentioned that India is going to set up a new Development Financial Institutions (DFIs) with initial paid-up capital of around \$3 billion with a lending target of \$69 billion in next three years.

### **About New Development Bank (NDB):**

**Headquarters:** Shanghai, China

**President:** Marcos Prado Troyjo

**Founder:** BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa).

**Founded:** 15 July 2014

**First President:** K. V. Kamath

## Finance Minister Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman attends 2nd virtual G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors Meeting

Union Minister for Finance & Corporate Affairs Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman participated virtually in the 2nd G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors (FMCBG) meeting under the Italian Presidency on 07 April, 2021.

The G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors discussed Updates of the G20 Action Plan in response to COVID-19.

They also discussed supporting the financing needs of the most vulnerable economies, the progress on the international taxation agenda, promoting greener transitions and the pandemic related financial regulation issues.

For boosting support to the most vulnerable economies, the Finance Minister supported extending the Debt Service Suspension Initiative, by six months, till December 2021.

### **Facts about G20:**

**Formation:** 26 September 1999

**Members:**

20

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

**Note:** The **G20 Summit** is set to be hosted by Italy in 2021, Indonesia in 2022, India in 2023 and Brazil in 2024.

## Finance Minister Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman participated in 103rd meeting Development Committee Meeting of World Bank-IMF

Union Minister for Finance & Corporate Affairs Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman participated in the 103rd Meeting of the Development Committee Plenary via video conferencing on 09 April, 2021.

**The main agenda of the meeting was:** World Bank Group (WBG) and International Monetary Fund Support for Debt Relief Under the Common Framework and Beyond;

COVID-19 pandemic: World Bank Group Support for Fair and Affordable Access to Vaccines by Developing Countries;

From COVID-19 Crisis Response to Resilient Recovery – Saving Lives and Livelihoods while Supporting Green, Resilient and Inclusive Development.

**Note:** Smt. Sitharaman shared that the Indian Government has announced Aatma Nirbhar Packages of Rs 27.1 trillion, amounting to more than 13% of the GDP.

### **Facts about World Bank:**

**Headquarters:** Washington, D.C., U. S.

**Founded:** July 1944

**President:** David Malpass

**MD and CFO:** Anshula Kant

**Membership:** 189 countries (IBRD), 173 countries (IDA)

### **Facts about IMF (International Monetary Fund):**

**Managing Director:** Kristalina Georgieva

**Headquarters:** Washington, D.C., U.S

**Chief Economist:** Gita Gopinath

**Formation:** December 1945

**Membership:** 190 countries

## Shri Piyush Goyal launches “DGFT Trade Facilitation App” for providing instant access to Exporters/Importers

Commerce & Industry Minister Shri Piyush Goyal launched DGFT Trade Facilitation App for promoting ease of doing business and providing quick access to information to importers/exporters.

It has been developed by the **Tata Consultancy Services (TCS)**, as per the directions of the **Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT)**.

**Trade facilitation App is READY for Industry 4.0, as it provides:**

Real-time trade policy updates, notifications, application status alert, tracking help requests

Explore item-wise Export-Import policy & statistics, Track IEC Portfolio

AI based 24\*7 assistance for trade queries

DGFT services made accessible to all

Your Trade Dashboard accessible anytime & anywhere

## Piyush Goyal inaugurates e-SANTA, an electronic marketplace

Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal inaugurated e-SANTA, an electronic marketplace providing a platform to connect aqua farmers and the buyers.

It will enable the farmers to get a better price and the exporters to directly purchase quality products from the farmers.

The term **e-SANTA** was coined for the web portal, meaning **Electronic Solution for Augmenting NaCSA farmers' Trade in Aquaculture**.

**National Centre for Sustainable Aquaculture (NaCSA)** is an extension arm of Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA), Ministry of Commerce & Industry.

**e-SANTA will RAISE the lives & income of farmers by:**

- Reducing Risk
- Awareness of Products & Markets
- Increase in Income
- Shielding Against Wrong Practice
- Ease of Processes

## RBI set up a committee headed by Sudarshan Sen to review ARCs working

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) set up a committee to undertake a comprehensive review of the working of **asset reconstruction companies (ARCs)** in the financial sector ecosystem and recommend suitable measures for enabling them to meet the growing requirements.

The six-member committee will be headed by **Sudarshan Sen, former Executive Director, RBI**.

The committee will submit its report within three months from the date of its first meeting.

**About Asset Reconstruction Company (ARC):** It is a company incorporated under the Companies Act and registered with Reserve Bank of India under section 3 of The Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002. An Asset Reconstruction Company is a specialized financial institution that buys the NPAs or bad assets from banks and financial institutions.

**Facts about RBI:**

**Headquarters:** Mumbai

**Established:** 1 April 1935

**Governor:** Shaktikanta Das (25<sup>th</sup> Governor)

## Important News: Defense

### Indian Army formally closes down Military Farms

Military Farms were set up with the sole requirement of supplying hygienic cow's milk to troops billeted in various garrisons across British India.

After 132 years of glorious service to the nation, curtains were drawn on this organisation.

After independence Military Farms flourished with 30,000 heads of cattle in 130 Military Farms all over India in varied Agro-climatic conditions.

**Note:** First Military farm was raised on 01 Feb 1889 at Allahabad.

Military Farms were even established in Leh and Kargil in the late 1990s.

### DRDO lab develops light weight Bullet Proof Jacket

Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) lab Defence Materials and Stores Research and Development Establishment (DMSRDE), Kanpur has developed light weight Bullet Proof Jacket (BPJ) weighing 9.0 kilogrammes, meeting the qualitative requirements of Indian Army.

The Front Hard Armour Panel (FHAP) jacket was tested at Terminal Ballistics Research Laboratory (TBRL), Chandigarh and met relevant BIS standards.

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### Indian Army joins Multinational Military Exercise 'SHANTIR OGROSHENA' 2021 in Bangladesh

Multinational Military **Exercise SHANTIR OGROSHENA 2021 (Front Runner of Peace)** commenced on 04 April 2021 at Bangabandhu Senanibas, Bangladesh to commemorate the birth centenary of **Bangladesh's 'Father of the Nation' Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman** and mark glorious 50 years of liberation.

Indian Army contingent of 30 personnel are participating along with contingent of the Royal Bhutan Army, Sri Lankan Army and Bangladesh Army from **04 Apr to 12 Apr 2021**.

Military observers from the USA, UK, Turkey, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Singapore will also be in attendance throughout the exercise.

The theme of the exercise is **"Robust Peace Keeping Operations"**.

### India joins Multi-Lateral Maritime Exercise 'La Perouse'

**India and three other Quad member nations** joined France in a three-day (05 to 07 Apr 2021) mega naval exercise in the eastern Indian Ocean.

Indian Navy Ships INS Satpura and INS Kiltanalongwith P8I Long Range Maritime Patrol Aircraft participated, for the first time; in multi-lateral maritime exercise La Pérouse.

The Indian Navy ships and aircraft participated with ships and aircraft of French Navy, Royal Australian Navy, Japan Maritime Self Defence Force and United States Navy.

**Note:** The **Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QSD, also known as the Quad)** is an informal strategic dialogue between the United States, Japan, Australia and India.

### DRDO develops Advanced Chaff Technology to safeguard naval ships from missile attack

Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has developed an Advanced Chaff Technology to safeguard the naval ships against enemy missile attack.

Defence Laboratory Jodhpur (DLJ), a DRDO laboratory, has indigenously developed three variants of this critical technology namely Short Range Chaff Rocket (SRCR), Medium Range Chaff Rocket (MRCR) and Long Range Chaff Rocket (LRCR) meeting Indian Navy's qualitative requirements.

Chaff is a passive expendable electronic countermeasure technology used worldwide to protect naval ships from enemy's radar and Radio Frequency missile seekers.

### 8<sup>th</sup> India- Kyrgyz Joint Special Forces Exercise 'Khanjar'

The special forces of India and Kyrgyzstan have started a two-week military exercise in **Bishkek** with a focus on counter-terror drills.

The exercise named, 'Khanjar', was inaugurated 16 April, 2021 at the Special Forces Brigade of National Guards of Kyrgyz Republic in Bishkek.

It is the eighth edition of the India-Kyrgyz Joint Special Forces Exercise. The two-week long exercise focuses on high-altitude, mountains and counter-extremism.

**Note:** The exercise 'Khanjar' has been held annually between India and Kyrgyzstan since 2011.

**Facts about Kyrgyzstan:**

**Capital:** Bishkek

**President:** Sadyr Japarov

**Currency:** Kyrgyzstani som

### INAS 323 commissioned at Goa as first unit of indigenously built ALH Mk III aircraft enters Naval Service

**Indian Naval Air Squadron (INAS) 323**, the first unit of the indigenously built ALH Mk III aircraft, was commissioned into the Indian Navy at **INS Hansa, Goa** on 19 Apr 21.

The squadron will operate three state-of-the-art ALH Mk III, a multirole helicopter with Shakti engine manufactured by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL).

The Mk III version of the ALH has an all glass cockpit and will be used for Search and Rescue, Special Operations and Coastal Surveillance.

INAS 323 is commanded by Cdr Samik Nundy, an accomplished and experienced ALH pilot with extensive operational experience.

### Indian and French Navy bilateral exercise 'VARUNA-2021'

The 19th edition of the Indian and French Navy bilateral exercise 'VARUNA-2021' is scheduled to be conducted in the Arabian Sea from 25th to 27th April 2021.

The three day exercise will see high tempo-naval operations at sea, including advanced air defence and anti-submarine exercises, intense fixed and rotary wing flying operations, tactical manoeuvres, surface and anti-air weapon firings, underway replenishment and other maritime security operations.

On completion of exercise VARUNA-21, to consolidate accrued best practices and enhance interoperability, Indian Navy's guided missile frigate INS Tarkash will continue to exercise with the French Navy's Carrier Strike Group (CSG) from 28th April to 1st May 2021.

VARUNA-21 highlights growing bonhomie and showcases increased levels of synergy, coordination and inter-operability between the two friendly navies. These interactions further underscore the shared values as partner navies, in ensuring freedom of seas and commitment to an open, inclusive Indo-Pacific and a rules-based international order.

## Project DANTAK completes 60 years in Bhutan

Project DANTAK is commemorating its Diamond Jubilee in Bhutan.

It may be recalled that over 1,200 DANTAK personnel laid down their lives while constructing important infrastructure in Bhutan.

**Project DANTAK** was established on April 24, 1961 as a result of the visionary leadership of His Majesty the Third King and then Prime Minister Jawahar Lal Nehru.

Identifying the utmost importance of connectivity in spurring the socio-economic development and growth of Bhutan, DANTAK was tasked to construct the pioneering motorable roads in the Kingdom. DANTAK completed the road connecting Samdrup Jongkhar to Trashigang in 1968. In the same year, Thimphu was connected to Phuentsholing by DANTAK.

### Facts about Bhutan:

**Capital:** Thimphu

**Currency:** Bhutanese ngultrum

**King:** Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck

**Prime Minister:** Lotay Tshering

## DRDO develops Single Crystal Blades for helicopter engine application

Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has developed single crystal blades technology and supplied 60 of these blades to Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) as part of their indigenous helicopter development program for helicopter engine application.

It is part of a program taken up by Defence Metallurgical Research Laboratory (DMRL), a premium laboratory of DRDO, to develop five sets (300 in number) of single crystal high pressure turbine (HPT) blades using a nickel-based super alloy. The supply of the remaining four sets will be completed in due course.

Helicopters used in strategic and defence applications need compact and powerful aero-engines for their reliable operation at extreme conditions. To achieve this, state-of-the-art Single Crystal Blades having complex shape and geometry, manufactured out of Nickel based superalloys capable of withstanding high temperatures of operation are used.

**Note:** Very few countries in the world such as the **USA, UK, France and Russia** have the capability to design and manufacture such Single Crystal (SX) components.

## Science and Technology

## 3rd phase of Indian Beamline Project for materials research in Japan initiated

The 3rd phase of the Indian Beamline Project, a facility for materials research set up under India-Japan Scientific and Technological Cooperation, was initiated on March 23, 2021, with special focus on industrial application research.

The phase would increase the number of young researchers from India to be trained in advanced X-ray techniques of material research.

**About Indian Beamline:** The Indian Beamline has been constructed and maintained by **Saha Institute of Nuclear Physics (SINP)**, Kolkata and **Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research (JNCASR)**, Bangalore; in Japanese synchrotron light source Photon Factory (PF) of High Energy Accelerator Research Organization (KEK), with support from Nano Mission, Department of Science and Technology.

## Novel technique for tracking solar eruptions that disrupt space weather to be used in India's first solar mission

Research led by Mr. Ritesh Patel, Dr. Vaibhav Pant, and Prof. Dipankar Banerjee from **Aryabhata Research Institute of Observational Sciences (ARIES)**, Nainital, an autonomous institute under **DST, Government of India**, along with their collaborators from Royal Observatory of Belgium, have led to the development of an algorithm, **CMEs Identification in Inner Solar Corona (CIISCO)** to detect and track the accelerating solar eruption in the lower corona.

CIISCO has been successfully tested on several eruptions observed by space observatories, including Solar Dynamics Observatory and Solar-Terrestrial Relations Observatory, PROBA2/SWAP launched by NASA and ESA, respectively.

**Note:** Software named **Computer Aided CME Tracking Software (CACTus)** based on a computer vision algorithm was so far used to detect and characterise such eruptions automatically in the outer corona.

As **India's first solar mission, Aditya-L1**, will be observing this region of the solar corona, implementation of CIISCO on the Aditya-L1 data will provide new insight into the CME properties in this less explored region.

## Supreme Court's first AI-driven research portal 'SUPACE' launched by CJI Bobde

Chief Justice of India S A Bobde launched Artificial Intelligence (AI) portal, **Supreme Court Portal for Assistance in Court's Efficiency (SUPACE)**.

It is a tool that collects relevant facts and laws and makes them available to a judge. SUPACE, designed to make research easier for judges, thereby easing their workload.

**Note:** Justice L Nageshwara Rao is the current chairman of the Supreme Court's Artificial Intelligence Committee.  
Chief Justice of India (CJI) S A Bobde was the first-ever chairman of the Artificial Intelligence Committee.

### **Union Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal launched NanoSniffer, the world's first Microsensor-based Explosive Trace Detector (ETD)**

The Nanosniffer has been developed by NanoSniff Technologies which is an IIT Bombay incubated startup.

It is being marketed by Vehant Technologies, IIT Delhi incubated startup.

The core technology of NanoSniffer is protected by patents in the U.S. & Europe.

**About NanoSniffer:** The completely indigenous device ETD - NanoSniffer can detect explosives in less than 10 seconds and it also identifies and categorizes explosives into different classes.

It detects all classes of military, conventional and homemade explosives.

### **Scientists discover the farthest Gamma-ray emitting galaxy**

Astronomers have discovered a new active galaxy identified as the farthest gamma-ray emitting galaxy.

This active galaxy called the Narrow-Line Seyfert 1 (NLS1) galaxy, which is about 31 billion light-years away.

Scientists from ARIES, an autonomous institute of the Department of Science & Technology (DST), Government of India, in collaboration with researchers from other institutions, studied around 25,000 luminous Active galactic nuclei (AGN) from the Sloan Digital Sky Survey (SDSS), a major optical imaging and spectroscopic survey of astronomical objects in-operation for the last 20 years and found a unique object that emits high-energy gamma rays located at a high redshift (more than 1).

They identified it as a gamma-ray emitting NLS1 galaxy, which is a rare entity in space.

For the research, the scientists used one of the largest ground-based telescopes in the world, the 8.2 m Subaru Telescope located at Hawaii, USA.

The new gamma-ray emitting NLS1 was formed when the Universe was only about 4.7 billion years old as compared to its current age of about 13.8 billion years.

### **NASA's Ingenuity helicopter makes history with successful flight on Planet Mars**

As per the U.S. space agency NASA, the miniature robot helicopter Ingenuity performed a successful take-off and landing on Mars.

**This is the first powered, controlled flight** by an aircraft over the surface of another planet.

Ingenuity helicopter weighs 4 pounds i.e. 1.8 kg. It also has a battery, heater and sensor. It has a solar panel at the top, which charges the battery.

**About NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration):** It is an independent agency of the U.S. Federal Government responsible for the civilian space program, as well as aeronautics and space research.

**Founded:** 1 October 1958

**Headquarters:** Washington, D.C., United States

## NASA's Perseverance rover on Mars makes oxygen from planet's carbon dioxide atmosphere

It is the second successful technology demonstration on the mission, which flew a mini-helicopter earlier.

The generation of oxygen was performed by a toaster-sized unit in the rover called **Moxie - the Mars Oxygen In-Situ Resource Utilization Experiment.**

It made 5 grams of the gas - equivalent to what an astronaut at Mars would need to breathe for roughly 10 minutes.

NASA is planning that future human missions would take scaled-up versions of Moxie with them to the Red Planet rather than try to carry all the oxygen needed to sustain them.

Mars' atmosphere is dominated by carbon dioxide. The expectation is that it can produce up to 10 grams of O<sub>2</sub> per hour.

## Community service centre to make data from India's first solar space mission accessible for analysis

A community service centre has been set up to bring all data on board **India's first dedicated solar space mission** to a single web-based interface enabling the users to quickly look at the data and identify the interesting science cases.

The service centre called **Aditya-L1 Support Cell (AL1SC)**, a joint effort of **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** and **Aryabhata Research Institute of Observational Sciences (ARIES)** an autonomous institute of the **Department of Science & Technology**, Government of India will be used by the guest observers in analyzing science data and preparing science observing proposals.

**AL1SC** set up at the transit campus of **ARIES** at Haldwani, Uttarakhand, will jointly work with **ISRO** to maximize utilization of science data from **Aditya-L1** and facilitate India's first dedicated solar space mission- Aditya-L1.

The centre will also provide the co-aligned data from other observatories around the world that can complement the data obtained from Aditya-L1 allowing users to accomplish the science goals beyond the capabilities of the Aditya-L1.

## China's first Mars Rover named 'Zhurong'

China has named its first Mars rover 'Zhurong' after the traditional fire god.

China launched its Mars probe - Tianwen-1 on July 23, 2020. The spacecraft, consisting of an orbiter, a lander and a rover, entered the parking orbit of Mars on February 24, 2021.

The Tianwen-1 aims to map the morphology and geological structure, investigate surface soil characteristics and water-ice distribution, analyze the surface material composition, measure the ionosphere and the characteristics of the Martian climate and environment at the surface and perceive the physical fields.

**Note:** China would become the third country after the former Soviet Union and the United States to put a robot rover on Mars.

## DRDO conducts maiden trial of Python-5 Air to Air Missile

Tejas, India's indigenous Light Combat Aircraft, added the 5th generation Python-5 Air-to-Air Missile (AAM) in its air-to-air weapons capability on April 27, 2021.

Trials were also aimed to validate enhanced capability of already integrated Derby Beyond Visual Range (BVR) AAM on Tejas.

The missiles were fired from Tejas aircraft of Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA) flown by Indian Air Force (IAF) Test pilots belonging to National Flight Test Centre (NFTC).

## Award and Honours

### Marathi writer Dr Sharankumar Limbale to receive Saraswati Samman 2020

Noted Marathi writer Dr Sharankumar Limbale will receive Saraswati Samman, 2020 for his book **Sanatan**.

Limbale's Sanatan has been published in 2018. Sanatan is an important social and historical document of dalit struggle.

**About Saraswati Samman:** It, instituted by K K Birla Foundation in 1991, is recognised as the most prestigious and highest literary award in the country.

The award carries fifteen lakh rupees, a citation and a plaque.

### Rajinikanth to be honoured with 51st Dadasaheb Phalke Award

Union Minister for Information and Broadcasting Shri Prakash Javadekar announced the recipient of the 51<sup>st</sup> Dadasaheb Phalke Award.

The award for 2019 will be conferred to legendary actor Shri Rajinikanth.

It will be presented on 3<sup>rd</sup> May, along with the National Film Awards.

**Note:** Debuted in Apoorva Raagangal (1975), **Rajinikanth** is an Indian actor who works primarily in Tamil cinema. He was also honored with the Padma Vibhushan (2016) by the Government of India.

**Facts about Dadasaheb Phalke Award:**

**First winner:** Devika Rani

**Most recent winner:** Amitabh Bachchan (2018)

**Established:** 1969

**Category of:** National Film Awards

### Dutee Chand to receive Chhattisgarh Veerni Award

Dutee Chand, the Jakarta Asian Games silver-medalist in 100 and 200 metres, will receive Chhattisgarh Veerni Award.

Due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, the inaugural edition of the awards ceremony will be held virtually on April 14, 2021.

In 2019, the Odisha sprinter Dutee Chand became the first Indian woman to win a gold medal at the World University Games held in Italy.

**Chhattisgarh Veerni Award**, instituted by the Chhattisgarh state government, recognises contribution of Indian women in different fields, including sports.

### Union Minister of Education presents AICTE Lilavati Awards 2020 on women empowerment

Union Minister of Education Shri Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' presented the AICTE Lilavati Awards 2020 on women empowerment to the winners in New Delhi.

Mr Pokhriyal welcomed the initiative of **All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE)** for instituting the Lilavati Awards and stressed that such innovative steps shall be a great motivation for girls to join higher education.

**Based on the theme 'Women Empowerment'**, AICTE finalized the winners from a total of 456 entries who competed across **6 sub themes**, which include, **Women's Health, Self-Defense, Sanitation and Hygiene, Literacy, Women Entrepreneurship, and Legal Awareness.**

**LIST OF AWARDEES:**

Sub theme	Name of Team	Name of Institute
Women Entrepreneurship	SWEAT (Sona Women and Entrepreneurship Training)	Sona College of Technology, Tamil Nadu
Sanitation and Hygiene	<b>SKBCOP ECO Club</b>	<b>Smt. Kishoritai Bhoyar College of Pharmacy, Mararashtra</b>
Literacy	Digital Literacy	Bharatiya Vidyapeeth (Deemed to be University)

		Institute of Management and Entrepreneurship Development, Pune
Women's Health	WIT Women Health Coalition	Walchand Institute of Technology, Maharashtra
Legal Awareness	Radiant Seetha	Thiagarajar Polytechnic College, Tamil Nadu
Self Defense	Paritranas	St. Joseph's College of Engineering, Tamil Nadu

## BAFTA Awards 2021: Nomadland wins 4 prizes

The **74th British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA)** were held on 10 and 11 April 2021 at the Royal Albert Hall in London, honouring the best national and foreign films of 2020 and early 2021.

**Note:** The Film '**Nomadland**' directed by Chloe Zhao, won **4 BAFTA** awards, including Best Film, Best Director, Best Cinematography and Best Leading Actress.

### Main Winners of BAFTA Awards 2021:

Award	Winner
Best film	Nomadland
Outstanding British film	Promising Young Woman
Leading actress	Frances McDormand (Nomadland)
Leading actor	Anthony Hopkins (The Father)
Supporting actress	Yuh Jung Youn (Minari)
Supporting actor	Daniel Kaluuya (Judas and the Black Messiah)
Director	Chloé Zhao (Nomadland)
EE Rising Star Award	Bukky Bakray
Outstanding debut by a British writer, director or producer	His House
Film not in the English language	Another Round
Documentary	My Octopus Teacher
Cinematography	Nomadland
Original Screenplay	Promising Young Woman
Adapted Screenplay	The Father
British short film	The Present
Outstanding British contribution to cinema	Noel Clarke
Bafta Fellowship	Ang Lee

**Oscar-winning producer Guneet Monga receives second highest civilian French honour**

Oscar-winning producer Guneet Monga, known for films like "The Lunchbox" and "Masaan", was awarded with **'Knight of the Order of Arts and Letters' 2021**, the second highest civilian French honour by French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Dria.

Monga was given the award for her contribution to world cinema through her Indo-French productions and her relentless work towards women empowerment.

## Roberto Benigni to receive Venice Film Festival's Lifetime Achievement award

Oscar-winning Italian director-actor Roberto Benigni will receive this year's **Golden Lion for Lifetime Achievement** of the **78th Venice International Film Festival**, which runs September 1- 11, 2021.

The director is best known for his Holocaust drama "Life is Beautiful". The 1997 film fetched him the best actor and best international film Oscars.

### Prime Minister confers National Panchayat Awards 2021

**About National Panchayati Raj Day:** It is the national day of Panchayati Raj System in India celebrated by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj on **24 April annually**.

Then Prime Minister of India Manmohan Singh declared the first National Panchayati Raj Day on 24 April 2010.

**Prime Minister Narendra Modi conferred the National Panchayat Awards 2021** on the occasion of National Panchayati Raj day.

**The Awards were given under various categories including** the Deen Dayal Upadhyay Panchayat Sashaktikaran Puraskar (to 224 Panchayats), Nanaji Deshmukh Rashtriya Gaurav Gram Sabha Puraskar (to 30 Gram Panchayats), Gram Panchayat Development Plan Award (to 29 Gram Panchayats), Child-friendly Gram Panchayat Award (to 30 Gram Panchayats) and e-Panchayat Puraskar (to 12 States).

The Award money ranging from 5 to 50 lakh rupees was transferred electronically to the awardee Panchayats.

## Rumana Sinha Sehgal awarded 'Nelson Mandela World Humanitarian Award 2021'

Rumana Sinha Sehgal, Software-engineer turned social entrepreneur from Hyderabad, has been awarded the prestigious 'Nelson Mandela World Humanitarian Award 2021' by the Diplomatic Mission Global Peace.

Her work has been recognised in the fields of developing innovative and functional 'green' products by recycling varied materials and creative use of non-biodegradable materials.

She is also the recipient of the Nationwide Award -under 50- Business Leader 2021 for social entrepreneurship by Business Mint.

At the Influencer Summit in January this year, she also received the 'International Influencer of the year 2021'.

She has won the ReX Karmaveer Chakra (silver) and Global Fellowship award 2019 for her work in the zone of women and child empowerment.

She was also crowned the 'Mrs Universe Successful 2018'.

### 93rd Academy Awards (Oscar award 2021)

The 93rd Academy Awards ceremony, presented by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (AMPAS), honored the best films of 2020 and early 2021. It took place in Los Angeles on April 25, 2021.

**Note:** Nomadland won three awards. The film won Best Picture, Best Actress for Frances McDormand and Best Director for Chloe Zhao. Chloe is the second woman to win this year in the Academy's 93 years of giving awards.

In the 'In Memoriam' section of the 93rd Academy Awards, actor Irrfan Khan and costume designer Bhanu Athaiya were honoured. The two legends passed away in 2020.

#### Main Winners of 93rd Academy Awards:

Award	Winner
Best Picture	Nomadland
Best Director	Chloe Zhao (Nomadland)
Best Actress	Frances McDormand (Nomadland)
Best Actor	Anthony Hopkins (The Father)
Best Supporting Actress	Youn Yuh-jung (Minari)
Best Supporting Actor	Daniel Kaluuya (Judas And The Black Messiah)
Best Original Screenplay	Promising Young Woman
Best Adapted Screenplay	The Father
Best Animated Feature Film	Soul
Best International Feature Film	Another Round
Best Original Score	Soul
Best Original Song	Fight For You (Judas And The Black Messiah)
Best Documentary Feature	My Octopus Teacher
Best Sound	Sound of Metal
Best Cinematography	Mank
Best Film Editing	Sound of Metal
Jean Hersholt Humanitarian Award	Tyler Perry

### Krithi Karanth becomes first Indian woman to get 'Wild Innovator Award'

Dr Krithi K Karanth, Chief Conservation Scientist at Bengaluru-based Centre for Wildlife Studies (CWS), has been chosen as the first Indian and Asian woman for the 2021 'WILD Innovator Award'.

This award was given by the '**WILD ELEMENTS Foundation**' brings together a coalition of innovators, advocates and partners to disrupt the status quo and identify solutions to global sustainability and conservation.

The Foundation's distinctive approach to addressing climate change is the "Power of Three," recognising the interconnectedness of animal kind, humankind, and plant kind for the future planetary wellness of our shared home.

## New Appointments

### SAIL chairperson Soma Mondal is new chairperson of SCOPE

Soma Mondal, chairperson of Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL), was elected the new chairperson of the **SCOPE (Standing Conference of Public Enterprises)**.

Mondal will have a two-year term starting April; she took charge of SAIL chairperson on January 1, 2021.

**About SCOPE (Standing Conference of Public Enterprises):** It is an apex professional organization representing the Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs). It promotes excellence in organisations where public investment is involved, in order to enable them to be globally competitive.

### Mukhmeet S Bhatia takes over the charge of Director General of ESIC

Shri Bhatia is an IAS Officer of 1990 batch of Jharkhand cadre.

**Employee State Insurance Corporation (ESIC)** is a statutory and autonomous Body under the Ministry of Labour and Employment, Government of India.

**Industry: Insurance**

**Founded: 24 February 1952**

**Headquarters: New Delhi**

**Former RBI Governor Urjit Patel appointed Additional Director of Britannia**

The Board of Britannia Industries has appointed former Reserve Bank Governor Urjit Patel as the company's Additional Director in the category of Non-Executive and Independent Director.

**Note:** He was the Governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) during September 2016-December 2018.

**About Britannia Industries Limited:** It is an Indian food and beverage company.

**CEO:** Varun Berry

**Headquarters:** Bengaluru

**Founded:** 1892

## Jeff Bezos tops Forbes' billionaire list; Mukesh Ambani is no. 10

Forbes has released its 35th annual World's Billionaires List 2021.

**Jeff Bezos** is the world's richest person for the fourth year running, worth \$177 billion.

**Mukesh Ambani** of India has become the richest person in Asia, ranked No. 10. The number of billionaires on Forbes' 35th annual list of the world's wealthiest has increased to 2755. Altogether they are worth \$13.1 trillion.

**India** has **the third highest number of billionaires with 140** in the world after the U.S. (724) and China (698).

Rank	Name	Wealth	Company
1	Jeff Bezos	\$177 billion	Amazon
2	Elon Musk	\$ 151 billion	Tesla, SpaceX
3	Bernard Arnault	\$ 150 billion	LVMH
10	Mukesh Ambani	\$ 84.5 billion	Reliance Industries

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### TAFE chief Mallika Srinivasan named chairperson of PESB

Mallika Srinivasan, Chairman and Managing Director of Tractors and Farm Equipment (TAFE) Ltd, has been named chairperson of the **Public Enterprises Selection Board (PESB)**.

This is for the first time a private sector specialist has been appointed the head of the PESB, which is responsible for making appointments to top posts in Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs).

### Justice N V Ramana appointed as 48th Chief Justice of India

President Ram Nath Kovind has appointed Justice N V Ramana as the 48th Chief Justice of India, accepting the recommendation made by the outgoing CJI S A Bobde.

Justice Ramana will take oath on April 24, 2021.

Ramana will serve as the 48th Chief Justice of India till August 26, 2022.

Before his elevation to the Supreme Court on February 17th, 2014, Justice Ramana was the Chief Justice of the Delhi High Court.

### QCI chief Adil Zainulbhai appointed chairman of Capacity Building Commission

According to a Personnel Ministry order issued, former Quality Council of India (QCI) Chief Adil Zainulbhai has been appointed as the chairperson of Capacity Building Commission, while Ramaswami Balasubramaniam has been appointed as member (HR) and Praveen Pardeshi as a member (administration).

**Note:** The government approved Capacity Building Commission under the **National Programme for Civil Services Capacity Building (NPCSCB)**, also known as '**Mission Karmayogi**', to train civil servants at all levels.

### Chintan Vaishnav appointed as new Mission Director for Atal Innovation Mission

Acclaimed socio-technologist Dr Chintan Vaishnav has been appointed as the new Mission Director for Atal Innovation Mission (AIM).

He will replace Ramanathan Ramanan, who had been leading AIM as its first Mission Director since June 2017.

Dr Vaishnav is moving from his present assignment at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, USA, to head AIM.

**About Atal Innovation Mission (AIM):** It is a flagship initiative set up by the NITI Aayog to promote innovation and entrepreneurship in the country and was set up in 2016.

## Nguyen Xuan Phuc sworn in as Vietnam's president: Pham Minh Chinh as Prime Minister

Nguyen Xuan Phuc has been formally sworn in as president in the Vietnamese capital, Hanoi.

Nguyen Xuan Phuc, of Communist Party of Vietnam, was Vietnam's prime minister for the last five years.

Vietnam's National Assembly confirmed Pham Minh Chinh of Communist Party of Vietnam, a career security official, as the Southeast Asian country's next Prime Minister.

### **Facts about Vietnam:**

**Capital:** Hanoi

**Currency:** Vietnamese dong

## S Ramann appointed as SIDBI Chairman & MD

The government has appointed S Ramann as Chairman and Managing Director of Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI).

The appointment is for a period of three years from the date of his assuming the charge or until further orders.

Ramann, a 1991 batch Indian Audit & Accounts Service officer, is currently the CEO of National E-Governance Services Ltd, India's first Information Utility.

**Facts about SIDBI (Small Industries Development Bank of India):** It is the apex regulatory agency in India for Microfinance Institutions and is under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Finance, Government of India.

**Founded:** 2 April 1990

**Headquarters:** Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh

## Sushil Chandra appointed as the Chief Election Commissioner

President Ram Nath Kovind appointed Sushil Chandra, the senior-most Election Commissioner, as the Chief Election Commissioner in the Election Commission of India (ECI).

Sushil Chandra will assume the charge of office of the Chief Election Commissioner with effect from the 13th April, 2021 vice Shri Sunil Arora consequent upon his demitting the Office of the Chief Election Commissioner on the 12th April, 2021. A 1980 batch Indian Revenue Service Officer, Mr. Chandra took office as an Election Commissioner on February 15, 2019 after retiring as the chairman of the Central Board of Direct Taxes.

## **Punjab appoints Sonu Sood as brand ambassador of COVID Vaccination Programme**

Actor Sonu Sood has been made the brand ambassador for Punjab's COVID Vaccination Programme.

During the nationwide coronavirus-induced lockdown last year, the actor, known for playing the antagonist in films, had helped thousands of migrant workers stranded across the country reach their home states.

**Note:** Sonu Sood presented to the Punjab Chief Minister his book "I am no Messiah".

### **Facts about Punjab:**

**Capital:** Chandigarh

**Governor:** V P Singh Badnore

**Chief Minister:** Captain Amarinder Singh

## **Russian President signs law letting him run for president of Russia again**

Russian President Vladimir Putin has signed a law letting him to hold office for two additional six-year terms, giving himself the possibility to stay in power until 2036.

Vladimir Putin is a Russian politician and former intelligence officer who is serving as the current president of Russia since 2012.

He was also prime minister from 1999 to 2000 and again from 2008 to 2012.

Putin was first elected president in 2000 and served two consecutive four-year terms.

Putin completes his ongoing 4<sup>th</sup> term as President in 2024.

### **Facts about Russia:**

**President:** Vladimir Putin

**Capital:** Moscow

**Currency:** Russian Ruble

## **NCAER appoints World Bank's economist Poonam Gupta as Director General**

National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) appointed the World Bank's lead economist Poonam Gupta as its next Director General.

Gupta, the first woman Director General of NCAER, will succeed Shekhar Shah who has led NCAER since 2011 and will complete his second five-year term in early May 2021.

**Facts about National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER):**

**President:** Nandan Nilekani

**Headquarters:** New Delhi

**Founded:** 1956

## Siddharth Singh Longjam appointed as Director General of NADA

IAS officer Siddharth Singh Longjam will take over as the National Anti-Doping Agency's Director General (NADA).

Longjam is currently serving as joint secretary in the sports ministry and is also the CEO of the currently suspended National Dope Testing Laboratory (NDTL).

He will replace Navin Agarwal.

**Facts about National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA):** It is the national organisation responsible for promoting, coordinating, and monitoring the doping control program in sports in all its forms in India.

**Headquarters:** New Delhi

**Founded:** 24 November 2005

## Haiti Prime Minister Joseph Jouthe resigns

Joseph Jouthe has served as the Prime Minister since March 2020.

President nominated **Claude Joseph as Haiti's new Prime Minister.**

**Note:** Haiti has seen eight Prime Ministers since 2015.

**Facts about Haiti:**

**Capital:** Port-au-Prince

**President:** Jovenel Moïse

**Currency:** Haitian gourde

## Miguel Díaz-Canel to succeed Raúl Castro as the President of Cuba

Miguel Díaz-Canel will succeed Raúl Castro as the Cuban Communist Party's first secretary, the most powerful position on the island.

He is the first person without the surname Castro to run Cuba since the 1959 revolution.

He will now hold Cuba's two most important positions, head of the party and president of the state.

Eighty nine years old Castro had been in the post since 2011, when he took over from his older brother, Fidel Castro.

### **Facts about Cuba:**

**Capital:** Havana

**Continent:** North America

**Currency:** Cuban peso (CUP)

## **India's CAG GC Murmu selected as external auditor of OPCW**

Hague-based Conference of State Parties of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) selected the India's Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) GC Murmu as its external auditor for a three-year term starting 2021.

India was also selected as the member of the executive council of the OPCW representing Asia group for another two-year term during the OPCW conference of state parties.

**About Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW):** It is an intergovernmental organisation and the implementing body for the Chemical Weapons Convention.

**Headquarters:** The Hague, Netherlands

**Founded:** 29 April 1997

**Director General:** Fernando Arias

**Membership:** 193 member states

## **Rekha Menon becomes first woman chairperson of NASSCOM**

Rekha M. Menon, chairperson and senior managing director at Accenture India, was appointed as the chairperson of the National Association of Software and Services Companies (NASSCOM) for 2021-22.

In the 30-year history of NASSCOM, she became the first woman to head the IT industry's apex body.

**About National Association of Software and Service Companies (NASSCOM):** It is an Indian non-governmental trade association and advocacy group focused mainly on Information Technology and Business Process Outsourcing industry. Established in 1988, NASSCOM is a non-profit organization.

## **Justice Rajesh Bindal appointed acting Chief Justice of Calcutta High Court**

The President of India in exercise of the powers conferred by Article 223 of the Constitution of India, appointed Shri Justice Rajesh Bindal, senior-most Judge of

Calcutta High Court, to perform the duties of the office of the Chief Justice of that High Court with effect from 29th April, 2021 following the retirement of Shri Justice Thottathil Bhaskaran Nair Radhakrishnan, Chief Justice, Calcutta High Court.

### **Central Government appoints Economic Affairs Secretary Ajay Seth as a Director on the Central Board of RBI**

The Central Government has appointed Ajay Seth, Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance, Government of India as a Director on the Central Board of Reserve Bank of India.

A 1987-batch Karnataka cadre IAS officer, Seth assumed charge of the Department of Economic Affairs in April 16, 2021.

Seth replaces Tarun Bajaj, who was appointed as Revenue Secretary.

### **Secretary, DoE in Finance Ministry T V Somanathan designated as new Finance Secretary**

IAS Officer T V Somanathan who is serving as Secretary, Department of Expenditure (DoE) in the Finance Ministry has been designated as the Finance Secretary. He is a 1987 batch IAS Officer of Tamil Nadu Cadre.

## **Reports and Indices**

### **NITI Aayog releases report 'Investment Opportunities in India's Healthcare Sector'**

NITI Aayog released a report outlining the range of investment opportunities in various segments of India's healthcare sector, including hospitals, medical devices and equipment, health insurance, telemedicine, home healthcare and medical value travel.

The report was released by NITI Aayog Member Dr VK Paul, CEO Amitabh Kant, and Additional Secretary Dr Rakesh Sarwal.

India's healthcare industry has been growing at a Compound Annual Growth Rate of around 22% since 2016. At this rate, it is expected to reach USD 372 billion in 2022.

As per estimates by the National Skill Development Corporation, healthcare can generate 27 lakh additional jobs in India between 2017-22.

### **World Development Report 2021**

The **World Bank** recently released the **World Development Report 2021: Data for Better Lives.**

The latest edition of the World Development Report provides a blueprint on how to harness the power of data for development, to ensure no one is left behind.

Most countries have shied away from an open-data policy. Only 11 percent low-income countries consistently made available a license classifiable as 'open'.

The comparable rate for lower-middle-income countries was 19 per cent, for upper-middle-income countries 22 percent and high-income countries 44 percent.

**Facts about World Bank:**

**Headquarters:** Washington, D.C., United States

**Founded:** July 1944

**President:** David Malpass

**MD and CFO:** Anshula Kant

**Membership:** 189 countries (IBRD), 173 countries (IDA)

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

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

**1 rank:** Iceland

**2 rank:** Finland

**3 rank:** Norway

**140 rank:** India

Afghanistan was at the last position of 156.

In South Asia, Bangladesh was the top performer with a global ranking of 65, followed by Nepal at 106.

**Note: India** has been ranked 112 in WEF's Global Gender Gap Report 2020.

The Global Gender Gap Index benchmarks the evolution of gender-based gaps among four key dimensions (Economic Participation and Opportunity, Educational Attainment, Health and Survival, and Political Empowerment).

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

In this special edition of GWEC's 16<sup>th</sup> annual flagship report ahead of the crucial COP26 conference in November 2021, the Global Wind Report 2021 highlights wind power's role.

2020 was the best year in history for the global wind industry with 93 GW of new capacity installed.

Today, there is now 743 GW of wind power capacity worldwide, helping to avoid over 1.1 billion tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> globally.

**India** is the world's fourth-largest onshore wind market by cumulative installations with nearly 38 GW of capacity.

The government has set an **ambitious target of 175 GW of installed renewable energy capacity by 2022**, which calls for current wind capacity to nearly double within the next two years, totaling 60 GW of onshore wind and 5 GW of offshore wind.

**Facts about Global Wind Energy Council (GWEC):**

The Global Wind Energy Council provides a credible and representative forum for the entire wind energy sector at an international level.

**Headquarters:** Brussels, Belgium

**CEO:** Ben Backwell

**Founded:** 2005

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### Inclusive Internet Index 2021: India ranks 49<sup>th</sup>

**About the Inclusive Internet Index:** The Inclusive Internet Index by the **Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU)** in collaboration with Facebook, benchmarks countries on the internet's availability, affordability, relevance and the readiness of people to use it.

Now in its fifth year, the Index covers 120 countries, representing 96% of the world's population and 98% of global GDP.

**1<sup>st</sup> Rank:** Sweden

**2<sup>nd</sup> Rank:** United States

**3<sup>rd</sup> Rank:** Spain

**49<sup>th</sup> Rank:** India

**Note:** India is tied with Thailand in 49th place this year.

### National climate vulnerability assessment report identifies eight eastern states as highly vulnerable

The report titled '**Climate Vulnerability Assessment for Adaptation Planning in India Using a Common Framework**', which identifies the most vulnerable states and districts in India with respect to current climate risk and key drivers of vulnerability, was released by DST Secretary Professor Ashutosh Sharma.

The National climate vulnerability assessment report has identified **Jharkhand, Mizoram, Orissa, Chhattisgarh, Assam, Bihar, Arunachal Pradesh, and West Bengal as states highly vulnerable to climate change.**

Among all states, Assam, Bihar, and Jharkhand have over 60% districts in the category of highly vulnerable districts.

A total of 94 representatives from 24 states and 2 Union Territories participated in the nation-wide exercise jointly supported by the **DST and the Swiss Agency for Development & Cooperation (SDC).**

**Note: DST (Department of Science and Technology)** has been implementing **2 national missions** on climate change as part of the National Action Plan on Climate Change.

These are **National Mission for Sustaining the Himalayan Ecosystem (NMSHE)** and **National Mission on Strategic Knowledge for Climate Change (NMSKCC)**.

As part of these missions, DST has been supporting the State Climate Change Cells in 25 States and Union Territories.

## India ranks 84<sup>th</sup> in 'Henley Passport Index: Q2 2021 Global Ranking'



**Henley Passport Index 2021** has revealed the list of the world's most powerful passports and India has been ranked 84th on it.

**India's passport got a visa-free score of 58**, which means Indian passport holders can visit 58 countries without prior visa.

**1st rank-** Japan (visa-free score 193)

**2nd rank-** Singapore (192)

**3rd rank-** Germany & South Korea (191)

**Iraq and Afghanistan** are the countries with the worst passport with visa-free score 28 and 26 respectively.

## World Press Freedom Index 2021: India ranks 142



India has been placed at 142nd among 180 countries and remains "one of the world's most dangerous countries" for journalists.

**1 rank:** Norway

**2 rank:** Finland

**3 rank:** Denmark

**142 rank:** India

**180 rank:** Eritrea

**Note:** The latest index released ranks 180 countries.

The report noted that “only 12 of the Index’s 180 countries (7%) can claim to offer a favourable environment for journalism”.

**About Press Freedom Index:** It is an annual ranking of countries compiled and published by **Reporters Without Borders (RSF)** since 2002 based upon the organization's own assessment of the countries' press freedom records in the previous year.

## India ranks 87th in Global Energy Transition Index 2021

India has been ranked at the 87th position among 115 countries in the Energy Transition Index (ETI) 2021 that tracks nations on the current performance of their energy systems across various aspects.

The report from the **World Economic Forum (WEF)** released and prepared in collaboration with Accenture.

**Rank 1:** Sweden

**Rank 2:** Norway

**Rank 3:** Denmark

**Rank 87:** India

**India** has targeted improvements through subsidy reforms and rapidly scaling energy access, with a strong political commitment and regulatory environment for the energy transition.

The index benchmarks 115 countries on the current performance of their energy systems across three dimensions- economic development and growth, environmental sustainability and energy security.

**Facts about World Economic Forum (WEF):**

**Headquarters:** Geneva, Switzerland

**Founder & Executive Chairman:** Klaus Schwab

**Founded:** 24 January 1971

## UNFPA launches the State of World Population Report, 2021: 'My Body is My Own'

UNFPA has launched the report State of World Population Report 2021: 'My Body is My Own' - Claiming the right to autonomy and self-determination.

For the first time, a United Nations report focuses on bodily autonomy - the power and agency to make choices about your body without fear of violence or having someone else decide for you.

Nearly half the women from 57 developing countries do not have the right to decide regarding their bodies including using contraception, seeking health care, or even on their sexuality.

**Note:** In India, according to National Family Health Survey (NFHS)-4 (2015-2016), only about 12% of currently married women (15-49 years of age) independently make decisions about their own healthcare, while 63% decide in consultation with their spouse. For a quarter of women (23%), it is the spouse that mainly takes decisions about healthcare.

**Facts about United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA):**

**Headquarters:** New York, United States

**Executive Director:** Natalia Kanem

**Founded:** 1969

**Parent organization:** United Nations

### SIPRI Report: India 3<sup>rd</sup> highest military spender in 2020

The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute released its “Trends in world Military Expenditure, 2020” report. According to the report, India was the third largest military spender in the world in 2020, behind only the US and China.

The US accounted for 39 percent of the money spent on the military globally, China accounted for 13 percent, and India accounted for 3.7 percent of the globe’s share. The military expenditure of India has grown by 2.1% and that of China has grown by 1.9%. The military Expenditure of the US has grown by 4.4%.

Global military expenditure rose to \$1981 billion in 2020, an increase of 2.6 percent from 2019.

Rank	Country	Spending
1	US	USD 778 Billion
2	China	USD 252 Billion
3	India	USD 72.9 Billion

**About Stockholm International Peace Research Institute:** It is an international institute based in Stockholm. It was founded in 1966 and provides data, analysis and recommendations for armed conflict, military expenditure, and arms trade as well as disarmament and arms control.

### Chandler Good Government Index (CGGI) 2021: India ranked 49<sup>th</sup>

India has been ranked 49<sup>th</sup> in the Chandler Good Government Index (CGGI) 2021 among 104 countries in terms of government capabilities and outcomes.

India’s index score stood at 0.516.

**Rank 1:** Finland

**Rank 2:** Switzerland

**Rank 3:** Singapore

**Rank 49:** India

The **Chandler Institute of Governance**, headquartered in Singapore, releases the **Chandler Good Government Index (CGGI)**.

The CGGI is the index of effective governance in the world. It ranks 104 countries in terms of their government capabilities and outcomes.

The CGGI focuses on seven pillars: Leadership and Foresight, Robust Laws and Policies, Strong Institutions, Financial Stewardship, Attractive Marketplace, Global Influence and Reputation and Helping People Rise.

## Schemes

### Dr. Harsh Vardhan inaugurates Alignment and Awareness Event for Publicity of DSIR-PRISM Scheme

Union Minister for Science & Technology, Earth Sciences and Health & Family Welfare, Dr Harsh Vardhan inaugurated Alignment and Awareness Event for Publicity of the **Department of Scientific and Industrial Research - Promoting Innovations in Individuals, Startups and MSMEs (DSIR-PRISM)** scheme at IIT Delhi.

The innovation movement by DSIR-PRISM making synergy with three National Initiatives like Unnat Bharat Abhiyan, Smart India Hackathon and Rural Technology Action Group is unique.

**Note:** Under the initiative, an innovator of Indian nationality - student, professional and common citizen - is provided technical, strategic, and financial assistance by DSIR-PRISM.

**Recently**, Dr. Harsh Vardhan digitally participated in a panel discussion on vaccine production and distribution across Asia at the “**World Immunisation and Logistics Summit**”.

### Jal Jeevan Mission deploys first-of-its-kind sensor-based IoT devices to monitor rural drinking water supply systems

The Ministry of Jal Shakti has decided to take the digital route to use sensor-based IoT devices to effectively monitor the implementation of Jal Jeevan Mission in more than six lakh villages.

For this, National Jal Jeevan Mission in collaboration with Tata Community Initiatives Trust (TCIT) and Tata Trusts recently completed pilot projects in several remote villages of five States i.e. Uttarakhand, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Himachal Pradesh.

**The Internet of Things (IoT)** based remote monitoring provides near real-time information without any manual intervention by using sensors.

**Note:** The aim of **Jal Jeevan Mission** is to provide piped water to all the rural households by 2024. It was launched on 15 August 2019. It comes under the Ministry of Jal Shakti, Government of India.

### Stand-Up India Scheme: More than Rs 25,586 crore sanctioned by the Banks in 5 years

25,586 crore has been sanctioned under Stand Up India Scheme to over 1,14,322 accounts upto 23.03.2021 since inception of the Scheme.

**About Stand up India Scheme:** It was launched on 5<sup>th</sup> April 2016.

This scheme has been extended up to the year 2025.

The **objective** of Stand-Up India is to promote entrepreneurship amongst women, Scheduled Castes (SC) & Scheduled Tribes (ST) categories.

Stand Up India Scheme facilitates bank loans between 10 lakh and 1 crore to at least one SC or ST borrower and at least one woman borrower per bank branch for setting up a greenfield enterprise. This enterprise may be in manufacturing, services or the trading sector.

### **Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana – Gramin: 92% target achieved in the 1st phase**

A target of 1 crore houses was set for completion in the 1<sup>st</sup> phase of the **Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana – Gramin (PMAY-G)** scheme i.e. from 2016-17 to 2018-19, against which 92% target of completion has been achieved.

The government is confident that all the houses in the Permanent Wait List would be completed by the end of Amrut Mahotsava.

**About Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana – Gramin (PMAY-G):** It is one of the flagship programmes of the Government of India which is driven by the noble objective of providing “Housing for All” by the year 2022.

It was launched in November 2016 by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

### **More than 28.68 crore loans for an amount of Rs 14.96 lakh crore sanctioned since launch of the PMMY**

More than **68 crore** loans for an amount of **Rs 14.96 lakh crore** have been sanctioned since launch of the **Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana (PMMY)** scheme (as on 19.03.2021).

Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana has completed six years.

PMMY helped in generation of 1.12 crore net additional employment from 2015 to 2018.

**Note:** About 68% of the loans have been given to women entrepreneurs.

**About Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana (PMMY):** It was launched by the **Hon'ble Prime Minister on April 8, 2015** for providing loans upto Rs.10 Lakh to the non-corporate, non-farm small/micro enterprises.

### **Udhampur dist. tops in India to implement PMGSY**

**Udhampur district of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir** has bagged top position at National level for successfully implementing **Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY)** during 2020-21.

The district has received top position for constructing roads of 560.49 km in 2020-21.

However, four more districts from the Union Territory have also figured in the list of PMGSY top performing 30 districts in the country. It includes Rajouri, Doda, Kathua and Reasi districts of Jammu division of Jammu and Kashmir.

**Chhattisgarh bagged the first place among all states/UT for developing the highest road length under PMGSY, Uttarakhand (2<sup>nd</sup> place), Jammu & Kashmir (3<sup>rd</sup> place).**

**Facts about Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY):** It is a nationwide plan in India to provide good all-weather road connectivity to unconnected villages.

**Launch year:** 25<sup>th</sup> December 2000

**Launched by (Prime Minister):** Atal Bihari Vajpayee

**Ministry:** Ministry of Rural Development

## April 17, World Hemophilia Day

World Hemophilia Day is celebrated to raise the awareness and understanding of hemophilia and other bleeding disorders.

The theme of this year is “**Adapting to change: sustaining care in a new world**”.

World Haemophilia Day was started in 1989 by the World Federation of Hemophilia. April 17th was selected as World Haemophilia Day to commemorate the birthday of Frank Schnabel, who founded the World Federation of Hemophilia.

## April 18, World Heritage Day

The World Heritage Day is also known as the International Day for Monuments and Sites.

The World Heritage Day was proposed by the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) on 18 April 1982 and approved by the General Assembly of UNESCO in 1983.

World Heritage Day 2021 theme this year is “**Complex Pasts: Diverse Futures**”.

**Note:** Presently, there are **38 World Heritage Sites located in India**. India has the sixth largest number of sites in the world. Among these 38 UNESCO Heritage sites of India, the list includes **30 cultural sites, 7 natural sites, and 1 mixed site**.

As of June 2020, a total of **1,121 World Heritage Sites (869 cultural, 213 natural, and 39 mixed)** exist across 167 countries. With 55 selected areas, China and Italy are the countries with the most sites on the list.

## Shri Piyush Goyal launches the Startup India Seed Fund Scheme

Minister of Railways, Commerce & Industry, Consumer Affairs and Food & Public Distribution Shri Piyush Goyal launched the Startup India Seed Fund Scheme (SISFS).

**Rs. 945 Crore** corpus will be divided over the next 4 years for providing seed funding to eligible startups through eligible incubators across India.

The scheme is expected to support an estimated 3,600 startups through 300 incubators.

SISFS will Secure seed funding, Inspire innovation, Support transformative ideas, Facilitate implementation, and Start startup revolution.

This Scheme will create a robust startup ecosystem, particularly in Tier 2 and Tier 3 towns of India, which are often deprived of adequate funding.

The Government has introduced initiatives like **Startup Innovation Challenges, National Startup Awards, Ranking of States, SCO Startup Forum, Prarambh etc.**

**Note:** Recently, the government has constituted an experts advisory committee for **Startup India Seed Fund Scheme**, chaired by **H K Mittal** from the Department of Science and Technology.

The Startup India Seed Fund Scheme was announced by the **Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi on 16th January 2021 in his address of 'Prarambh: Startup India International Summit'**, marking the five-year anniversary of the Startup India initiative.

## Prime Minister launches distribution of e-property cards under SVAMITVA scheme

The Prime Minister, Narendra Modi launched the distribution of e-property cards under the SVAMITVA scheme on National Panchayati Raj Day.

Under the scheme, the entire village's properties are surveyed by drone and property cards are distributed to the owners. 4.09 lakh people were given such e-property cards in more than 5 thousand villages.

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

It paves the way for using the property as a financial asset by villagers for availing loans and other financial benefits.

The Scheme will cover around 6.62 Lakh villages of the entire country during 2021-2025.

The pilot phase of the Scheme was implemented during 2020-2021 in the States of Maharashtra, Karnataka, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Madhya Pradesh and select villages of Punjab and Rajasthan.

## Important Days

April 2, World Autism Awareness Day

The **United Nations General Assembly** unanimously declared 2 April as World Autism Awareness Day to highlight the need to help improve the quality of life of those with autism.

World Autism Awareness Day, passed in council on 1 November 2007, and adopted on 18 December 2007.

**About Autism:** Autism, also called Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), is a complicated condition that includes problems with communication and behavior.

### April 05, National Maritime Day

The National Maritime Day was first celebrated on April 5, 1964.

The history of India shipping first started on April 5, 1919, when the **SS Loyalty, the first ship of The Scindia Steam Navigation Company Ltd** travelled from Mumbai to the United Kingdom (London).

**Note: World Maritime Day** is observed on the last week of September on Thursday annually.

### April 07, World Health Day

The theme for 2021 is '**Building a Fairer and Healthier World for Everyone**'.

In 1948, the WHO held the First World Health Assembly. The Assembly decided to celebrate 7 April of each year, with effect from 1950, as the World Health Day.

The World Health Day is held to mark WHO's founding and is seen as an opportunity by the organization to draw worldwide attention to a subject of major importance to global health each year.

**Facts about WHO (World Health Organization):**

**Headquarters:** Geneva, Switzerland

**Founded:** 7 April 1948

**Director-General:** Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus

### April 10, World Homeopathy Day

The day is observed on the occasion of the birth anniversary of German physician Dr Christian Friedrich Samuel Hahnemann, the founder of homoeopathy. He was born in Paris on April 10, 1755.

**Note:** A two-day Scientific Convention on '**Homoeopathy - Roadmap for Integrative Medicine**' was organized from 10-11, April 2021 by the Central Council for Research in Homoeopathy, an autonomous apex research organization under the **Ministry of AYUSH** on the World Homoeopathy Day.

## April 21, National Civil Services Day

The National civil services day is observed on April 21. It consists of (IAS) Indian Administrative services, (IPS) Indian Police services, (IFS) Indian Foreign services along with central Group A and group B services.

On April 21, 1947, Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel, the Home Member of Parliament inaugurated the All India Services.

In his speech at the All India Administrative Service Training School at Metcalfe House, Delhi, he referred to civil servants as the '**steel frame of India**'.

To mark this occasion, **Prime Minister's Awards for Excellence in Public Administration** is presented to Districts/Implementing Units for implementation of Priority programme and innovation categories.

## April 22, World Earth Day

World Earth Day is an annual event on April 22 to demonstrate support for environmental protection. First held on April 22, 1970, it now includes a wide range of events coordinated globally by EARTHDAY.ORG (formerly Earth Day Network).

The World Earth Day 2021 theme is '**Restore Our Earth**'.

The theme features five primary programs: The Canopy Project, Food and Environment, Climate Literacy, the Global Earth Challenge and The Great Global CleanUp.

## April 26, World Intellectual Property Day

In 2000, WIPO (World Intellectual Property Organisation)'s member states designated April 26 – the day on which the WIPO Convention came into force in 1970 – as World IP Day with the aim of increasing general understanding of IP.

In 2021, the World Intellectual Property Day (IP) is being celebrated under the theme: '**IP and SMEs: Taking your Ideas to Market**'.

**Intellectual property (IP)** refers to creations of the mind, such as inventions; literary and artistic works; designs; and symbols, names and images used in commerce.

IP is protected in law by, for example, patents, copyright and trademarks, which enable people to earn recognition or financial benefit from what they invent or create. By striking the right balance between the interests of innovators and the wider public interest, the IP system aims to foster an environment in which creativity and innovation can flourish.

## April 28, World Day for Safety and Health at Work

Theme is 'Anticipate, prepare and respond to crises: Invest now in resilient occupational safety and health systems'.

The World Day for Safety and Health at Work will focus on strategies to strengthen national **occupational safety and health (OSH)** systems to build resilience, in order to face crises now and in the future.

The annual World Day for Safety and Health at Work on 28 April promotes the prevention of occupational accidents and diseases globally.

## April 30, Ayushman Bharat Diwas

Ayushman Bharat Diwas is celebrated across the country every year on the 30th of April. The day is significant to help provide and promote affordable medical facilities in the country.

The scheme is called Ayushman Bharat Yojana and is also known as Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY).

The day included a special scheme that was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the year 2018. The Scheme has various benefits with a cover of 5 lakh rupees per family to be given per year.

## Books and Authors

### Vice President releases book 'Suparipalana' by retired civil servant Dr Shailendra Joshi

The Vice President Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu released the book 'Suparipalana', the Telugu translation of "Echo T Calling: Towards People-Centric Governance", written by former Telangana Chief Secretary, Dr Shailendra Joshi.

The translator of the book is Annavarapu Brahmaiah and the publisher is Maruthi

### A book titled 'Manohar Parrikar: Brilliant Mind, Simple Life' by Nitin Gokhale

This book is as much a personal tribute by the author to Manohar Parrikar, as an honest attempt to capture the persona of Parrikar the man, the politician and patriot.

Manohar Parrikar was India's first IIT-qualified Chief Minister. He served as the Chief Minister of Goa and Defence Minister of India.

**Nitin Gokhale**, one of South Asia's leading Strategic Analysts, is a renowned author, media trainer and founder of a specialised defence related website BharatShakti.in and Strategic News International.

The book is published by Bloomsbury.

### Prime Minister releases hindi version of Odisha Itihaas by Dr. Harekrushna Mahtab

The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi released the hindi translation of the book 'Odisha Itihaas' written by 'Utkal Keshari' Dr. Harekrushna Mahtab.

The book, available in Odia and English so far, has been translated into Hindi by Shri. Shankarlal Purohit.

**About the Author:** Dr. Harekrushna Mahtab was a notable figure in the Indian Independence Movement. He also served as Chief Minister of Odisha from 1946 to 1950 and from 1956 to 1961.

### Suresh Raina's memoir 'Believe' to release soon

Suresh Raina has penned his memoir '**Believe: What Life and Cricket Taught Me**' along with cricket writer Bharat Sundaresan.

The book will be published by **Penguin Random House India** and is expected to be out on May 12, 2021.

In this book, Suresh Raina takes us through the challenges he faced as a young cricketer.

**Suresh Raina** is one of India's most successful international cricketers. Raina was part of the World Cup-winning team in 2011.

### Jnanpith winner Amitav Ghosh's forthcoming publication 'The Living Mountain': A Fable for Our Times

It is a fable for the current times: a cautionary tale of how humans have systematically exploited nature, leading to an environmental collapse.

HarperCollins Publishers India will publish The Living Mountain as a special standalone edition in January 2022 under its prestigious Fourth Estate imprint.

Amitav Ghosh is an Indian writer and the winner of the 54th Jnanpith award, best known for his work in English fiction.

He was awarded the Padma Shri by the Indian government in 2007.

## Sports

### F1 Bahrain Grand Prix 2021

**British Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes) won the** F1 Bahrain Grand Prix 2021 held at Bahrain International Circuit, Sakhir, Bahrain.

Max Verstappen (**Red Bull**) got second position and Valtteri Bottas (Mercedes) got third position.

**Note:** This was Hamilton's 96th career Formula 1 victory.

## Hubert Hurkacz wins Men's singles title in Miami Open Tennis Championships 2021; Ashleigh Barty wins Women's singles title

**Poland's Hubert Hurkacz** has won the **men's singles title** as he defeated Italy's Jannik Sinner at Miami Gardens, Florida, United States.

**Australia's Ashleigh Barty** has won the **women's singles title** in the finals as she defeated Canada's Bianca Andreescu.

## 2023 Men's Boxing World Championships to be held in Uzbekistan's capital Tashkent

The city of Tashkent is awarded the 2023 AIBA Men's boxing World Boxing Championships after the successful bid presentation by the Boxing Federation of Uzbekistan.

**Note: International Boxing Association** announced that Asian Boxing Championships 2021 will be hosted by New Delhi, India from May 21-31.

**Facts about the International Boxing Association (AIBA):**

**Headquarters:** Lausanne, Switzerland

**President:** Umar Kremlev

## FIFA suspends Pakistan, Chad football associations

FIFA Council suspended the **Pakistan Football Federation (PFF)** with immediate effect due to third-party interference, which constitutes a serious violation of the FIFA Statutes.

FIFA Council decided to suspend the **Chadian Football Association (FTFA)** with immediate effect due to government interference.

**Note:** Qatar will host the 2022 FIFA World Cup.

**Facts about FIFA (Fédération Internationale de Football Association):**

**Founded:** 21 May 1904

**Headquarters:** Zürich, Switzerland

**Membership:** 211 national associations

**President:** Gianni Infantino

**Founded:** 1946

## Sports Minister inaugurates Khelo India State Centre of Excellence for Rowing discipline at Water Sports Academy in Srinagar

Union Minister for Sports & Youth Affairs Shri Kiren Rijiju inaugurated Khelo India State Centre of Excellence (KISCE) for Rowing discipline at the Jammu & Kashmir Sports Council Water Sports Academy in Srinagar on 10th April 2021.

This is one of the two KISCES from Jammu & Kashmir itself, with the Maulana Azad Stadium for Fencing discipline in Jammu being the other.

**Note:** There are currently 24 KISCES across 23 States and Union Territories and each of them focuses on Olympics sports discipline.

## **Nethra Kumanan becomes first Indian woman sailor to qualify for the Tokyo Olympics**

Four sailors created history from India by qualifying for this year's Tokyo Olympics. Vishnu Saravanan and the pair of Ganapathy Chengappa and Varun Thakkar made the cut during the ongoing Asian Qualifiers in Oman.

**The 23-year-old from Chennai, Nethra Kumanan**, became the **first Indian woman sailor** to qualify in the laser radial event in the Mussanah Open Championship in Oman.

**Note: North Korea will not participate in the Tokyo Olympics** to protect its athletes amid the coronavirus pandemic.

## **Kane Williamson wins Sir Richard Hadlee Medal for fourth time**

**New Zealand's captain Kane Williamson** was adjudged 'International Test Player of the Year' along with winner of the prestigious Sir Richard Hadlee Medal for the fourth time in last six years at the **New Zealand Cricket Awards for the 2020-21 season**.

Amelia Kerr and Devon Conway claimed double honours during the 2020-21 awards season.

Devon Conway won the men's ODI and T20 Player of the Year awards.

Amelia Kerr won the Women's T20 Player of the Year and Women's Dream11 Super Smash Player of the Year awards.

## **Virat Kohli named Wisden Almanack's ODI cricketer of the 2010s**

To commemorate the 50th anniversary of the first One-Day International, five ODI cricketers of the decade have been named in the 2021 edition of the Wisden Cricketers' Almanack, the reference book, often described as the Bible of Cricket.

One cricketer has been named for each of the decades between 1971 and 2021.

### **List of Winners:**

India captain **Virat Kohli** was named **Wisden Almanack's ODI cricketer of the 2010s**.

Former Indian cricketer **Kapil Dev** was named the **ODI Cricketer of the 1980s**.

Legendary Indian cricketer **Sachin Tendulkar** was named the **ODI Cricketer of the 1990s**.

England all-rounder **Ben Stokes** was declared the '**Cricketer of the Year**' for a second successive time.

Australia women cricketer **Beth Mooney** was awarded the **leading women cricketer in the World**.

West Indies all-rounder **Kieron Pollard** was named the **leading T20I cricketer in the world**.

Jason Holder, Mohammad Rizwan, Dom Sibley, Zak Crawley, and Darren Stevens were named **Wisden Cricketers of the Year**.

### Asian Wrestling Championships 2021

(Almaty, Kazakhstan: April 13-18, 2021)

**India finishes 3<sup>rd</sup> place** in the medals table in the 34<sup>th</sup> edition of the Senior Asian Wrestling Championships 2021.

Place	Countries	Medals
1	Iran	17 Medals (7 Gold, 5 Silver, 5 Bronze)
	Kazakhstan	17 Medals (7 Gold, 5 Silver, 5 Bronze)
3	India	14 Medals (5 Gold, 3 Silver, 6 Bronze)

### Emilia Romagna F1 Grand Prix 2021

**Max Verstappen (Red Bull)** won the Emilia Romagna F1 Grand Prix 2021 held at Autodromo Internazionale Enzo e Dino Ferrai Circuit in Imola, Italy.

**Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes)** got second position and **Lando Norris (McLaren)** got third position.

### Tamil Nadu teenager Arjun Kalyan becomes India's 68th Chess GrandMaster (GM)

Arjun Kalyan became India's 68th Grandmaster. The 18-year-old from Chennai crossed the 2500 ELO mark after scoring a win over Dragan Kosic in the 5th round of the ongoing GM Round Robin "Rujna Zora-3" in Serbia.

**Note:** Viswanathan Anand became the **1st Grandmaster** from India in 1988.

Leon Mendonca from Goa became India's **67th Grandmaster** in 2020.

### 2021 AIBA Youth World Boxing Championships

The 2021 AIBA Youth World Boxing Championships were held in Kielce, Poland. India topped the medal table with eight gold and three bronze medals.

**Medal table**

Rank	Nation	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
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1	India	8	0	3	11
2	Russia	3	5	3	11
3	Uzbekistan	3	1	6	10

**Note:** Gitika (48kg), Naorem Babyrojisana Chanu (51kg), Poonam (57kg), Vinka (60kg), Arundhati Choudhary (69kg), T Sanamacha Chanu (75kg) and Alfiya Pathan (+81kg) clinched gold medals as India finished at the No. 1 position in the women's section with seven gold medals.

India's Sachin won the men's 56kg gold medal.

### Rafael Nadal wins 12th Barcelona Open Title 2021

Spain's Rafael Nadal won the 12th Barcelona Open Title 2021. He defeated Greece's Stefanos Tsitsipas.

Rafael Nadal secured his first title of the year 2021 and 87th of his career.

## Obituaries

### Veteran actress Shashikala passes away

More popularly known by her first name, Shashikala Om Prakash Saigal had acted in over 100 movies.

Shashikala was honoured with the prestigious Padma Shri by the Indian government in 2007. Shashikala bagged two Filmfare awards for her work in Aarti and Gumrah.

### Gita Press president Radheshyam Khemka passes away

Khemka took Sanatan literature to the masses.

**Gita Press** is the world's largest publisher of Hindu religious texts. It is located in Gorakhpur city of India's Uttar Pradesh state. It was founded in 1923 by Jaya Dayal Goyanka and Ghanshyam Das Jalan for promoting the principles of Sanatana Dharma.

### Prince Philip, husband of Britain's Queen Elizabeth II, passes away at 99

Philip Philip was also known as the Duke of Edinburgh.

The Prince married Britain's Princess Elizabeth in 1947, the longest reigning woman in British history.

### **Eminent Historian Yogesh Praveen passes away**

Eminent Historian and an expert on Awadh especially Lucknow Yogesh Praveen passed away.

Mr. Yogesh Praveen had a deep knowledge of the culture and history of Avadh, especially Lucknow.

He was awarded Padma Shri in 2019.

Apart from books he also published poetry. He had received several other awards, including the UP Ratna Award (2000), the National Teachers Award (1999), the Yash Bharti Award (2006), and the UP Sangeet Natak Academy Award (1998).

### **Noted Tamil actor Vivek passes away**

An incredible comedian, Vivek had entertained people of Tamil Nadu for over three decades through his 200 plus films.

A disciple of former President Abdul Kalam, Vivek was involved in afforestation and other social welfare activities.

He was awarded the Padma Shri in 2009.

### **Noted radiologist Dr. Kakarla Subba Rao passes away**

Dr. Kakarla Subba Rao was a radiologist who served as the first director of Nizam's Institute of Medical Sciences, Hyderabad.

For his contributions to the field of medicine, Rao was conferred Padma Shri in 2000.

It is also widely known that he had returned to India from the USA following a request by the then Chief Minister, Shri N T Rama Rao and served the motherland with dedication.

Dr. Rao was the founder president of **Telugu Association of North America (TANA)**.

### **Noted Hindi litterateur Narendra Kohli passes away**

Eminent writer and litterateur of the Hindi world, Narendra Kohli, passed away. Na Bhooto Na Bhavishyati was his best book.

He was awarded the Vyas Samman (2012) and Padma Shri (2017).

## Former Assam Chief Minister Bhumidhar Barman passes away

Mr. Barman, a veteran Congress leader, was a two-time Chief Minister of the state. His first term as the Chief Minister lasted from April 22 to May 14, 1996. He was again made the Chief Minister in 2010. The seven-term MLA was first elected to the Assam Assembly in 1967.

## Noted Bengali poet Shankha Ghosh passes away

Shankha Ghosh, Bengali poet and litterateur, passed away. Ghosh contributed significantly to Bengali and Indian literature. Shankha Ghosh had won the Sahitya Akademi Award, Padma Bhushan, and the prestigious Jnanpith Award.

## Former Reserve Bank of India (RBI) governor M Narasimham passes away

M Narasimham was the first and only governor to be appointed from the Reserve Bank cadre. He served as the 13th RBI governor for seven months between May and November, 1977. After his stint at the RBI, Narasimham joined the International Monetary Fund where he served as Executive Director and later at the World Bank. He also served as the Finance Secretary in 1982. Narasimham is considered as the father of banking reforms. He headed two committees in 1991 and 1997 that had critical influence on the country's banking sector. He was honoured with Padma Vibhushan in 2000.

## Maulana Wahiduddin Khan passes away

Maulana Wahiduddin Khan, a renowned Islamic scholar and peace activist, passed away. The 96-year-old scholar, who was honoured with the Padma Bhushan in 2000, was awarded the Padma Vibhushan in January 2021. Khan wrote over 200 books on several aspects of Islam and established the Islamic Centre in New Delhi.

## Gujarati poet Dadudan Gadhvi passes away

Dadudan Gadhvi, also known as Kavi Dad, was a Gujarati poet and folk singer from Gujarat, India.

He had received the Gujarat Gaurav Award as well as the Jhaverchand Meghani Award. He was also awarded the Padma Shri in 2021 for his contribution in the field of literature and education.

### Odia and English author Manoj Das passes away

Manoj Das, an eminent Indian author who wrote in Odia and English, passed away. Das was awarded Padma Shri in 2001 and Padma Bhushan in 2020 for his contributions in the field of literature and education. He received the first Sri Aurobindo Puraskar for his research on the lesser-known facts of India's freedom struggle led by Aurobindo. He was also honoured with the Sahitya Akademi Award fellowship.

### Miscellaneous

### Shri Prahlad Singh Patel and Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan inaugurates the 'Maharaja Chhatrasal Convention Centre at Khajuraho

Shri Prahlad Singh Patel, Minister of State for Tourism and Culture (Independent Charge) and Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan, Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh inaugurated the 'Maharaja Chhatrasal Convention Centre at Khajuraho developed under **Swadesh Darshan Scheme** of Ministry of Tourism in Khajuraho, Madhya Pradesh.

**The UNESCO world Heritage site Khajuraho** attracts tourists for its mesmerising temples. Adding on more to its features is the convention Centre with brilliant facilities, Named as Maharaja Chhatrasal Convention Centre Khajuraho, this venue will cater to all your business needs.

### First-of-its-kind Cruise service starts between Surat and Diu

Minister of State for Ports, Shipping & Waterways (I/C) Shri Mansukh Mandaviya flagged off the Cruise service from Hazira Port of Surat to Diu.

Before 2014, there were 139 cruise calls at the Indian Ports but today there are 450 cruise calls in the country.

The number before 2014 was one lakh and the number of tourists in 2019-20 was 4.5 lakhs.

**Note:** Indian coastline has a huge potential for the cruise tourism industry and 6 International cruise terminals are being planned on both the west coast (Mumbai, Goa, Kochi) and east coast (Visakhapatnam, Kolkata, Chennai) of India.

## ICCR unveils 'Little Guru' app, world's first Gamified Sanskrit learning App

The **Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR)** celebrated its 71st Foundation Day at Indian Embassy in Beijing on 09 April, 2021.

On the occasion, the **ICCR has unveiled 'Little Guru' app, world's first Gamified Sanskrit learning App** which was jointly launched in Beijing by Ambassador Vikram Misri and renowned Chinese scholar on Sanskrit and India studies, Professor Wang Bangwei.

In keeping pace with changing technology in access as well as teaching methods, ICCR has tied up with Gamapp Sportswizz Tech. Pvt. Ltd. to launch 'Little Guru', a specialized app for learning Sanskrit.

**Note:** This year, ICCR has also announced two new fellowships dedicated to music – Bhimsen Joshi fellowship for music and Ustad Ghulam Mustafa Khan fellowship for Music to encourage research in the field of Indian music.

### **Facts about Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR):**

**Founder:** Abul Kalam Azad

**Founded:** 9 April 1950

**Headquarters:** New Delhi

**Director General:** Shri Dineshk Patnaik

## Prime Minister addresses the Association of Indian Universities' 95th Annual Meet and National Seminar of Vice-Chancellors

The Prime Minister, Narendra Modi addressed the Association of Indian Universities (AIU) 95th Annual Meet and National Seminar of Vice-Chancellors on April 14, 2021.

The event was hosted by Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar Open University, Ahmedabad.

**AIU was established in 1925** under the leaders like Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan and Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee.

**The Prime Minister released the following four books based on Baba Saheb Bhimrao Ambedkar's life, written by Shri Kishor Makwana:**

Dr. Ambedkar Jivan Darshan,

Dr. Ambedkar Vyakti Darshan,

Dr Ambedkar Rashtra Darshan,

Dr. Ambedkar Aayam Darshan

## "MANAS" platform launched

The Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India Prof. K VijayRaghavan launched the "MANAS" App to promote wellbeing across age groups.

**MANAS** which stands for **Mental Health and Normalcy Augmentation System** was endorsed as a national program by the Prime Minister's Science, Technology, and Innovation Advisory Council (PM-STIAC).

MANAS is a comprehensive, scalable, and national digital wellbeing platform and an app developed to augment mental well-being of Indian citizens.

MANAS was initiated by the Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India. It was jointly executed by **NIMHANS Bengaluru, AFMC Pune and C-DAC Bengaluru.**

**Note:** In India, the **Mental Health Care Act 2017** was passed on 7 April 2017 and came into force from 29 May 2018.

### “Online Grievance Management Portal” for persons from scheduled castes launched

Union Minister for Communication & IT and Law & Justice Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad launched the “**Online Grievance Management Portal of National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC)**” at a function organised by NCSC on the occasion of 130th birth anniversary of Bharat Ratna Baba Saheb Dr. B. R. Ambedkar.

**NCSC Grievance Management portal** would make it easier for the Scheduled Castes population of country to register their complaint from any part of the country.

The portal designed in collaboration with the Bhaskaracharya Institute for Space Applications and Geoinformatics (BISAG-N), a Centre of Excellence under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, Government of India will facilitate an end-to-end e-filing of complaints and grievances and their tracking.

**About the National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC):** It was set up under Article 338 of the Constitution of India.

**Headquarters:** New Delhi

**Founded:** 19 February 2004

**Chairman:** Vijay Sampla

### Eatsmart Cities Challenge and Transport 4 All Challenge launched

Shri Hardeep S Puri, MoS (I/C), Housing and Urban Affairs launched the EatSmart Cities Challenge and Transport 4 All Challenge.

**About EatSmart Cities Challenge:** EatSmart Cities Challenge was organized in association with **Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)** under the aegis of Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

The EatSmart Cities Challenge aims to motivate Smart Cities to develop a plan that supports a healthy, safe and sustainable food environment.

The EatSmart Cities Challenge is envisioned as a competition among cities to recognize their efforts in adopting and scaling up various initiatives under **Eat Right India**.

The challenge is open to all Smart Cities, capital cities of States /UTs, and cities with **a population of more than 5 lakh**. At the end of the first phase of the challenge, **11 cities** will be selected for deeper engagement for an extended period to implement their vision.

**About Transport 4 All (T4All) Challenge:** The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs launched the Transport 4 All challenge in collaboration with the **Institute for Transportation and Development Policy (ITDP)**.

The Transport4All Digital Innovation Challenge aims to develop digital solutions that will make public transport safe, affordable, comfortable, and reliable for all.

All the Smart Cities Mission cities, capitals of states and union territories, and all cities with a population of over 5 lakhs are eligible for the Challenge.

### Gender Samvaad event launched

Gender Samvaad event, a joint attempt between **DAY-NRLM** and the Initiative for What Works to Advance Women and Girls in the Economy (**IWWAGE**), was launched by Nagendra Nath Sinha, Secretary, Ministry of Rural Development.

The attempt is to generate greater awareness on gender related interventions under DAY-NRLM across the country and best practices, with a focus on hearing voices from the states and the field.

**Note:** With over 60 million women mobilised to be part of one of India's largest livelihoods programme, DAY-NRLM holds great promise for advancing women's socio-economic empowerment by organising them into self-help groups (SHGs) and federations of the rural poor.

**About DAY-NRLM (Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Rural Livelihoods Mission):** The DAY-NRLM is the flagship program of Govt. of India for promoting poverty reduction through building strong institutions of the poor, particularly women, and enabling these institutions to access a range of financial services and livelihoods.

**Aajeevika - National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM)** was launched by the Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India in June 2011.

In November 2015, the program was renamed Deendayal Antayodaya Yojana (DAY-NRLM).

### Three new initiatives/services of National Internet Exchange of India (NIXI) launched

Shri Ajay Prakash Sawhney, Secretary, Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY) & Chairman NIXI launched three path breaking initiatives for National Internet Exchange of India (NIXI).

With this launch, NIXI has announced to play a supporting role for the **IPv6 (Internet Protocol version 6)** awareness and adoption in the country along with the Department of Telecommunications (DOT) & MeitY.

**The details of the three new initiatives are as below:**

**IPv6 Expert Panel (IP Guru):** IP Guru has been launched to extend technical support to Indian Entities in adoption of IPv6.

**NIXI Academy:** NIXI Academy to be created to educate technical/non-technical people in India about technologies like IPv6 which will lead to better management of Internet resources in country.

**NIXI-IP-INDEX:** NIXI-IP-INDEX portal has been launched to showcase IPv6 adoption rate in India and across the world.

**About National Internet Exchange of India (NIXI):** It is a not-for-profit organization (section 8 of the Companies Act 2013) working since 2003 for spreading the internet infrastructure to the citizens of India.

### **Union Minister of Education launches “World’s 1st affordable and long-lasting hygiene product DuroKea Series”**

Union Minister of Education Shri Ramesh Pokhriyal ‘Nishank’ launched “World 1st affordable and long-lasting hygiene product DuroKea Series”, **developed by IIT Hyderabad researchers.**

Researcher from Indian Institute of Technology Hyderabad led Dr. Jyotsnendu Giri, Associate Professor in Biomedical Engineering and founder EaffoCare Innovation Pvt. Ltd incubating at iTIC, IIT Hyderabad has developed innovative DuroKea long-lasting technologies to combat COVID-19 virus spreading.

This next generation DuroKea antimicrobial technology starts at Rs. 189, kills 99.99% of germs instantly and leaves behind the long-lasting protective nanoscale coating up to 35 days till next wash.

### **Marathi film 'Puglya' wins Best Foreign Language Feature at Moscow International Film Festival 2021**

The film has been directed and produced by Vinod Sam Peter under the banner Abraham Films.

Puglya is a story that revolves around a pug and two boys, Rushab and Datta, who are around 10 years old.

# Monthly Current Affairs

## March 2021

### Important News: State

#### **Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath inaugurated Shaheed Ashfaq Ulla Khan Zoological Park in Gorakhpur**

The Chief Minister said the zoo has been named after great freedom fighter Shaheed Ashfaq Ullah Khan.

It will be the second biggest zoo in Uttar Pradesh after Kanpur Zoological Park.

**Note:** Recently Uttar Pradesh government has organized **Banana Festival in Kushinagar district** under ODOP (One District One Product) scheme.

#### **Arunachal Pradesh CM Pema Khandu launched 'Dekho Apna Pradesh'**

Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu launched 'Dekho Apna Pradesh' – an initiative of the chief minister himself, conceptualized on the lines of the union tourism ministry's 'Dekho Apna Desh' initiative.

It aims to restart tourism activities and encourage citizens to take a pledge to visit at least 10 places in Arunachal Pradesh by 2022.

**About Dekho Apna Desh:** It is an initiative of the Ministry of Tourism which was launched by Union Minister for Tourism Shri Prahlad Singh Patel at Konark, Odisha on 24th January 2020.

#### **'Anandam: The Center for Happiness' in IIM Jammu**

Union Minister of Education **Ramesh Pokhriyal** inaugurates 'Anandam: The Center for Happiness' at **Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Jammu** virtually.

Lieutenant Governor, Jammu and Kashmir, Shri Manoj Sinha; Founder, Art of Living Foundation, Sri Sri Ravi Shankar virtually attended the occasion.

It aligns with the **National Education Policy 2020** that aims to transform India's education system by 2021.

**'Anandam: The Center for Happiness'** will be divided into five broad categories, namely, Counselling, Holistic wellness, Elective courses on Happiness Development, Research and Leadership & Faculty Development

#### **Uttar Pradesh government approves scheme offering affordable rental housing for urban migrants and poor**

The Uttar Pradesh government will start the **Affordable Rental Housing and Complexes (ARHC) scheme** for poor people living in cities and a proposal to this

effect was approved by the state cabinet presided over by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.

**About ARHC scheme:** It has been launched by the government of India through the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs under the 'self-reliant India' campaign.

**Note:** The scheme will be implemented under **two models** in the state.

**Model one** involves converting vacant houses funded by the central or state government into an ARHC through an agreement.

Under the **second model**, ARHC will be built, operated and maintained by public/private entities on their available vacant land.

### **First-of-its-kind Cruise service starts between Surat and Diu**

Minister of State for Ports, Shipping & Waterways (I/C) Shri Mansukh Mandaviya flagged off the Cruise service from Hazira Port of Surat to Diu.

Before 2014, there were 139 cruise calls at the Indian Ports but today there are 450 cruise calls in the country.

The number before 2014 was one lakh and the number of tourists in 2019-20 was 4.5 lakhs.

**Note:** Indian coastline has a huge potential for the cruise tourism industry and 6 International cruise terminals are being planned on both the west coast (Mumbai, Goa, Kochi) and east coast (Visakhapattanam, Kolkata, Chennai) of India

### **Power Minister R K Singh launches 'GRAM UJALA' in Bihar**

Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Ministry of Power and Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, R K Singh launched the 'GRAM UJALA' programme in Arrah, Bihar.

Under the GRAM UJALA programme, **Convergence Energy Services Limited (CESL)** will distribute high quality LED bulbs, at an affordable cost of 10 rupees per bulb in rural areas.

The Village Ujala program will be funded entirely through **carbon credits** and will be the first such program in India.

**In the first phase** of this programme, 1.5 crore LED bulbs will be distributed across villages of Aarah (Bihar), Varanasi (Uttar Pradesh), Vijaywada (Andhra Pradesh), Nagpur (Maharashtra), and village in western Gujarat.

### **Bihar becomes first state in country to implement 'Ethanol Production Promotion policy 2021'**

Bihar has become the first state in the country to implement 'Ethanol Production Promotion policy 2021' that would allow investors to directly make ethanol from maize, molasses, broken rice and rotten grains.

The Central government has already given permission for direct production of ethanol in December 2020 in consonance with **National Policy of Biofuels, 2018**.

An investor will get an additional government subsidy of 15% of the cost of plant and machinery up to a maximum of Rs 5 crore, in addition to the existing incentives under the **Bihar Industrial Investment Promotion Policy, 2016**.

**Note:** Currently, **India** produces 5.30 thousand barrel of ethanol, which is very low compared to countries like the USA and Brazil.

At present, **Bihar** has been producing 12 crore litre ethanol per year and is the fifth highest ethanol-producing state in the country.

**Uttar Pradesh** is the highest ethanol-producing state in the country.

### **Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister launches India's first FPO portal**

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath launched '**UPFPO Shakti Portal**' as part of Kisan Kalyan Mission at an event in Gorakhpur.

The Farmer Producer Organization-centric (FPO-centric) portal will bring farmers, producer groups, traders and the agriculture and other allied departments of the UP government on one platform.

The portal was developed with technical and funding support from the **Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF)**.

**Note:** The state currently has 576 FPOs comprising around 2.15 lakh farmers. Of these, 471 FPOs have registered themselves on the portal.

### **Asia's largest Tulip Garden in Srinagar opens**

In the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, Asia's largest Tulip Garden in Srinagar has been opened for the general public and tourists.

**About Tulip Garden (Indira Gandhi Memorial Tulip garden):** It is the largest tulip garden in Asia spread over an area of about 30 hectares.

It is situated in the valley of the Jabarawan Hills on the banks of Dal Lake.

The garden was opened in 2007 with the aim to boost floriculture and tourism in Kashmir Valley.

**Note:** The **Tulip festival**, organised at the onset of spring season in the Valley, is an annual celebration that aims to showcase the range of flowers in the garden as part of tourism efforts by the government of Jammu and Kashmir.

### **Andhra Pradesh to launch India's first "Government-run Ambulance Network" for animals**

The Andhra Pradesh government has decided to set up mobile ambulance services "Government-run Ambulance Network" for animals to boost the animal husbandry and veterinary sector in the state.

The Animal Husbandry Department has been further directed to set up one Mobile Ambulance Veterinary Clinic at every assembly constituency.

These mobile ambulances shall provide veterinary first aid services along with spot diagnosis and attending to emergency cases.

**Facts about Andhra Pradesh:**

**Capital:** Amaravati  
**Governor:** Biswabhusan Harichandan  
**Chief Minister:** Y.S. Jaganmohan Reddy

### **Shri Sanjay Dhotre releases Commemorative Postage Stamp on 100 years of first visit of Mahatma Gandhi to Odisha**

Shri Sanjay Dhotre, Minister of State for Education, Communications and Electronics & Information Technology digitally released a Commemorative Postage Stamp on 100 years of first visit of Mahatma Gandhi to Odisha.

This Commemorative Postage Stamp celebrates an important event of Indian History which is the **first visit of Mahatma Gandhi to Odisha on 23<sup>rd</sup> March, 1921**.

It energized the Non-Cooperation movement and strengthened the cause of the freedom struggle.

### **India's largest floating solar power plant at Telangana to be commissioned by May 2021**

India's largest floating solar power plant of **100 MW capacity** is being developed in Telangana's Ramagundam and is likely to be commissioned by May, 2021.

It is one of the solar plants being developed by the energy conglomerate NTPC, which is all set to commission around 217 MW floating solar capacity in the next few months.

The other renewable energy plants that are likely to be commissioned this year are 92 MW floating unit at Kayamkulam gas plant in Kerala and 25 MW unit at Simhadri power plant.

**Note:** The world's largest solar power plant with 600 MW capacity is being set up on Omkareshwar Dam on Narmada river in Madhya Pradesh. The project is expected to start power generation only by 2022-23.

### **Kalanamak Rice Festival**

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath inaugurated a three-day 'Kalanamak Rice Festival' in **Siddharthnagar district** on March 13, 2021.

Kalanamak rice has been recognised with a **geographical indication (GI) tag**.

It is under **ODOP (One District One Product)** scheme of the state government.

**Kalanamak rice** is rich in micro-nutrients such as Iron and Zinc. Regular intake of Kalanamak rice can prevent Alzheimer's disease.

**Note:** Earlier, the Chief Minister had inaugurated the **Strawberry Festival** in Jhansi and the **Jaggery Festival** in Lucknow.

### **Bengaluru airport launches India's first dedicated express cargo terminal**

The Kempegowda International Airport in Bengaluru now has India's first dedicated Express Cargo Terminal exclusively for export and import of international couriers.

The two lakh square feet built to suit facility will be operated by **Express Industry Council of India**.

**Note:** Recently, Bengaluru airport has bagged global recognition from the **Airports Council International (ACI) World's 'Voice of the Customer' award**.

### **India's first AC railway station 'Sir M Visvesvaraya Terminal' to function soon in Bengaluru**

Named after one of the foremost civil engineers, Bharat Ratna Sir M Visvesvaraya, the nation's first centralised AC (Air Conditioned) railway terminal at Baiyappanahalli in Bengaluru is set to become operational soon.

India's first AC railway terminal, built at an anticipated cost of Rs 314 crore, is all set to be inaugurated later this month.

Byappanahalli is the third coach terminal sanctioned in 2015-16.

#### **Facts about Karnataka:**

**Capital:** Bengaluru

**Governor:** Vajubhai Vala

**Chief Minister:** B. S. Yediyurappa

### **Mumbai's CSMT becomes first railway station in Maharashtra to get IGBC Gold Certification**

Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus (CSMT) Railway Station of Central Railway is the first railway station in Maharashtra to be awarded with Gold certification as per CII's Indian Green Building Council (IGBC) ratings.

Central Railway has implemented various green initiatives across its zone, with plantations creating green areas, installation of solar panels, customer-friendly initiatives at many stations etc.

**Note:** **Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus (CSMT)** also known by its former name Victoria Terminus and It is a **UNESCO World Heritage Site**.

**The Indian Green Building Council (IGBC)**, part of the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) was formed in the year 2001. The council offers a wide array of services which include developing new green building rating programmes, certification services and green building training programmes.

### **Delhi government approves the formation of a separate school board in the city**

The Delhi government approved the formation of the **Delhi Board of School Education (DBSE)**.

The new Board will have a governing body headed by the Education Minister of the Delhi government and an executive body headed by a chief executive officer.

**Note:** There are around 1,000 Delhi government schools and about 1,700 private schools, most of them affiliated to the CBSE, in the city.

**Facts about Delhi:**

**Chief Minister:** Arvind Kejriwal

**Lieutenant Governor:** Anil Baijal

**India's first 'Transgender Community Desk' opens in Hyderabad**

The Cyberabad Police launched India's first-ever 'Transgender Community Desk' at the Gachibowli Police Station in Hyderabad.

The desk will provide support to file cases in offences related to violence or discrimination against any transgender person.

Cyberabad Police chief VC Sajjanar inaugurated the desk.

The desk will be managed by a **police liaison officer and a transgender person** who is designated as a **community coordinator**.

**President of India inaugurates conservation works at Singorgarh Fort in Madhya Pradesh**

The President of India Shri Ram Nath Kovind laid the foundation stone for the conservation works of Singorgarh Fort in Singrampur village of Damoh district in Madhya Pradesh.

The President also inaugurated the newly carved Jabalpur Circle of Archaeological Survey of India.

He also addressed the State Level Tribal Conference at Singrampur village in Damoh. The program was organized by the Ministry of Culture, Government of India and the Tribal Affairs Department of Madhya Pradesh.

**Uttarakhand opens India's first 'forest healing centre'**

The country's first 'forest healing centre' was inaugurated by noted environmentalist Joginder Bisht at Kalika near Ranikhet, Uttarakhand.

The country's first forest healing centre based on the concept of making people healthy by bringing them into direct contact with nature was opened to the public.

Drawing inspiration from the **Japanese technique of forest bathing (shinrin - yoku)**, the healing centre has been developed by the research wing of Uttarakhand Forest Department.

**Uttarakhand Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat resigns**

Mr Rawat handed in his resignation to Governor Baby Rani Maurya just days short of completing four years in power.

A first-timer, he was chosen by Prime Minister Narendra Modi after the BJP swept the Uttarakhand election in 2017, winning 57 seats in the 69-member assembly.

### India's first 'World Skill Centre' in Bhubaneswar

Chief Minister of Odisha Naveen Patnaik inaugurated the 'World Skill Centre' (WSC) at Mancheswar,

It will provide skills training to 3000 students in eight trades.

The State government has partnered with **Institute of Technical Education Services (ITEES), Singapore** to support **Odisha Skill Development Authority (OSDA)** in operationalising the centre.

**Note:** The State will create **Odisha Skill Vision 2030** that will guide all future efforts in the skill development sector.

### Saras Aajeevika Mela opens at Noida Haat

Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Minister Narendra Singh Tomar inaugurated Saras Aajeevika Mela 2021 (26th February to 14th March 2021) at Noida Haat.

**About SARAS Aajeevika Mela:** It is an initiative by the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM), Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD), Government of India.

Its aim is to bring the rural women Self Help Groups (SHGs) formed with support of DAY-NRLM, under one platform to show-case their skills, sell their products.

The Mela is organised by the marketing arm of the Ministry, Council for Advancement of People's Action and Rural Technology (CAPART).

### World's tallest Chenab rail bridge in Jammu & Kashmir

The world's highest railway bridge is being constructed over Jammu & Kashmir's Chenab River.

The iconic steel arch is almost complete and the completion of the mega infrastructure project is scheduled for March this year.

**Note:** The bridge which is being built by Konkan Railway Corporation Ltd (KRCL) is a part of the 111- km Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail link Project (USBRL) which aims to connect Kashmir Valley with the rest of the country through a railway line.

### Fossils of world's oldest animal Dickinsonia discovered inside Bhimbetka in Madhya Pradesh

Researchers are of the opinion that has traced Dickinsonia on the roof of *Auditorium Cave* at Bhimbetka, which dates back 570 million years.

The fossil was discovered by chance by two experts from the Geological Survey of India (GSI) when they went ahead to explore Bhimbetka ahead of the 36th International Geological Congress.

**About Bhimbetka rock shelters:** The Bhimbetka rock shelters are an archaeological site in central India. It is located in the Raisen District of Madhya Pradesh.

It is a **UNESCO World Heritage Site** that consists of seven hills and over 750 rock shelters distributed over 10 km.

### **'Udaipur Science Centre' inaugurated in Tripura**

The Governor of Tripura Ramesh Bais has inaugurated the 'Udaipur Science Centre', at Udaipur, Tripura.

Udaipur Science Centre has been developed at a cost of Rs 6.00 crore funded jointly by the Ministry of Culture, Govt. of India and Dept. of Science, Technology & Environment, Government of Tripura.

**Note:** Udaipur Science Centre is the 22nd Science Centre which has been developed by NCSM and handed over to the State Governments under the Ministry of Culture's Scheme for Promotion of Culture of Science.

**National Council of Science Museums (NCSM):**

**Formation:** 4 April 1978

**Headquarters:** Kolkata

**Director General:** Shri A. D. Choudhury

**Parent Organisation:** Ministry of Culture, Govt. of India

### **Haryana implements 75 percent reservation for locals in private sector jobs**

The Haryana Governor has approved a bill (**The Haryana State Employment of Local Candidates Bill, 2020**) that reserves 75 percent of the private sector jobs, that includes companies, societies and trusts, with gross salary upto ₹ 50,000 per month for the people of the state.

The Bill was passed by the state assembly last year.

**Facts about Haryana:**

**Capital:** Chandigarh

**Governor:** Satyadev Narayan Arya

**Chief Minister:** Manohar Lal Khattar

**Deputy Chief Minister:** Dushyant Chautala

### **Important News: India**

**PM Modi's Bangladesh two day (26-27 March, 2021) visit**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi arrived in Dhaka on March 26, 2021 to take part in Bangladesh's 50th Independence Day celebrations.

This is the historic visit to celebrate **Mujib Borsho- the birth centenary of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman**; 50 years of the establishment of diplomatic ties between India and Bangladesh; and 50 years of Bangladesh's war of liberation.

**Key points:** India and Bangladesh signed 5 MoUs in the fields of Disaster Management, trade, NCC, ICT and setting up of sports facilities.

Swarna Jayanti scholarship for youths of Bangladesh announced.

To invite 50 entrepreneurs of Bangladesh to visit India and join start-up initiative

A Bangabandhu Chair will be established at Delhi University to facilitate Bangladesh studies.

India and Bangladesh are together making a film titled Bangabandhu by the renowned film director Shyam Benegal.

**Note:** This was PM Modi's first foreign trip since COVID-19.

### **New passenger train 'Mitali Express' inaugurated between India and Bangladesh**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Bangladeshi counterpart Sheikh Hasina jointly inaugurated a new passenger train, '**Mitali Express**', between **Dhaka and New Jalpaiguri in West Bengal** on the occasion of 'Bangabandhu' Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's birth centenary and golden jubilee of Bangladesh's Independence on March 27, 2021.

**Note:** This is the third passenger train after **Maitree Express** (Dhaka-Kolkata) and **Bandhan Express** (Khulna-Kolkata) running between the two neighbouring countries.

### **Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan launches 'Tribal TB Initiative' in pursuit of TB Mukh Bharat**

The government accords top priority to ensuring Universal Access to free treatment and care for TB (Tuberculosis) across the country.

Over ten crore tribal population is living with a huge diversity in their population dynamics.

**Note:** The Union Territories of Lakshadweep and district of Badgam in Jammu and Kashmir have been declared **TB Free** on World TB Day 2021.

India has 30 percent of the world's TB cases.

### **AYUSH Ministry set up interdisciplinary team to explore potential of Yoga**

The Ministry of AYUSH has set up an interdisciplinary team of experts to explore the potential of Yoga as a productivity enhancing tool for the population.

The committee is chaired by **H. R Nagendra, Chancellor, Swami Vivekananda Yoga Anusandhana Samsthana** and its members include representatives from AIIMS New Delhi, IIM Bangalore, IIT Bombay, various leading Yoga institutions, the corporate sector and the AYUSH Ministry.

The committee will submit its preliminary recommendations by May 2021.

**Note:** The Sports Ministry formally recognised **Yogasana** as a competitive sport, which will enable the ancient practice to avail government funding.

### **Finance Minister Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman launches Central Scrutiny Centre and IEPFA's Mobile App**

Union Minister for Finance & Corporate Affairs Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman launched **Central Scrutiny Centre (CSC)** and **Investor Education and Protection Fund Authority's (IEPFA) Mobile App** — two tech-enabled initiatives by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA).

The **Central Scrutiny Centre** will scrutinize certain Straight Through Process (STP) Forms filed by the corporates on the MCA21 registry.

The **Mobile App** aims at achieving the goal of financial literacy, spreading investors' awareness, education, and protection among investors.

### **Prime Minister Modi unveils new version of 'Exam Warriors'**

The new version of 'Exam Warriors' written by Prime Minister Narendra Modi is now available with many new mantras for students as well as for parents.

The book reaffirms the need to remain stress free before an exam.

The Exam Warriors module is also available on the NaMo App.

**Note:** The initial version of the book 'Exam Warriors' was written by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and was published in 2018.

### **MoU signed towards execution of planned actions in time bound manner in 132 cities under National Clean Air Programme (NCAP)**

In the presence of Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Shri Prakash Javadekar the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed by representatives of State Pollution Control Boards, Urban Local Bodies and Institutes of Repute for 132 identified cities for implementation of city specific action plans under National Clean Air Programme (NCAP).

**A National Knowledge Network** comprising leading air quality specialists has also been constituted as a technical advisory group to support activities under NCAP.

**About National Clean Air Programme (NCAP):** It is a long-term, time-bound, national level strategy to tackle air pollution problem across the country in a comprehensive manner with targets to achieve 20% to 30% reduction in Particulate Matter concentrations by 2024 (with 2017 as base year).

**Shri Prahlad Singh Patel and Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan inaugurates the 'Maharaja Chhatrasal Convention Centre at Khajuraho**

Shri Prahlad Singh Patel, Minister of State for Tourism and Culture (Independent Charge) and Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan, Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh inaugurated the 'Maharaja Chhatrasal Convention Centre at Khajuraho developed under **Swadesh Darshan Scheme** of Ministry of Tourism in Khajuraho, Madhya Pradesh.

**The UNESCO world Heritage site Khajuraho** attracts tourists for its mesmerising temples. Adding on more to its features is the convention Centre with brilliant facilities, Named as Maharaja Chhatrasal Convention Centre Khajuraho, this venue will cater to all your business needs.

### **AYUSH Ministry in collaboration with Vinoba Seva Pratishthan organizes 'Ayurveda Parav'**

In a bid to promote Ayurveda as the mainstream treatment for the prevalent lifestyle related diseases, Vinoba Seva Pratishthan (VSP), in collaboration with the Ministry of AYUSH, has successfully organized 'Ayurveda Parav' in Bhubaneswar from 26<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> March 2021.

The 3-days event was inaugurated by **Padma Vibhushan Dr Raghunath Mohapatra**, Hon'ble Member of Rajya Sabha along with **Shri Naba Kishore Das**, Hon'ble Minister of Health & Family Welfare, Govt. of Odisha and **Shri Trilochan Majhi**, Director of AYUSH, Govt. of Odisha.

During this Parv, nearly 25 research papers were presented by experts and researchers.

### **The Road Transport and Highways Ministry published the draft rules regarding concession in motor vehicle tax against scrapped vehicles**

Under the draft rules, people will get 25 percent concession on the purchase of personal vehicles with vehicle scrappage certificate while on the purchase of commercial vehicles, the tax relief will be 15 percent.

In case of personal vehicles, the tax concessions will be available up to 8 years while for commercial vehicles, it will be up to 15 years.

The rules are proposed to come into force from October 01, 2021.

**Note:** Recently, Minister for Road Transport and Highways, Shri Nitin Gadkari announced the "**Vehicle Scrapping Policy**".

### **Dr. Harsh Vardhan inaugurates Alignment and Awareness Event for Publicity of DSIR-PRISM Scheme**

Union Minister for Science & Technology, Earth Sciences and Health & Family Welfare, Dr Harsh Vardhan inaugurated Alignment and Awareness Event for Publicity of the **Department of Scientific and Industrial Research - Promoting**

**Innovations in Individuals, Startups and MSMEs (DSIR-PRISM)** scheme at IIT Delhi.

The innovation movement by DSIR-PRISM making synergy with three National Initiatives like Unnat Bharat Abhiyan, Smart India Hackathon and Rural Technology Action Group is unique.

**Note:** Under the initiative, an innovator of Indian nationality - student, professional and common citizen - is provided technical, strategic, and financial assistance by DSIR-PRISM.

**Recently**, Dr. Harsh Vardhan digitally participated in a panel discussion on vaccine production and distribution across Asia at the “**World Immunisation and Logistics Summit**”.

### **Atal Innovation Mission launches 'AIM-PRIME', in partnership with BMGF & Venture Center**

Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), NITI Aayog launched **AIM-PRIME (Program for Researchers on Innovations, Market-Readiness & Entrepreneurship)**, an initiative to promote and support science-based deep-tech startups & ventures across India.

In this regard, AIM has joined hands with **Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF)** to launch this nationwide program which will be implemented by **Venture Center** - a non-profit technology business incubator.

The first cohort of the program is open to technology developers (tech startups/scientists/ engineers/ clinicians) with strong science-based deep tech business ideas.

**About Atal Innovation Mission (AIM):** It is a flagship initiative set up by the NITI Aayog to promote innovation and entrepreneurship in the country and was setup in 2016.

### **MA Ganapathy appointed as Director General of NSG**

Mr Ganapathy, a 1986-batch IPS officer has been appointment as the Director General (DG) of National Security Guard (NSG) by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC).

He was serving as the DG of the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS).

**About National Security Guard (NSG):** NSG was raised in 1984 as the federal contingency commando force and its primary task includes undertaking specific counter-terrorist, counter-hijack operations and VVIP protection duties.

### **Prime Minister launches ‘Jal Shakti Abhiyan: Catch the Rain’ campaign**

The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi launched the ‘Jal Shakti Abhiyan: Catch the Rain’ campaign on World Water Day.

The campaign launched under the theme: '**Catch the Rain, where it falls, when it falls**' will be implemented in all districts, rural as well as urban areas, of the

country during the period March 22, 2021 to November 30, 2021 (the pre-monsoon and monsoon period).

On the occasion, **A Memorandum of Agreement** was signed between the Union Minister of Jal Shakti and the Chief Ministers of Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh to implement the **Ken Betwa Link Project**, the first project of the National Perspective Plan for interlinking of rivers.

**About Ken Betwa Link Project:** This project involves transfer of water from the Ken to the Betwa River through the construction of Daudhan Dam and a canal linking the two rivers, the Lower Orr Project, Kotha Barrage and Bina Complex Multipurpose Project.

### **Government forms experts committee for Startup India Seed Fund Scheme**

The government has constituted an experts advisory committee chaired by **H K Mittal** from the Department of Science and Technology.

The committee will be responsible for the overall execution and monitoring of the Startup India Seed Fund Scheme.

**About Startup India Seed Fund Scheme (SISFS):** It has been approved for the period of next four years starting from 2021-22.

It will be implemented with effect from April 1, 2021.

Rs 945 crore corpus will be divided over the next four years for providing seed funding to eligible startups through eligible incubators across India.

### **Minister for Road Transport and Highways, Shri Nitin Gadkari announces the Vehicle Scrapping Policy**

#### **The main features of the Policy:**

It is proposed that commercial vehicles be de-registered after 15 years in case of failure to get the fitness certificate.

It is proposed that Private Vehicles be de-registered after 20 years if found unfit or in case of a failure to renew registration certificate.

The scheme shall provide strong incentives to owners of old vehicles to scrap old and unfit vehicles through registered scrapping centres.

The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways will promote setting up of **Registered Vehicle Scrapping Facility (RVSF)** across India.

**Note:** Criteria to determine vehicle fitness will be primarily emission tests, braking, safety equipment, among many other tests which are as per the **Central Motor Vehicle Rules, 1989**.

### **Government to launch Poshan Abhiyan for the Elderly**

The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment aims to launch a Poshan Abhiyan for the Elderly, to provide nutrition support to the indigent elders, who are not staying in the Old Age Homes and are victims of severe malnutrition.

The Gram Panchayats and Urban Municipalities will be the implementing agencies of the Scheme.

The fund for the Scheme will be provided by the **Senior Citizens Welfare Fund**.

**About Poshan Abhiyan:** Government is implementing Poshan Abhiyan, earlier known as National Nutrition Mission, since 18<sup>th</sup> December 2017 to address the problem of malnutrition in the country.

### **Government of India drives Enforcement of Contracts and Conciliation Mechanism**

In order to lay emphasis on Enforcement of Contracts and Conciliation Mechanism, **NITI Aayog has constituted two Task Forces.**

**The Task Force for Enforcement of Contracts:** It will give its recommendation for a policy framework for Enforcement of Contracts.

The Vice Chairman, NITI Aayog will be the Chairman of this Task force.

The task force will also examine relevant provisions of the Commercial Courts Act, 2015.

**The Task Force on Conciliation Mechanism:** It will give its recommendation for an effective Conciliation Mechanism.

The CEO, NITI Aayog will be the Chairman of this Task force.

The task force will also examine relevant provisions of the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996.

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

**Formed:** 1 January 2015

**Headquarters:** New Delhi

**Chairperson:** Narendra Modi

**Vice Chairperson:** Rajiv Kumar

**CEO:** Amitabh Kant

### **Union Education Minister inaugurates Shaheed Bhagat Singh Smarak in New Delhi**

The University of Delhi organized a programme to pay homage and commemorate 90 years of martyrdom of our national icons of the Indian National Movement - **Shaheed Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev Thapar and Shivaram Rajguru on 'Shaheed Diwas'** in the Convention Hall of the Viceregal Lodge.

On this occasion Shaheed Bhagat Singh Smarak was inaugurated by the Union Minister of Education, Shri Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank'.

The existing collection of books on freedom fighters in the Bhagat Singh Smarak has been announced to be converted into **"Shaheed Smriti Pustakalaya."**

### **Parliament passes the National Capital Territory of Delhi (Amendment) Bill, 2021**

Rajya Sabha on March 24, 2021, passed the National Capital Territory of Delhi (Amendment) Bill, 2021. The bill was earlier passed in the Lok Sabha on March 22, 2021.

The latest bill amends the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi Act, 1991 which provides a framework for the functioning of the Government of Delhi and the Legislative Assembly.

**The Bill provides that the term 'government' referred to in any law made by the Legislative Assembly of Delhi will imply Lieutenant Governor, LG.**

### **Prime Minister inaugurates 'Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav' from Sabarmati Ashram; flags off Dandi Padyatra**

The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi inaugurated the curtain raiser activities of the '**Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav (India@75)**'.

He flagged off the '**Padyatra (Freedom March)**' from Sabarmati Ashram, Ahmedabad, Gujarat on March 12, 2021.

The Padyatra will cover a journey of 241 miles from Sabarmati Ashram, Ahmedabad to Dandi in Navsari and will end on 5th April, 2021 lasting for 25 days.

Shri Prahlad Singh Patel, Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Culture & Tourism will lead the first lap of 75 kilometers of the Padyatra.

The launch of the 'Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav' 75 weeks before 15 August 2022 will continue till 15 August, 2023.

**Note:** Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav is a series of events to be organised by the Government of India to commemorate the **75th Anniversary of India's Independence**.

**Mahatma Gandhi** along with 81 persons had initiated the famous **Dandi Padyatra** from 12th March to 6th April, 1930.

### **Prime Minister addresses 4th Global Ayurveda Festival**

The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi addressed the 4th Global Ayurveda Festival (12-19 March, 2021, Kerala) through virtual mode.

The **National AYUSH Mission** has been started to promote AYUSH medical systems through cost effective AYUSH services.

India's policy regarding Ayurveda and other Indian systems of medicine is already aligned with the **Traditional Medicine Strategy 2014-2023 of the World Health Organisation**.

**Note:** The **WHO** has also announced the setting up of the **Global Centre for Traditional Medicine** in India.

### **Government launches 'Mera Ration' mobile app**

The Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution launched the ‘**Mera Ration**’ mobile app in line with the “**One Nation One Ration Card**” (ONORC) scheme.

This app will benefit especially those ration card holders who move to new areas for livelihoods.

**Note:** The system which was started initially in 4 States in August 2019 has been swiftly rolled out in a very short span of time in 32 States/UTs by December 2020 and the integration of remaining 4 States/UT (Assam, Chhattisgarh, Delhi and West Bengal) is expected to be completed in next few months.

At present, the system covers nearly **69 Crore NFSA beneficiaries** (about 86% NFSA population) in the country.

The **ONORC scheme** is being implemented by the Department of Food & Public Distribution for the nation-wide portability of ration cards under **National Food Security Act (NFSA)**.

### **Union Minister Anurag Thakur appointed as Captain in Territorial Army**

Minister of State for Finance and Corporate Affairs Anurag Thakur became the first serving MP (Member of Parliament) to be appointed as Captain in the Territorial Army.

Mr Thakur has been promoted to the rank of Captain at 124 Infantry Battalion Territorial Army (Sikh).

**Note:** The four-time BJP MP from Himachal Pradesh's Hamirpur was commissioned into the Territorial Army as a Lieutenant by then Chief of Army Staff General Dalbir S Suhag in July 2016.

### **Government appointed GP Samanta as Chief Statistician of India**

Samanta will also hold charge as Secretary in the Ministry of Statistics and Program Implementation (MoSPI).

He will replace Kshatrapati Shivaji who was given additional charge in MoSPI in September.

Samanta is currently as an advisor in the Reserve Bank of India's department of statistics and information management.

### **Maths, physics, chemistry not compulsory for engineering admissions: AICTE**

In a major change in the eligibility criteria for engineering courses, the **AICTE (All India Council for Technical Education)** has made Physics, Chemistry and Mathematics (PCM) optional for students who wish to pursue technical courses like biotechnology, textile or agriculture engineering at the undergraduate level.

However, PCM remains mandatory for most engineering subjects like computer science.

**About AICTE (All India Council for Technical Education):** It is a statutory body, and a national-level council for technical education, under the Department of Higher Education.

**Founded:** November 1945

**Headquarters:** New Delhi

**Chairperson:** Anil Sahasrabudhe

### **Centre's Panel for air quality management in NCR dissolved within five months**

**The Commission for Air Quality Management** in the National Capital Region (NCR) and its Adjoining Areas, formed by the Centre last year in October, stands dissolved as the ordinance under which it was established has lapsed.

Since ordinance was not introduced in Parliament within six weeks of its convention, it has lapsed and consequently, the commission also has been shut down within five months of its constitution.

**Note:** The commission was headed by **M M Kuttu**, former secretary to the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas.

Under the ordinance released by the Ministry of Law and Justice on October 28, the Environment Pollution (Prevention and Control) Authority (EPCA) was dissolved and replaced by the commission.

### **New scheme announced for tourist vehicle operators**

The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has announced a new scheme, under which any tourist vehicle operator may apply for an "All India Tourist Authorization/Permit" through online mode.

The new set of rules, to be known as, "**All India Tourist Vehicles Authorization and Permit Rules, 2021**".

The new rules will be applicable from 01 April 2021. All existing permits shall continue to be in force during their validity.

The step was discussed in the **39th & 40th Transport Development Council Meetings**.

### **Cabinet approves closure of Handicrafts and Handlooms Export Corporation of India Limited**

The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi has approved the closure of **Handicrafts and Handlooms Export Corporation of India Limited (HHEC)**, a Government of India undertaking under the administrative control of the Ministry of Textiles.

The Corporation has been continuously incurring losses since financial year 2015-16 and not earning sufficient income to meet its running expenses.

## **Centre appoints high-level team to review Medical Care & Public Health arrangements for Kumbh Mela at Haridwar**

Centre has deployed a three-member high-level central team to review Medical Care and Public Health arrangements for Kumbh Mela at Haridwar in Uttarakhand.

The team is being led by **Dr SK Singh**, Director, National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC). **Dr SK Jain**, Additional Director and **Dr Meera Dhuria**, Deputy Director, both from NCDC are the team members.

**Note:** The Kumbh Mela at Haridwar is held every 12 years at Haridwar, India.

## **Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Principal Advisor PK Sinha resigns**

Sinha, a retired IAS officer of 1977 batch, was appointed as Principal Advisor to the Prime Minister in September 2019, after a brief stint as an officer on special duty (OSD).

Sinha was made OSD to the Prime Minister in August 2019, after he had served four years as Cabinet Secretary.

## **Former PepsiCo CEO Indra Nooyi's memoir titled "My Life in Full: Work, Family and Our Future"**

"My Life in Full: Work, Family and Our Future" will be published by Portfolio Books on September 28, 2021.

Indra Nooyi was honoured with Padam Bhushan in 2007.

She worked at PepsiCo for 24 years.

## **Rajya Sabha passes the Medical Termination of Pregnancy (Amendment) Bill, 2021**

The Rajya Sabha has approved the Medical Termination of Pregnancy (Amendment) Bill, 2021 to amend the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971 on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2021.

The Bill was approved in Lok Sabha on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2020.

### **Some salient features of amendments:**

**Enhancing the upper gestation limit from 20 to 24 weeks** for special categories of women which will be defined in the amendments to the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Rules and would include survivors of rape, victims of incest and other vulnerable women (like differently-abled women, minors) etc.

Opinion of only one provider will be required up to 20 weeks of gestation and of two providers for termination of pregnancy of 20-24 weeks of gestation.

**The Government constitutes a National Committee headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to commemorate 75 years of India's Independence**

The committee has 259 members and includes dignitaries and eminent citizens.

The Government intends to commemorate 75 years of India's Independence in a befitting manner at national and international level in the form of 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav'.

The 75 years of India's Independence falls on 15th August 2022 and celebrations are proposed to be launched 75 weeks prior to this date on 12th March 2021.

**Note:** 12th March is the 91st anniversary of the historic **Salt Satyagraha led by Mahatma Gandhi.**

### Union Health Minister Dr. Harsh Vardhan launches 'CSIR Floriculture Mission'

Harsh Vardhan encouraged scientists of CSIR laboratories across the country to develop the land available at each laboratory to be set up as a model under the "CSIR Floriculture Mission".

CSIR Floriculture Mission has been approved for implementation in 21 States and Union Territories of India.

Harsh Vardhan also launched **CSIR's Societal Portal along with the Android App.**

**Note:** The Indian floriculture market was worth Rs 15700 cr in 2018. The market is projected to reach Rs 47200 cr by 2024 during 2019-24.

### All major schemes of Women and Child Development Ministry classified under 3 Umbrella Schemes

For effective implementation of various schemes and programmes of the Ministry of Women and Child Development (WCD), all major schemes of the Ministry have been classified under 3 umbrella schemes viz. **Mission Poshan 2.0, Mission Vatsalya and Mission Shakti.**

For these 3 Umbrella Schemes, the following allocation has been made in the Budget 2021-22 under Demand No. 100 for Ministry of Women and Child Development:

S.No.	Umbrella Scheme	Schemes included	Budget 2021-22 (Rs. In crores)
1.	Mission Saksham Anganwadi and Mission POSHAN 2.0	Umbrella ICDS - Anganwadi Services, Poshan Abhiyan, Scheme for Adolescent Girls, National Creche Scheme	20,105.00
2.	Mission Vatsalya	Child Protection Services and Child Welfare Services	900.00
3.	Mission Shakti (Mission for Protection and Empowerment for	Sambal (One Stop Centre, Mahila Police Volunteer, Women's Helpline/Swadhar/Ujjawala/Widow Homes etc.)	3,109

	Women)	Samarthya (Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, Creche, Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana/ Gender Budgeting/Research	
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### Indian Railway announces integrated Rail Madad Helpline number “139”

Indian Railway has integrated all railway helplines into single number 139 (Rail Madad Helpline) for quick grievance redressal and enquiry during the journey.

Various Railway grievances helplines were discontinued last year. Now, Helpline no. 182 would also be discontinued from 1.4.21, and merged into 139.

The Ministry of Railways has also launched a Social Media campaign **#OneRailOneHelpline139** to inform and educate the passengers.

**Note:** Recently, Indian Railways' Western Railway zone has introduced a **mobile train radio communication (MTRC)** system to prevent the train accidents by effective communication.

### Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi inaugurated the first-ever India Toy Fair 2021

The Toy Fair is being organized from 27th February to 2nd March 2021.

**Note:** Today India's share in the \$ 100 billion global toy market is very small. 85 % of the toys in the country are sourced from abroad.

The **National Toy Action Plan** has also been prepared. It has included 15 ministries and departments to make these industries competitive.

Recently, **Toyathon-2021** was also organized to promote Indian sports based toys and more than 7000 ideas were brainstormed.

### City Innovation Exchange (CiX) launched for Fostering Innovation in Urban Ecosystem

The City Innovation Exchange platform was launched by Shri Durga Shanker Mishra, Secretary, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.

**About City Innovation Exchange (CiX):** CiX will connect cities to innovators across the national ecosystem to design innovative solutions for their pressing challenges.

The Platform has more than 400 start-ups, 100 smart cities, more than 150 challenges statements and over 215 solutions at the time of launch.

### Swachh Iconic Places - Ministry of Jal Shakti announces selection of 12 sites for transforming them into 'Swachh Tourist Destinations' under Phase IV

Under Swachh Iconic Places initiative of Swachh Bharat Mission Grameen (SBM-G), the Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation, Ministry of Jal Shakti has announced the selection of the following 12 iconic sites under Phase IV-

**Ajanta Caves**, Maharashtra  
**Sanchi Stupa**, Madhya Pradesh  
**Kumbhalgarh Fort**, Rajasthan  
**Jaisalmer Fort**, Rajasthan  
**Ramdevra**, Jaisalmer, Rajasthan  
**Golconda Fort**, Hyderabad, Telangana  
**Sun Temple**, Konark, Odisha  
**Rock Garden**, Chandigarh  
**Dal Lake**, Srinagar, Jammu & Kashmir  
**Banke Bihari Temple**, Mathura, Uttar Pradesh  
**Agra Fort**, Agra, Uttar Pradesh  
**Kalighat Temple**, West Bengal

### **Election Commission of India announced the schedule for 2021 General Elections to State Legislative Assemblies of Assam, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and Puducherry**

Polls are to be held for 294 seats in West Bengal, 234 seats in Tamil Nadu, 140 seats in Kerala, 126 seats in Assam and 30 seats in Puducherry.

**Note: Recently, President's Rule was imposed in Puducherry.**

### **MoHUA launches field assessment of Swachh Survekshan 2021**

Shri Durga Shanker Mishra, Secretary, Ministry of Housing and Housing Affairs (MoHUA) launched the field assessment of Swachh Survekshan (SS) 2021.

It is the sixth edition of the annual cleanliness survey conducted by the Government of India.

**About Swachh Survekshan (SS):** It was introduced by MoHUA in 2016 as a competitive framework to encourage cities to improve the status of urban sanitation while encouraging large scale citizen participation.

**Note:** Every year, the on-field assessment for SS takes place between January 4-31. However, the same had been delayed by two months due to the COVID pandemic and will now be conducted between **1-28 March 2021**.

### **Real-Time Monitoring System of Toll Plazas**

Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari launched the Real-Time Monitoring System of Toll Plazas.

It improves traffic congestion problem at toll plazas/ city roads/highways by using central monitoring system.

It uses several technologies like Satellite Imagery, GIS, Remote Sensing along with a proprietary algorithm to remotely monitor the congestion status of the roads.

**Note:** The government has made **FASTag** mandatory from the 15th February midnight and any vehicle not fitted with it will be charged double the toll at electronic toll plazas across the country.

### **Government notifies Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules 2021**

The Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules 2021 has been framed in exercise of powers under section 87 (2) of the Information Technology Act, 2000 and in supersession of the earlier Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines) Rules 2011.

The new rules have been widely introduced for social media and over-the-top (OTT) platforms.

### **Union Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment Shri Thaawarchand Gehlot launched “Sugamya Bharat App” and a handbook entitled “Access – The Photo Digest”**

The App and the handbook have been developed by the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.

**Sugamya Bharat App** — a Crowd sourcing Mobile Application is a means for sensitising and enhancing accessibility in the 3 pillars of the Accessible India Campaign i.e. built environment, transportation sector and ICT ecosystem in India.

The handbook entitled “**Access - The Photo Digest**” is a collection of photographs from across different States and UTs.

This Book is envisaged as a tool and guide to sensitise stakeholders about 10 basic features of accessibility and related good-bad practices in easy to understand pictorial form.

### **Rajya Sabha TV and Lok Sabha TV merges, now to be known as Sansad TV**

Retired IAS officer Ravi Capoor has been appointed as its Chief Executive Officer of Sansad TV.

The decision has been taken jointly by the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha, M. Venkaiah Naidu, and Speaker of Lok Sabha, Om Birla, based on the report of a committee set up to look into the integration of the two channels.

## **Important News: World**

### **World's first ship tunnel to be constructed in Norway**

The world's first ship tunnel ‘**Stad Ship Tunnel**’ is to be constructed in Norway.

As per Norwegian Coastal Administration, the construction on the engineering project is expected to begin in 2022 and get completed by 2025-26.

The ship tunnel is planned to run underneath the mountains in Norway's Stadhavet peninsula.

It is expected to measure 1,700 metres long, 37 metres high and 26.5 metres wide after completion.

### **Indo-Korean Friendship Park inaugurated**

India’s First Indo-Korean Friendship Park was jointly inaugurated by Mr Suh Wook, Hon'ble Minister of National Defence, South Korea (Republic of Korea) and Shri Rajnath Singh, Hon’ble Raksha Mantri, at Delhi Cantonment on 26 Mar 2021.

The park's significance is not only because of it being a symbol of strong India-South Korea friendly relations, but also as a monument to India's contributions as part of 21 countries which participated in Korean war 1950-53, under the aegis of the United Nations.

**Note:** The **South Korea's Minister of National Defence, Suh Wook** visited India between March 25-27, 2021 with a focus on boosting bilateral defence and military cooperation.

**Facts about South Korea:**

**Capital:** Seoul

**President:** Moon Jae-in

**Currency:** South Korean Won

**The cargo ship 'Ever Given' stranded in Egypt's Suez Canal lifted off the side of the channel**

The Suez Canal Authority has announced that the cargo '**Ever Given**' which has blocked Suez Canal for almost a week has been freed and is now on the move.

**About Suez Canal:** It is an artificial sea-level waterway in Egypt, connecting the Mediterranean Sea to the Red Sea through the Isthmus of Suez and dividing Africa and Asia.

About 15% of world shipping traffic transits the Suez Canal, which is an important source of foreign currency revenue for Egypt.

**Iran, China sign a 25-Year 'Strategic Cooperation Pact'**

Iran and China signed a 25-year "Strategic Cooperation Pact" in the latest expansion of Beijing's flagship trillion-dollar Belt and Road Initiative.

China is Iran's leading trade partner and was one of the biggest buyers of Iranian oil. The agreement, signed in Tehran by Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif and his Chinese counterpart, Wang Yi.

**Note:** Iran's foreign ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said that the pact had first been proposed during a visit to Tehran by Chinese President Xi Jinping in January 2016.

**India takes part in 2nd Sherpas meeting of G7, guest countries**

The 2nd meeting of the Sherpas of G7 and guest countries was held on March 30, 2021.

India's representative (Sherpa) Suresh Prabhu attended the meeting.

The priority issues under the UK's G7 Presidency agenda were discussed, including preparations for the COP26 Summit and global health cooperation.

**Note:** The United Kingdom has invited Prime Minister Narendra Modi to attend the G7 Summit as a guest, along with Australia, South Korea and South Africa.

The G7 Summit is to be held on June 11-13, 2021.

**Facts about G7:** The heads of government of the member states, as well as the representatives of the European Union, meet at the annual G7 Summit.

**Founded:** 1975

**Members:** United Kingdom, United States, Japan, France, Germany, Canada, Italy

### **3rd phase of Indian Beamline Project for materials research in Japan initiated**

The 3rd phase of the Indian Beamline Project, a facility for materials research set up under India-Japan Scientific and Technological Cooperation, was initiated on March 23, 2021, with special focus on industrial application research.

The phase would increase the number of young researchers from India to be trained in advanced X-ray techniques of material research.

**About Indian Beamline:** The Indian Beamline has been constructed and maintained by **Saha Institute of Nuclear Physics (SINP)**, Kolkata and **Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research (JNCASR)**, Bangalore; in Japanese synchrotron light source Photon Factory (PF) of High Energy Accelerator Research Organization (KEK), with support from Nano Mission, Department of Science and Technology.

### **US India Artificial Intelligence (USIAI) Initiative launched**

On March 17, 2021, Indo-U.S. Science and Technology Forum (IUSSTF) has launched the US-India Artificial Intelligence (USIAI) Initiative.

**USIAI** will serve as a platform to discuss opportunities for bilateral AI R&D collaboration.

**The Indo-U.S. Science and Technology Forum (IUSSTF)** established under an agreement between the Governments of India and the United States of America in March 2000, is an autonomous bilateral organization jointly funded by both the Governments that promotes Science, Technology, Engineering and Innovation.

### **UNDP launches "Sahi Disha" campaign in rural India**

The UNDP has launched "Sahi Disha" campaign to celebrate women's livelihoods and entrepreneurship in rural India.

The Disha initiative, a five-year collaboration between UNDP and the IKEA Foundation, enabled one million women through skilling and counselling services to access job and livelihood opportunities across five states - Delhi NCR, Haryana, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Telangana.

### **Facts about UNDP (United Nations Development Programme):**

**Headquarters:** New York, United States

**Founded:** 22 November 1965

**Parent organization:** United Nations General Assembly

**European Union (EU) joins India's International Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure-CDRI**

The European Union has joined the CDRI during the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of annual conference- **International Conference on Disaster Resilient Infrastructure-ICDRI (March 17-19, 2021).**

**About CDRI:** Launched in 2019 by **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** at the UN Climate Change Summit, the CDRI is an international collaborative platform involving the public and private sector which aims to promote the resilience of new and existing infrastructure systems to climate and disaster risks in support of sustainable development.

**Facts about the European Union (EU):**

**Headquarters:** Brussels, Belgium

**Founded:** 1 November 1993

**Members Countries:** 27

The **United Kingdom** became the first member state to leave the EU on 31 January 2020.

In 2012, the EU was awarded the **Nobel Peace Prize**.

**India, US to re-establish Homeland Security Dialogue**

**The Joe Biden administration** has announced the re-establishment of the Homeland Security Dialogue with India that was discontinued by the former President of the USA, Donald Trump.

Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas and India's Ambassador to the US Taranjit Singh Sandhu agreed to re-establish the US-India Homeland Security Dialogue and to discuss important issues such as cybersecurity, emerging technology and addressing violent extremism.

**Note:** An initiative of the Obama administration, the first India-US Homeland Security Dialogue was held in India in May 2011.

The second India-US Homeland Security Dialogue was held in Washington DC in 2013.

**First Quad Leaders' virtual summit 2021**

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi virtually participated, along with Prime Minister of Australia Scott Morrison and Prime Minister of Japan Yoshihide Suga and President of U.S.A. Joseph R. Biden, in the first Leaders' Summit of the Quadrilateral Framework on 12th March 2021.

The Leaders discussed regional and global issues of shared interest and exchange views on practical areas of cooperation towards maintaining a free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific region.

**Note: Quad Leaders** agreed to pool financing, manufacturing and distribution capacity to send **1 billion coronavirus vaccines across Asia by the end of 2022.**

**About Quad:** The **Quadrilateral Security Dialogue** also known as the **Quad** is an informal strategic forum between **Australia, India, Japan and the United States.**

**1st Meeting of the BRICS Contact Group on Economic and Trade Issues held**

The BRICS Contact Group on Economic and Trade Issues (CGETI) held their first meeting under India's Chairship from 9-11 March 2021.

The theme of BRICS this year is -"**BRICS@15: Intra BRICS Cooperation for Continuity, Consolidation, and Consensus**".

**Note:** The **13th BRICS Summit** will be held under India's Chairship in 2021, and it will be the third time India will host the BRICS Summit after 2012 and 2016.

**Facts about BRICS:**

**Formation:** 2009

**Countries:** Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa

**Prime Minister Narendra Modi addresses International Conference on Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (ICDRI) 2021**

Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI), in partnership with member countries, organisations and institutions, is hosting the International Conference on Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (ICDRI) 2021, a three-day virtual Conference scheduled to be held from March 17 to March 19, 2021.

**Facts about Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI):**

**Formation:** September 23, 2019

**Headquarters:** New Delhi, India

**Director General:** Sandeep Poundrik

**Italy joins International Solar Alliance under the amended ISA Framework Agreement**

The amendments to the Framework Agreement of the ISA entered into force, opening its Membership to all Member States of the UN.

The Framework Agreement was signed by Italy's Ambassador, Vincenzo De Luca.

**About International Solar Alliance (ISA):** The International Solar Alliance was launched jointly by the Indian Prime Minister and the French President during the 2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference, or COP21, in Paris.

**Headquarters:** Gurugram, Haryana, India

**Founded:** 30 November 2015

**Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurates 'Maitri Setu' between India and Bangladesh**

'Maitri Setu', 1.9 kilometres long, joining Sabroom in India with Ramgarh in Bangladesh, has been built over the **Feni River** which flows between the Indian boundary in Tripura and Bangladesh.

Due to this bridge over Feni River, Agartala will become the nearest city to an international sea port in India.

**Note:** **Two ships of Indian navy (INS Kulish and INS Sumedha)** arrived at the port city of Mongla in Bangladesh to commemorate the ongoing 'Swarnim Vijay Varsh'.

**France launches first military exercises in space**

France launched its first military exercise in space to evaluate its ability to defend its satellites and other defense equipment from an attack.

The exercise, codenamed "AsterX" in memory of the first French satellite from 1965, will be based on 18 simulated events in an operations room.

**Note:** The French Space Forces Command was created in 2019 and is set to have 500 personnel by 2025.

**Facts about France:**

**Capital:** Paris

**President:** Emmanuel Macron

**Prime Minister:** Jean Castex

**Currency:** Euro

**Pakistan to remain on FATF 'Grey List'**

Financial Action Task Force (FATF) decided to keep Pakistan on its terrorism financing 'Grey List' till June 2021.

**Note:** In October 2020, the FATF had kept Pakistan on the grey list citing its failure to fulfill six out of 27 obligations of the global money laundering and terrorist financing watchdog.

Pakistan has been on the FATF's grey list since June 2018.

**Facts about the Financial Action Task Force (FATF):**

**Headquarters:** Paris, France

**President:** Marcus Pleyer

**Founded:** 1989

**Membership:** 39

**Two lists of FATF:**

**Grey List:** Those Countries that are considered safe haven for supporting terror funding and money laundering. It serves as a warning to the country that it may enter the blacklist.

**Black List:** Those Countries known as Non-Cooperative Countries or Territories are put in the blacklist. These countries support terror funding and money laundering activities.

**UN body recommends Bangladesh graduation from LDC**

The United Nations Committee for Development Policy (CDP) has recommended graduation of Bangladesh from the category of **Least Developed Country (LDC)** as it

fulfilled the eligibility criteria in terms of per capita income, human assets and economic and environmental vulnerability.

This is the second consecutive time since 2018 that the CDP has made recommendation for Bangladesh for graduation from LDC category.

The proposal will be sent to the United Nations Economic and Social Council (**ECOSOC**) for endorsement in June to be finally approved by the UN General Assembly (UNGA) in September this year.

**Note:** Bangladesh will get time upto 2026 to prepare for the transition to the status of a developing country.

### **Israel officially receives first ever UAE ambassador**

Israel formally received the first-ever ambassador from the **UAE (United Arab Emirates)**, following last year's historic agreement between the countries to normalise ties.

**The UAE's first ambassador to Israel, Mohamed Al Khajah** delivered his credentials to Israeli President Reuven Rivlin at a ceremony in Jerusalem.

The UAE was the first country to agree to establish full diplomatic relations with the Jewish state under the **Abraham Accords**, a pact brokered by former US president Donald Trump.

#### **Facts about Israel:**

**President:** Reuven Rivlin

**Prime Minister:** Benjamin Netanyahu

**Capital:** Jerusalem

**Currency:** Israeli Shekel

### **UN General Assembly adopts India's resolution to declare 2023 as 'International Year of Millets'**

The resolution titled 'International Year of Millets 2023' was initiated by India with Bangladesh, Kenya, Nepal, Nigeria, Russia and Senegal and was co-sponsored by over 70 nations.

The primary objective of the proposal is to increase awareness and direct policy action for nutritional and health benefits for consumption of millet and their suitability for farming in adverse and changing climatic conditions.

**Note:** In April 2016, the UN General Assembly had proclaimed the **UN Decade of Action on Nutrition from 2016 to 2025**, recognizing the need to eradicate hunger and prevent all forms of malnutrition worldwide.

## **Economy**

### **Finance Minister Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman attends 6th Annual Meeting of Board of Governors of New Development Bank**

Union Minister of Finance & Corporate Affairs and India's Governor in New Development Bank (NDB), Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman attended the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of Board of Governors of New Development Bank on March 30, 2021.

The meeting was also attended by Governors/Alternate Governors of Brazil, China, Russia and South Africa.

This year's Annual Meeting theme was “**New Development Paradigms: The Evolution of Infrastructure**”.

**Note:** Sitharaman mentioned that India is going to set up a new Development Financial Institutions (DFIs) with initial paid-up capital of around \$3 billion with a lending target of \$69 billion in next three years.

**About New Development Bank (NDB):**

**Headquarters:** Shanghai, China

**President:** Marcos Prado Troyjo

**Founder:** BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa).

**Founded:** 15 July 2014

**First President:** K. V. Kamath

**NITI Aayog releases report ‘Investment Opportunities in India’s Healthcare Sector’**

NITI Aayog released a report outlining the range of investment opportunities in various segments of India’s healthcare sector, including hospitals, medical devices and equipment, health insurance, telemedicine, home healthcare and medical value travel.

The report was released by NITI Aayog Member Dr VK Paul, CEO Amitabh Kant, and Additional Secretary Dr Rakesh Sarwal.

India’s healthcare industry has been growing at a Compound Annual Growth Rate of around 22% since 2016. At this rate, it is expected to reach USD 372 billion in 2022.

As per estimates by the National Skill Development Corporation, healthcare can generate 27 lakh additional jobs in India between 2017-22.

**Insurance (Amendment) Bill, 2021 passed in Rajya Sabha; Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) limit increased from 49 to 74 %**

The Rajya Sabha has passed the Insurance (Amendment) Bill, 2021. It seeks to amend the Insurance Act, 1938 which will increase the limit of foreign investment allowed in Indian insurance companies.

The Bill provides to increase the foreign direct investment limit from existing 49 percent to 74 percent.

**Note:** The Act was first amended during Atal Bihari Vajpayee’s tenure when 26 percent FDI was allowed in the insurance sector.

In 2015, the law was amended further to allow 49 percent FDI.

### **Government to launch 'Atmanirbhar Niveshak Mitra' portal for handholding and facilitation of domestic investors**

In order to further strengthen efforts to promote domestic investments, the **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)** is in the process of finalising the 'Atmanirbhar Niveshak Mitra' digital portal.

The portal is in testing phase and the final version will be ready for launch by 15th May this year.

**Some of the special features of the Atmanirbhar Niveshak Mitra portal** include One-stop-shop to access all MSME portals; Information about the Approvals, Licenses, Clearances, Incentives & Schemes applicable to specific businesses across different sectors and Information on Manufacturing Clusters and Land Availability.

### **US becomes India's second biggest oil supplier**

The United States overtook Saudi Arabia as India's second biggest oil supplier in February 2021, as refiners boosted cheaper U.S. crude purchases to record levels to offset OPEC+ supply cuts.

The trade data is released by Reuters.

India's imports from the United States - the world's top producer - rose 48 percent to a record 545,300 barrels per day (bpd) in February 2021.

Saudi Arabia, which has consistently been one of India's top two suppliers, slipped to No. 4 for the first time since at least January 2006.

**India is the world's third biggest oil importer and consumer**, shipping in about 84% of its crude needs, and relies heavily on the Middle East.

**Note:** Iraq is the India's first biggest oil supplier.

### **India's Foreign-exchange reserves (Forex reserves) have become the fourth largest in the world, surpassing Russia**

As per the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), India's foreign currency holdings, which dropped \$4.3 billion to \$580.3 billion on March 5, 2021, surpassed Russia's \$580.1 billion.

As of March 2021, International Monetary Fund (IMF) table, **China has the largest Forex reserves followed by Japan and Switzerland.**

**Foreign-exchange reserves:** Foreign exchange reserves are cash and other reserve assets such as gold held by a central bank or other monetary authority that are primarily available to balance payments of the country, influence the foreign exchange rate of its currency, and to maintain confidence in financial markets.

### **RBI asks banks to implement image-based Cheque Truncation System in all branches**

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has asked banks to implement the image-based Cheque Truncation System (CTS) in all branches by September 30, 2021.

The move is aimed at faster settlement of cheques resulting in better customer service. Last month, the RBI had announced pan-India coverage of CTS by bringing all bank branches under the image-based clearing mechanism.

**Note:** There are about 18,000 bank branches that are still outside any formal clearing arrangement. The CTS is in use since 2010 and presently covers around 1,50,000 branches.

### **India home to 4.12-lakh millionaire households, Mumbai tops the chart: Hurun India Wealth Report 2020**

According to Hurun India Wealth Report 2020, there are 4.12-lakh millionaire households / affluent households in India with a networth of at least Rs 7 crore.

Region-wise, the top 10 states are home to 70.3 percent of millionaire households in the country. Maharashtra has the highest number of millionaires (56,000), followed by Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu.

There are 16,933 millionaire households in Mumbai, which contributes about 6.16 percent to the country's GDP.

**Note:** The report has identified a novel household category in India – the 'New Middle Class' – with an average savings of Rs 20-lakh per annum.

### **Union Cabinet approves 'Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Nidhi' as 'single non-lapsable reserve fund'**

The Union Cabinet approved the 'Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Nidhi' (PMSSN) as a 'single non-lapsable reserve fund' for share of Health from the proceeds of Health and Education Cess levied under Finance Act, 2007.

The use of this fund will be utilized for the **flagship schemes of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare** namely: Ayushman Bharat - Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana, Ayushman Bharat - Health and Wellness Centres, National Health Mission and Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana.

**Note:** In the budget speech 2018, the Finance Minister while announcing Ayushman Bharat Scheme, also announced replacement of existing 3% Education Cess by 4% Health and Education Cess.

### **APEDA organizes first ever Virtual Trade Fair (VTF)**

In a first of its kind initiative for boosting export potential of India's agricultural and processed food products during COVID19 pandemic, APEDA launched its first Virtual Trade Fair on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2021. The fair will conclude on March 12, 2021.

The fair with a theme '**India Rice and Agro Commodity**', will focus on showcasing the exports potential of various agricultural commodities.

**Facts about Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA):**

**Formation:** 1986

**Headquarters:** New Delhi

**Chairman:** Dr. M. Angamuthu

**Parent organization:** Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India

### **NITI Aayog and RMI India releases a report 'Mobilising Electric Vehicle Financing in India'**

It highlights the role of finance in India's transition to electric vehicles (EVs) and analyses that the transition will require a cumulative capital investment of USD 266 billion (Rs 19.7 lakh crore) in EVs, charging infrastructure, and batteries over the next decade.

The report also identifies a market size of USD 50 billion (Rs 3.7 lakh crore) for the financing of EVs in 2030.

**Rocky Mountain Institute (RMI)**, an independent non-profit founded in 1982, transforms global energy use to create a clean, prosperous, and secure low-carbon future.

### **"India Telecom 2021"- a platform for convergence of technologies and business exchange**

**TEPC (Telecom Equipment Export Promotion Council)** has organized 'India Telecom 2021' (March 3- 4, 2021) - an Exclusive International Business Expo under Market Access Initiative Scheme (MAI) of Department of Commerce, Government of India and with support of Department of Telecommunications & Ministry of External Affairs.

**Note:** The government has announced the **Production Linked Incentive (PLI) schemes** for various sectors, including telecom sector, to become a part of the global supply chain.

**About TEPC (Telecom Equipment Export Promotion Council):** TEPC has been set up by the Ministry of Commerce & Industry and Ministry of Communications, Government of India to promote and develop of Export of Telecom Equipment and Services.

### **Government amends Insurance Ombudsman Rules, 2017**

The Union Government on 2nd March 2021 notified comprehensive amendments to the Insurance Ombudsman Rules, 2017, with a view to improve the working of the Insurance Ombudsman mechanism to facilitate resolution of complaints regarding deficiencies in insurance services in a timely, cost-effective and impartial manner.

The amended rules have enlarged the scope of complaints to Ombudsman from only disputes earlier to deficiencies in service on the part of insurers, agents, brokers and other intermediaries.

**Note:** The Ombudsman mechanism was administered by the Executive Council of Insurers, which has been renamed as the **Council for Insurance Ombudsman**

## Award and Honor

### **Asha Bhosle to be honoured with Maharashtra Bhushan Award**

Legendary singer Asha Bhosle will be honoured with the prestigious Maharashtra Bhushan Award for the year 2020.

A committee chaired by Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray decided to select Asha Bhosle for this award.

**About the Maharashtra Bhushan award:** It is a highest and prestigious award presented annually by the government of Maharashtra state in India. The Maharashtra Bhushan was first awarded in 1996.

**Note:** Asha Bhosle was also honoured with the Dadasaheb Phalke Award in 2000.

### **Mahinder Giri, Range Officer, won International Ranger Award**

Mahinder Giri, range officer of Rajaji Tiger Reserve became the only ranger from Asia to win the prestigious International Ranger Award for his contribution towards conservation.

The award has been announced for 10 professionals across the world by the **International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA).**

### **Marathi writer Dr Sharankumar Limbale to receive Saraswati Samman 2020**

Noted Marathi writer Dr Sharankumar Limbale will receive Saraswati Samman, 2020 for his book **Sanatan**.

Limbale's Sanatan has been published in 2018. Sanatan is an important social and historical document of dalit struggle.

**About Saraswati Samman:** It, instituted by K K Birla Foundation in 1991, is recognised as the most prestigious and highest literary award in the country.

The award carries fifteen lakh rupees, a citation and a plaque.

### **Rajinikanth to be honoured with 51st Dadasaheb Phalke Award**

Union Minister for Information and Broadcasting Shri Prakash Javadekar announced the recipient of the 51<sup>st</sup> Dadasaheb Phalke Award.

The award for 2019 will be conferred to legendary actor Shri Rajinikanth.

It will be presented on 3<sup>rd</sup> May, along with the National Film Awards.

**Note:** Debuted in Apoorva Raagangal (1975), **Rajinikanth** is an Indian actor who works primarily in Tamil cinema. He was also honored with the Padma Vibhushan (2016) by the Government of India.

### **Facts about Dadasaheb Phalke Award:**

**First winner:** Devika Rani

**Most recent winner:** Amitabh Bachchan (2018)

**Established:** 1969

**Category of:** National Film Awards

### **NTPC conferred 'Role Model' award at 11th CII National HR Excellence Award 2020-21**

NTPC Ltd, a Public Sector Undertaking under the Ministry of Power has been conferred the prestigious 'Role Model' award at the 11<sup>th</sup> CII National HR Excellence Award 2020-21.

This award is the highest level of recognition in the field of Human Resources by Confederation of Indian Industry (CII).

**Note:** Since the institutionalization of CII National HR Excellence Award, this is only the second time when the award of Role Model has been conferred to any organization. NTPC is the only PSU to have received this prestigious award.

### **Gandhi Peace Prize for the Year 2019, 2020 announced**

The Government of India conferred the **Gandhi Peace Prize for the year 2019** on (Late) His Majesty **Sultan Qaboos bin Said Al Said** of Oman.

**Qaboos bin Said Al Said** was the longest-serving leader in the Middle East and Arab world.

The Government of India conferred the **Gandhi Peace Prize for the year 2020** on **Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman**.

**Rahman** was the first President and later the Prime Minister of Bangladesh. He is known as the "Father of the Nation" or simply "Mujib" in Bangladesh.

**About Gandhi Peace Prize:** It is an annual award instituted by Government of India since 1995, the 125<sup>th</sup> Birth Anniversary commemoration year of Mahatma Gandhi.

The award carries an amount of Rs. 1 crore, a citation, a plaque and an exquisite traditional handicraft/ handloom item.

### **Hindi writer Prof. Sharad Pagare to be conferred with Vyas Samman – 2020**

Well known Hindi writer Prof. Sharad Pagare will be conferred with the prestigious Vyas Samman - 2020 for his novel 'Patliputru Ki Samragi.'

**Note:** The **Vyas Samman**, started in 1991, is given by K K Birla Foundation for an outstanding literary work in Hindi authored by an Indian citizen published during the last 10 years.

It carries an award of four lakh rupees along with a citation and plaque.

### **Sahitya Akademi Awards 2020**

The names of the recipients of the awards were announced by **the India's National Academy of Letters** during the opening day of its annual 'Festival of Letters' event on March 12, 2021.

**Sahitya Akademi** presents the award to the literary works in 24 languages including English. It was established in 1954 and the award comprises a copper-plaque, a shawl and a cash prize of ₹ 1,00,000.

**Note: Sahitya Akademi Awards 2020** were presented in 20 languages. Awards in Malayalam, Nepali, Odia and Rajasthani languages will be announced at a later date.

Language	Title and Genre	Name of the Author
Assamese	Bengsata (Short Stories)	Apurba Kumar Saikia
Bengali	Eka Eka Ekashi (Memoirs)	Sankar (Manishankar Mukhopadhyay)
Bodo	Gwthenay Lamayao Gwdan Agan (Short Stories)	(late) Dharanidhar Owari
Dogri	Baba Jitmal (Play)	Gian Singh
<b>English</b>	<b>When God Is a Traveller (Poetry)</b>	<b>Arundhati Subramaniam</b>
Gujarati	Banaras Diary (Poetry)	Harish Meenashru
Hindi	Tokri Mein Digant 'Their Gatha' : 2014 (Poetry)	Anamika
<b>Kannada</b>	<b>Sri Bahubali Ahimsadigvijayam (Epic Poetry)</b>	<b>M. Veerappa Moily</b>
Kashmiri	Tilasm-e-Khanabadosh (Short Stories)	(Late) Hirday Koul Bharti
Konkani	Yugaparivarthanancha Yatri (Poetry)	R.S. Bhaskar
Maithili	Gachh Roosal Achhi (Short Stories)	Kamalkant Jha
Manipuri	Malangbana Kari Hai (Poetry)	Irungbam Deven
Marathi	Udya (Novel)	Nanda Khare
Punjabi	Aam Khass (Short Stories)	Gurdev Singh Rupana
Sanskrit	Vaishali (Novel)	Mahesh Chandra Sharma Gautam
Santali	Gur Dak Kasa Dak (Poetry)	Rupchand Hansdah
Sindhi	Jehad (Plays)	Jetho Lalwani
Tamil	Sellaatha Panam (Novel)	Imaiyam
Telugu	Agniswaasa (Poetry)	Nikhileswar

Urdu	Amawas Main Khwab (Novel)	Hussain-ul-Haque
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### Grammy Awards 2021

One of the most prestigious awards in the world of music, the **63rd Annual Grammy Awards** took place in Los Angeles.

The awards recognise the best recordings, compositions, and artists of the eligibility year, running from September 1, 2019, to August 31, 2020.

The Grammy Award is presented by the **Recording Academy**.

#### Important awards:

**Billie Eilish** became the **first solo artist to win the record of the year award** at Grammys for **two years in a row**.

**Beyonce** created history by becoming the **most-awarded woman in the history of Grammys with 28 wins**.

Beyonce picked up four awards during this year's ceremony, two for **'Savage'** along with rapper Megan Thee Stallion, one for her own **'Black Parade'** and another for **'Blown Skin Girl'**.

**Taylor Swift** became the **first woman to win the album of the year award three times**.

#### Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi awarded CERAWeek Global Energy and Environment Leadership Award

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi also delivered the keynote address at the CERAWeek 2021 (1 - 5 March 2021) through video conference.

CERAWeek Founder Dr Daniel Yergin gave the CERAWeek Global Energy and Environment Leadership Award to Mr Narendra Modi.

**About CERAWeek (Cambridge Energy Research Associates Week):** CERAWeek was founded in 1983 by Dr. Daniel Yergin. It has been organized in Houston every year since 1983 and is considered the world's premier annual energy platform.

**About the Award:** CERAWeek Global Energy and Environment Leadership Award was instituted in 2016. It recognizes the commitment of leadership on the future of global energy & environment and for offering solutions and policies for energy access, affordability & environmental stewardship.

#### President Ram Nath Kovind presents a Baton of Honour to Kiran Bedi

The former Puducherry Lieutenant Governor Kiran Bedi received a Baton of Honor decorated with the emblem of the Indian Republic and the appreciation letter recognizing her service in the Union Territory of Puducherry.

**Note:** Kiran Bedi was removed as the Lieutenant Governor of Puducherry on February 16 by the President of India and Tamilisai Soundararajan took additional charge as the Lieutenant Governor on February 18.

### **ICAR receives “King Bhumibol World Soil Day - 2020 Award” of FAO**

Suchitra Durai, Ambassador of India to the Kingdom of Thailand received the prestigious “King Bhumibol World Soil Day - 2020 Award” of FAO on the behalf of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR).

Chalermchai Srion, Minister of Agriculture and Cooperatives of the Kingdom of Thailand conferred the award in a Ceremony held at Bangkok, Thailand.

**Note:** The international recognition was announced by the FAO, Rome on the World Soil Day - 2020 in view of the ICAR’s contributions in “*Soil Health Awareness*”.

#### **Facts about Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR):**

**Established:** 16 July 1929

**Director:** Trilochan Mohapatra

#### **Facts about Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO):**

**Formation:** 16 October 1945

**Headquarters:** Rome, Italy

**Parent organization:** United Nations Economic and Social Council

**Director-General:** Qu Dongyu

#### **Amitabh Bachchan to be honoured with FIAF Award 2021**

Megastar Amitabh Bachchan will be honoured with an award by the **International Federation of Film Archives (FIAF)**.

Bachchan will be the first Indian cinema personality to be bestowed with the FIAF Award for his dedication and contribution to the preservation of the world’s film heritage.

**Note:** The **FIAF** is a worldwide organisation, comprising film archives and museums from across the world.

Bachchan’s name was nominated by the **FIAF affiliate Film Heritage Foundation**.

#### **Uttar Pradesh Hindi Sansthan literary awards 2019: Bharat-Bharti honour for Dr Suryabala**

Dr Suryabala from Mumbai will get the coveted Bharat-Bharti award given by Uttar Pradesh Hindi Sansthan (UPHS).

It includes Rs 5 lakh cash prize and a citation.

#### **Bihari Puraskar 2020 to be awarded to Mohankrishna Bohara**

The 30th Bihari Puraskar for 2020 will be given to Mohankrishna Bohara for his Hindi book of Criticism, titled **Taslima: Sangharsh aur Sahitya**.

**The K.K. Birla Foundation** announced this in New Delhi.

Named after famous Hindi poet Bihari, the award is given every year for an outstanding work in Hindi or Rajasthani published in the last 10 years by a Rajasthani writer.

**Note: K.K. Birla Foundation** was established in 1991 by Krishna Kumar Birla in Delhi.

The **other awards** of this foundation are Saraswati Samman, Vyas Samman, Shankar Puraskar, Vachaspati Puraskar, G.D. Birla Award for Scientific Research.

## Defense

### **India conducts first-ever Joint Patrol in Madagascar EEZ**

In a first, the navies of India and Madagascar undertook joint patrolling of Madagascar's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and also conducted a **Passage Exercise (PASSEX)** on 24 Mar 2021.

**Indian Navy's INS Shardul** and Malagasy Naval Ship Trozona undertook Joint Patrol of Madagascar's Exclusive Economic Zone and participated in PASSEX.

Indian Naval Ship Shardul had arrived at port of Antsiranana, Madagascar on 21 March 2021 for Overseas Deployment of a training squadron headed by Captain Aftab Ahmed Khan.

### **Facts about Madagascar:**

**Capital:** Antananarivo

**President:** Andry Rajoelina

**Currency:** Malagasy ariary

### **India Navy participates with US Navy in PASSEX in Eastern Indian Ocean Region**

India Navy and US Navy conducted a 2 day Passage Exercise from March 28-29, 2021 in the eastern Indian Ocean Region, reflecting the growing congruence in their defence and military partnership.

The Indian Navy deployed its warship Shivalik and long-range maritime patrol aircraft P8I in the 'PASSEX' exercise while the US Navy was represented by the USS Theodore Roosevelt carrier strike group.

**Note:** The 11<sup>th</sup> edition of Indo-US Joint Special Forces Exercise **VAJRA PRAHAR 2021** was conducted at Special Forces Training School located at Bakloh, Himachal Pradesh in March 2021.

Recently America's Secretary of Defense, General Lloyd Austin visited India.

### **Operation Sankalp 2021: Indian Navy undertakes Passage Exercise (PASSEX) with Royal Bahrain Naval Force**

Indian Navy on March 17, 2021 undertook Passage Exercise (PASSEX) with Royal Bahrain Naval Force in the Persian Gulf under Operation Sankalp.

Enhancing interoperability & strengthening bilateral Maritime cooperation, Reassuring Diaspora & merchant shipping Indian Navy Ship INS Talwar

undertook Passage Exercise with Royal Bahrain Naval Force Corvette Al Muharraq in the Persian Gulf.

**Note:** Maritime Security Operations was initiated in the Gulf region on June 19, 2019, in the aftermath of the attacks on merchant ships in the Gulf of Oman.

**Facts about Bahrain:**

**Crown Prince & Prime Minister:** Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa

**Capital:** Manama

**Currency:** Bahraini Dinar

**India, Pakistan, China to participate in SCO joint anti-terrorism exercise**

India, Pakistan, China and other members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) will hold a joint anti-terrorism exercise in 2021.

The decision to hold the joint exercise "**Pabbi-Antiterror-2021**" was announced during the **36th meeting of the Council of the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS)** held in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

**Note:** The next meeting of the Council of the RATS SCO is scheduled to be held in September in Uzbekistan.

**RATS**, headquartered in Tashkent, is a permanent organ of the SCO which serves to promote cooperation of member states against terrorism, separatism and extremism.

**Facts about SCO:** Shanghai Cooperation Organisation or Shanghai Pact, is a Eurasian political, economic and security alliance.

**Formed:** 15 June 2001

**Members:** China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, India & Pakistan.

**Headquarter:** Beijing, China

**'Vajra' commissioned to the Indian Coast Guard**

Indian Coast Guard Ship 'Vajra' was commissioned by General Bipin Rawat, Chief of Defence Staff at Kattupalli in Chennai.

This is the **sixth in the series of seven Offshore Patrol Vessels** constructed by M/s Larsen & Toubro Ltd.

Vajra will be based under the Operational and Administrative Control of Coast Guard District (Tuticorin) and will be deployed extensively for surveillance in exclusive economic zones in the Indian Coastal region.

**Indian Army to procure Mobile Integrated Network Terminal (MINT) systems**

The Indian Army is in the process of procuring Mobile Integrated Network Terminal (MINT) systems under **Make II Category of DAP 2020**.

The system is envisaged as a lightweight, portable, state of art integrated communication solution with satellite backhaul and wireless access system to support voice, video and data.

Development of MINT systems will enhance the operational communication capability of the field army in consonance to the self-reliance vision of “**Aatmanirbhar Bharat**” for Defence production.

### **SIPRI Report: India's import of arms decreases by 33 percent**

According to the report by the **Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)**, Arms imports by India decreased by 33 percent between 2011-15 and 2016-20.

**India's top three arms suppliers** during 2016-20 were Russia (49% import), France (18%) and Israel (13%).

**Globally**, the five largest arms exporters in 2016-20 were the US, Russia, France, Germany and China, while the top importers were Saudi Arabia, India, Egypt, Australia and China.

**Note: India's Export Level:** India accounted for 0.2% of the share of global arms exports during 2016-20, making the country the world's 24th largest exporter of major arms.

### **India commissions Nuclear Missile Tracking Vessel 'INS Dhruv'**

**INS Dhruv (codenamed as VC 11184)**, the Ocean Surveillance and Nuclear Missile Tracking Vessel, was commissioned into Indian Navy in a secret manner in October 2020.

It is capable of monitoring missile launches at long distances, enhancing the testing programme and adding a crucial part to a national missile defence system.

It was constructed at Hindustan Shipyard Ltd, Visakhapatnam.

It will be operated by a joint crew of the National Technical Research Organisation (NTRO), the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and the Indian Navy.

**Note:** At present, only the **US, France, China and Russia** operate similar vessels that are used to track missile launches at sea.

### **DRDO conducts successful flight test of Solid Fuel Ducted Ramjet**

**Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** successfully carried out a flight demonstration based on **Solid Fuel Ducted Ramjet (SFDR)** technology from Integrated Test Range Chandipur off the coast of Odisha.

During the test, many new technologies were proven, including Solid Fuel based Ducted Ramjet technology.

**Note:** Last month, the DRDO had successfully launched an indigenously-designed and developed Vertical Launch Short Range Surface to Air Missile (**VL-SRSAM**).

## **India-Uzbekistan joint military exercise “DUSTLIK II” commenced in Chaubatia, Uttarakhand**

This is the second edition (March 10-19, 2021) of the annual bilateral joint exercise of both armies.

45 Soldiers each from Uzbekistan and the Indian Army are participating in the exercise. In the exercise, the troops of the two countries will share the war techniques, introducing high-tech battle skills.

**Note:** The **first edition** of the exercise was held in Uzbekistan in Nov 2019.

**Facts about Uzbekistan:**

**Capital:** Tashkent

**President:** Shavkat Mirziyoyev

**Prime Minister:** Abdulla Aripov

**Currency:** Uzbekistani som

### **‘INS Karanj’, third Scorpene-class Submarine commissioned at Naval Dockyard, Mumbai**

Indian Navy’s third stealth Scorpene-class Submarine INS Karanj has been commissioned at the Naval Dockyard Mumbai through a formal commissioning ceremony.

**Note:** With INS Karanj, three of the six superior and advanced indigenous submarines based on the Scorpene-class under Project 75 are now functional.

**INS Kalvari** was commissioned in 2017 and **INS Khanderi** was commissioned in 2019. While **INS Vela** is undergoing sea trials, **INS Vagir** was launched last year and the sixth one, **INS Vagsheer**, is under construction.

Six Scorpene-class submarines are being built in India by the Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL) Mumbai, under collaboration with M/s Naval Group, France.

## **Indian Air Force (IAF) participation in Exercise Desert Flag-VI**

Ex Desert Flag is an annual multi-national large force employment warfare exercise hosted by the United Arab Emirates Air Force.

The exercise is scheduled from 03 March to 27 March 2021 at Al-Dhafra airbase, UAE.

**Note:** The Indian Air Force is participating for the first time in Exercise Desert Flag-VI along with air forces of United Arab Emirates, United States of America, France, Saudi Arabia, South Korea and Bahrain.

**Facts about United Arab Emirates (UAE):**

**Capital:** Abu Dhabi

**Currency:** United Arab Emirates dirham

**President:** Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan

### **India described Sri Lanka as "Priority One" partner in the defence sphere**

The participation of Indian military aircraft in the 70th-anniversary celebration of the **Sri Lanka Air Force (SLAF)** is indicative of the growing cooperation, camaraderie and friendship between the two militaries.

The SLAF celebrated its 70th Anniversary on March 2.

A total of 23 aircraft of the Indian Air Force (IAF) and Indian Navy participated in the grand event.

### **IAF gifts 1971 war helicopter to Bangladesh, gets F-86 fighter as return gift**

Commemorating 50 years of defeating Pakistan in the 1971 war, Indian Air Force (IAF) Chief RKS Bhadauria gifted a legacy Alouette III helicopter to Bangladesh Air Force (BAF) and got a legacy F-86 Sabre aircraft as a return gift from Dhaka.

**Note:** The exchange of aircraft took place in Dhaka during the **four day trip of IAF Chief RKS Bhadauria to Bangladesh.**

Bangladesh's Defense Services Command and Staff College (DSCSC) has inducted RKS Bhadauria into the '**Mirpur Hall of Fame**'.

Bhaduria took part in the 18th Air Staff Course from this college in Mirpur in 1997-98.

#### **Facts about Bangladesh:**

**Capital:** Dhaka

**Currency:** Bangladeshi taka

**President:** Abdul Hamid

**Prime Minister:** Sheikh Hasina

### **New Appointment**

#### **Saurabh Garg appointed as CEO of UIDAI**

Senior bureaucrat Saurabh Garg has been appointed as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of UIDAI by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet.

Garg is at present serving in his cadre state Odisha. He is a 1991 batch IAS officer.

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved the appointment of Garg as the CEO, UIDAI in the rank and pay of Additional Secretary.

#### **Facts about UIDAI (Unique Identification Authority of India):**

**Founded:** 28 January 2009

**Headquarters:** New Delhi

### **Sanjeev Kumar appointed as Chairman of AAI**

The government appointed senior IAS officer Sanjeev Kumar as the Chairman of AAI (Airports Authority of India).

Kumar is a 1993 batch IAS officer of Maharashtra cadre.

#### **Facts about AAI (Airports Authority of India):**

**Headquarters:** New Delhi

**Founded:** 1 April 1995

**Parent organizations:** Directorate General of Civil Aviation, Ministry of Civil Aviation, Government of India

### **Atish Chandra appointed as CMD of FCI**

Atish Chandra has been appointed as the CMD (Chairman and Managing Director) of FCI (Food Corporation of India).

Chandra, a 1994 batch IAS officer of Bihar cadre, is currently Joint Secretary, Department of Agriculture, Cooperation and Farmers Welfare.

#### **Facts about FCI (Food Corporation of India):**

**Founded:** 14 January 1965

**Headquarters:** New Delhi

### **SAIL chairperson Soma Mondal is new chairperson of SCOPE**

Soma Mondal, chairperson of Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL), was elected the new chairperson of the **SCOPE (Standing Conference of Public Enterprises)**.

Mondal will have a two-year term starting April; she took charge of SAIL chairperson on January 1, 2021.

**About SCOPE (Standing Conference of Public Enterprises):** It is an apex professional organization representing the Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs). It promotes excellence in organisations where public investment is involved, in order to enable them to be globally competitive.

### **Justice N.V. Ramana to be next Chief Justice of India**

**Chief Justice of India S A Bobde** has recommended the Union Government to appoint the senior most Supreme Court Judge Justice N V Ramanna as the **48th Chief Justice of India**.

Chief Justice Bobde is set to retire on 23rd April, 2021.

**Note:** Justice Ramana was elevated as the Chief Justice of Delhi High Court on September 2, 2013 and was elevated as a Supreme Court Judge on February 17, 2014.

### **US Senate confirms Indian-American Dr Vivek Murthy as Surgeon General**

The US Senate has voted to confirm Indian-American Dr Vivek Murthy to be President Biden's Surgeon General.

He will be the **21st surgeon general** of the United States.

**Note:** Dr Murthy had served as the Surgeon General under the Obama administration from 2014 to 2017.

### **World Bank economist Deepak Mishra appointed as director of ICRIER**

Deepak Mishra, Practice Manager in the World Bank's Macroeconomics, Trade and Investment Global Practice, has been appointed as the next director and chief executive of the **Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER)**.

He will take the charge from Rajat Kathuria.

### **Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare Dr Harsh Vardhan appointed as Chairman of international body 'Stop TB Partnership Board'**

Dr Harsh Vardhan was appointed in recognition of his outstanding contribution to the movement to eradicate Tuberculosis (TB) from India by 2025.

He will serve a three-year term, commencing from July this year.

**The Stop TB Partnership** is a unique international body with the power to align actors all over the world in the fight against TB. The Partnership's vision is a **TB-free world**.

**Note:** On 25<sup>th</sup> September 2019, Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister launched the **'TB Harega Desh Jeetega'** Campaign along with the National TB Prevalence Survey.

### **Kapil Dev inducted as PGTI board member**

Legendary cricketer Kapil Dev was inducted as one of the board members of the Professional Golf Tour of India (PGTI).

**Professional Golf Tour of India (PGTI)**, the controlling body for professional golf in India, was formed in September of 2006. Mr. Gautam Thapar is President of PGTI.

**Note:** Kapil Dev captained the Indian cricket team that won the 1983 Cricket World Cup.

### **Indian-American Naureen Hassan has been appointed as the first Vice President (VP) and Chief Operating Officer (COO) of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York**

As the first vice president, Hassan will be the New York Fed's second ranking officer and an alternative voting member of the Federal Open Market Committee.

Hassan's appointment has been approved by the **Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System**.

Till recently, she was the Chief Digital Officer for Morgan Stanley Wealth Management (MSWM).

**About the Federal Reserve Bank of New York:** It is one of the 12 Federal Reserve Banks of the United States.

**Headquarters: New York, USA**

**Established: November 16, 1914**

**President and Chief Executive Officer: John C. Williams**

**Tirath Singh Rawat takes oath as new Chief Minister of Uttarakhand**

Tirath replaced Trivendra Singh Rawat, who stepped down from the CM's post on 09 March 2021 after completing nearly 4 years.

Rawat is a Member of Parliament from Pauri Garhwal.

He was the first education minister after the formation of the Uttarakhand state in 2000.

**NABARD's chairman G R Chintala takes charge as chairman of APRACA**

Chintala has taken over from DPK Gunasekera, who is also the Chief Executive Officer of Bank of Ceylon.

**About APRACA (Asia Pacific Rural and Agricultural Credit Association):**

APRACA, established in 1977, is an association of institutions involved in agricultural, rural and microfinance policy and development, representing 21 countries in the Asia-Pacific region.

**Girish Murmu appointed Chairman of UN Panel of External Auditors again**

**Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) Girish Chandra Murmu** has been re-appointed as the Chairman of the Panel of External Auditors of the United Nations for the year 2021.

**Note:** Murmu was initially elected as Chairman of the Panel for 2020.

**About the UN Panel of External Auditors:** The UN General Assembly had in 1959 established the Panel of External Auditors, comprising the individual external auditors of the United Nations system.

Presently, the panel consists of 13 countries -- India, Germany, Chile, China, United Kingdom, France, Philippines, Switzerland, Italy, Ghana, Indonesia, Canada and Russia.

**Haryana Dy CM Dushyant Chautala re-elected TTFI president**

Haryana's Deputy Chief Minister Dushyant Chautala was re-elected as President of Table Tennis Federation of India for a four-year term during the 84th annual meeting of the TTFI.

**Facts about Table Tennis Federation of India (TTFI):**

**Membership:** 32 state units and 37 institutions

**Founded:** 1926

**Affiliation:** International Table Tennis Federation

**Headquarters:** New Delhi

**Russian supermodel 'Supernova' Natalia Vodianova named new UN goodwill ambassador**

Natalia Vodianova became a United Nations goodwill ambassador, pledging to promote the sexual and reproductive rights of women and girls and tackle stigmas surrounding their bodies.

She will be a campaigner for the UN Population Fund, which now calls itself the U.N.'s sexual and reproductive health agency, known as UNFPA.

**Indian economist Ligia Noronha appointed as Assistant Secretary-General of UN**

United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres has announced the appointment of Ligia Noronha of India as Assistant Secretary-General and Head of the New York Office of the **United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)**.

Noronha is an economist with over 30 years of international experience in the field of sustainable development.

She has worked since 2014 as Director of UNEP's Economy Division based in Nairobi.

**CBDT Chairman P C Mody gets further extension for three months**

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved an extension in the re-appointment of Shri Pramod Chandra Mody as Chairman, Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT), for a further period of three months with effect from March 1, 2021 to May 31, 2021.

Mr Mody, a 1982-batch Indian Revenue Service officer, was appointed as the CBDT chief in February 2019.

**Mary Kom appointed as the Chairperson of the International Boxing Association's "Champions and Veterans" committee**

**Note:** "Champions and Veterans" committee, formed in December 2020, consists of most respected worldwide boxing veterans and champions who have achieved significant results and who are ready to share their experience.

**About Mary Kom:** Six-time world champion Mary Kom is an Indian boxer, politician, and incumbent Member of Parliament, Rajya Sabha. Awards: Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan, Padma Shri. She won a bronze medal in the 2012 Summer Olympics and many more.

**Facts about the International Boxing Association (AIBA):**

**Headquarters:** Lausanne, Switzerland

**President:** Umar Kremlev

**Founded:** 1946

### **Shri Manpreet Vohra appointed as the next High Commissioner of India to Australia**

Mr Vohra, a 1988-batch Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officer, is presently Ambassador of India to Mexico.

#### **Facts about Australia:**

**Prime Minister:** Scott Morrison

**Capital:** Canberra

## **Science & Technology**

### **Maithri Aquatech sets up the 'World's First Mobile Water from Air Kiosk and Water Knowledge Centre' in the smart city Visakhapatnam**

This initiative is supported by GVMC (Greater Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation) and project SEWAH (Sustainable Enterprises for Water and Health) - an alliance between USAID (United States Agency for International Development) and SWN (Safe Water Network).

The kiosk will provide clean, mineral-enriched potable water harvested from the air by making use of Maithri Aquatech's own MEGHDOOT solution as a source to generate water with no dependency on scarce groundwater as well as surface water resources.

**Maithri Aquatech** is a Hyderabad-based company. The company has developed an innovative solution called **MEGHDOOT** which can generate water by harvesting the moisture in the air.

### **Russia launches 38 foreign satellites from 18 countries**

**Russian space agency 'Roscosmos'** successfully launched 38 foreign satellites from a Soyuz 2.1a carrier rocket from Baikonur cosmodrome, Kazakhstan.

The rocket will place in orbit 38 satellites from 18 countries, including South Korea, Japan, Canada, Saudi Arabia, Germany, Italy and Brazil.

Among them is the **Challenge-1, the first satellite made completely in Tunisia**, which was created by the Telnet telecommunications group.

**Note:** Recently, **India's PSLV-C51 launched Brazil's Amazonia-1, 18 other satellites.**

#### **Facts about Russia:**

**President:** Vladimir Putin  
**Capital:** Moscow  
**Currency:** Russian Ruble

### **World's most powerful supercomputer 'Fugaku'**

The world's most powerful supercomputer '**Fugaku**' is now ready to use.

Fugaku, the machine was created by Japanese scientific research institute RIKEN in collaboration with multinational IT developer Fujitsu.

**Note:** In June 2020, Fugaku was deemed the world's most powerful supercomputer in the **TOP500 supercomputer speed rankings**, overtaking IBM's Summit.

### **Facts about Japan:**

**Prime Minister:** Yoshihide Suga  
**Capital:** Tokyo  
**Currency:** Japanese yen

### **Google launches the "Women Will" web platform**

Google launched the "Women Will" web platform for women entrepreneurs on International Women's Day.

This platform aims to support 1 million women in rural areas of the country to pursue their ambitions and improve their livelihoods through entrepreneurship.

Google will work initially with **2,000 'Internet Saathi'** to help other women turn entrepreneurs.

**Internet Saathi** is a programme to improve digital literacy among women in rural areas in India. The programme is a joint initiative of Google India, Intel and Tata Trusts.

### **Facts about Google:**

**CEO:** Sundar Pichai

**Founded:** 4 September 1998

**Headquarters:** California, USA

**Founders:** Larry Page, Sergey Brin

### **ISRO develops radar (SAR) for joint earth observation satellite mission with NASA**

Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has completed the development of a **Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR)** capable of producing extremely high-resolution images for a joint earth observation satellite mission with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).

**NASA-ISRO SAR (NISAR)** is a joint collaboration for a dual-frequency L and S-band SAR for earth observation.

**NISAR** will be the first satellite mission to use two different radar frequencies (L-band and S-band) to measure changes in our planet's surface less than a centimetre across.

**Note:** The mission is targeted to launch in early 2022 from ISRO's Sriharikota spaceport in Andhra Pradesh's Nellore district.

### **India's PSLV-C51 launches Brazil's Amazonia-1, 18 other satellites**

India's Polar rocket successfully launched Amazonia-1 of Brazil and 18 other satellites from the launch pad of the Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota, in the first mission of the year for space agency ISRO.

The 18 co-passenger satellites placed in the orbit are -four from ISRO's Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre (three UNITY Sats from consortium of three Indian academic institutes and the SD-SAT from Chennai-based Space Kidz India-SKI, which is engraved with a picture of Prime Minister Narendra Modi) and 14 from NSIL. SKI's Satish Dhawan Satellite (SD-SAT) also carried Bhagavad Gita in a Secured Digital card format.

**Note:** PSLV-C51 is the first dedicated commercial mission of NewSpace India Limited (NSIL), ISRO's commercial arm.

### **Dr Harsh Vardhan inaugurates the three-day Global Bio India 2021**

The Union Minister for Science & Technology, Earth Sciences and Health & Family Welfare Dr. Harsh Vardhan inaugurated the second edition of Global Bio-India-2021 (1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2021).

The theme for this year is **"Transforming lives"** with the tag line **"Biosciences to Bio-economy"**.

The event will showcase the strength and opportunities of the India's biotechnology sector at national level and to the global community.

Harsh Vardhan unveiled the **"National Biotech Strategy"** and also inaugurated the **Virtual Exhibition of Global Bio-India**.

**Note:** The Government of India is playing a transformative and catalytic role in building a USD 150 billion bio-economy by 2025.

### **Russia launches first Arctic-monitoring satellite "Arktika-M"**

Russia's space corporation Roscosmos has successfully launched its first satellite "Arktika-M" to monitor the Arctic's climate and environment.

A Soyuz-2.1b carrier rocket with the "Arktika-M" satellite on board blasted off from the Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan.

The Arktika-M will provide round-the-clock continuous monitoring of the northern territory of Russia and the seas of the Arctic Ocean.

### **Swachhta Saarthi Fellowships launched by the Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser**

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

The fellowship is an initiative to empower young innovators who are engaged in community work of waste management/awareness campaigns/waste surveys/studies, etc. as Swachhta Saarthis.

**Note:** ‘Waste to Wealth’ Mission, is one of the nine national missions of the Prime Minister’s Science, Technology, and Innovation Advisory Council (PM-STIAC).

## Summits & Conference

### **Dr. Harsh Vardhan addresses 7th annual summit of NATHEALTH 2021**

Dr Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare addressed the 7<sup>th</sup> annual summit of NATHEALTH (March 25-26, 2021) organized by NATHEALTH-Healthcare Federation of India.

The theme is ‘**Indian Health system expansion in post-COVID era**’.

**Note:** Health has also been identified in Budget 2021-22 as one of the six main pillars to drive growth.

A holistic approach towards health and wellbeing has been adopted with an enormous financial allocation of Rs 2,23,846 crore in 2021-22 which is a mammoth 137% increase over the previous year.

### **S Jaishankar attends Heart of Asia conference in Tajikistan**

During his three-day bilateral visit to Tajikistan, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar attended the **9th Ministerial Conference of Heart of Asia - Istanbul Process (HoA-IP)** on Afghanistan in Dushanbe, Tajikistan on March 30, 2021.

Jaishankar asserted that for a durable peace in Afghanistan, every stakeholder should work towards genuine ‘double peace’ mechanism, which includes peace both within and around Afghanistan.

**Note:** The 9th Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process ministerial conference is part of the Istanbul Process - a regional initiative on security and cooperation for a stable and peaceful Afghanistan - that was launched on November 2, 2011, in Turkey.

India co-hosted the 6th Heart of Asia Ministerial Conference in Amritsar, Punjab in December 2016.

#### **Facts about Tajikistan:**

**Capital:** Dushanbe

**Currency:** Tajikistani somoni

**President:** Emomali Rahmon

**MOS Telecom Shri Sanjay Dhotre represents India at the World Summit on Information Society Forum 2021**

The World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Forum 2021 represents one of the world's largest annual gathering of the 'ICT for development' community, is co-organized by International Telecommunications Union (ITU), UNESCO, UNDP and UNCTAD.

Shri Dhotre underscored the role of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) for modernization and transformation of the industry, promotion of inclusive economic growth and stimulation of the national economies to meet the larger objectives of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

**Note:** The 2021 WSIS Forum will provide an opportunity to serve as a platform to track the achievements of WSIS Action Lines in collaboration with the UN Agencies involved and provide information and analyses of the implementation of WSIS Action Lines since 2005.

**Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare delivers the keynote address at the 'India TB Summit'**

The summit was organized to highlight the global and national prevalence of Tuberculosis in the run up to **World TB Day celebrations on 24<sup>th</sup> March, 2021**.

The Union Health Minister reaffirmed the political commitment of the government to end TB, we have accorded high priority to eradicating Tuberculosis in India by 2025, five years ahead of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) target of 2030.

The slogan is **"TB Haarega Desh Jeetega."**

**India Finland Virtual Summit**

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and Prime Minister of the Republic of Finland H.E. Ms. Sanna Marin held a Virtual Summit on March 16, 2021.

The two leaders reviewed the ongoing bilateral engagements and expressed their desire to further expand and diversify the relationship across sectors such as trade and investment, innovation, education, emerging technologies including Artificial Intelligence, 5G/6G, and quantum computing.

Prime Minister Modi invited Finland to join the **International Solar Alliance (ISA)** and the **Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI)**.

**Facts about Finland:**

**Capital:** Helsinki

**Prime Minister:** Sanna Marin

**Currency:** Euro

**President:** Sauli Niinistö

**6<sup>th</sup> India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA) Women's Forum**

The 6<sup>th</sup> India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA) Women's Forum meeting was held virtually on 16 March, 2021.

The meeting was chaired by Smriti Zubin Irani, Minister of Women and Child Development, Government of India.

A **joint declaration** was also issued highlighting the shared IBSA goals and commitments for achieving gender equality in all spheres of life.

**The India-Brazil-South Africa Trilateral Cooperation Forum** is a unique platform which brings together India, Brazil and South Africa, three large democracies and major economies from three different continents

### **India - Sweden Virtual Summit 2021**

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Sweden H.E. Stefan Löfven held a Virtual Summit.

Prime Minister Modi welcomed Sweden's decision to join the **International Solar Alliance (ISA)**.

The leaders also noted the growing membership of the India-Sweden joint initiative – the Leadership Group on Industry Transition (LeadIT) that was launched during the UN Climate Action Summit in September 2019 in New York.

They welcomed the creation of a **Sweden-India Health Hub** at AIIMS-Jodhpur.

**Note:** They welcomed the upcoming India-EU+27 Leaders' Meeting in Portugal in May 2021 which will be a new milestone for India-EU Strategic Partnership.

#### **Facts about Sweden:**

**Capital:** Stockholm

**Currency:** Swedish Krona

### **Techbharat 2021**

Union Minister for Health & Family Welfare, Dr Harsh Vardhan addressed the inaugural session of TechBharat 2021.

**Laghu Udyog Bharati and IMS Foundation** have organized the 2nd edition of the conclave bringing together stakeholders from the **HealthTech & Edutech sector** on a virtual platform.

**Techbharat** is facilitating interactions & deliberations between thousands of domestic & global participants, including policy makers, government representatives, industry members, investors & start-ups to nurture resourceful partnerships and boost growth in the sectors.

### **Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurates second edition of 'Maritime India Summit 2021'**

The Maritime India Summit 2021 is being organised by the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways from March 2 to March 4.

Denmark is the partner country for the summit.

The Maritime India Summit is one of the biggest virtual summits in the world, with the participation of more than 1.7 lakh registered participants from more than 100 nations.

Prime Minister released e-book of '**Maritime India Vision-2030**'.

Prime Minister also unveiled the e-plaque of '**Sagar-Manthan: Mercantile Maritime Domain Awareness Centre (MM-DAC)**'. It is an information system for enhancing maritime safety, search and rescue capabilities, security and marine environment protection.

## Chabahar Day

Chabahar Day was commemorated on March 04, 2021 on the sidelines of the Second edition of **International Maritime Summit-2021** (March 2-4).

**Note:** India, Iran and Uzbekistan had conducted the **first trilateral working group meeting** on the joint use of Chabahar port virtually in December 2020. India had proposed then to hold **Chabahar Day** on the sidelines of the International Maritime Summit.

**Chabahar port:** India and Iran had signed an agreement in 2018 to develop the Chabahar Port, located in the Gulf of Oman in south-eastern Iran.

Chabahar is the only Iranian port with direct access to the Indian Ocean.

The port is a key connectivity project that is aimed at boosting trade ties between India, Iran, and Afghanistan.

## Ranking & Index

### World Development Report 2021

The **World Bank** recently released the **World Development Report 2021: Data for Better Lives**.

The latest edition of the World Development Report provides a blueprint on how to harness the power of data for development, to ensure no one is left behind.

Most countries have shied away from an open-data policy. Only 11 percent low-income countries consistently made available a license classifiable as 'open'.

The comparable rate for lower-middle-income countries was 19 per cent, for upper-middle-income countries 22 percent and high-income countries 44 percent.

### Facts about World Bank:

Headquarters: Washington, D.C., United States

Founded: July 1944

President: David Malpass

**MD and CFO:** Anshula Kant

**Membership:** 189 countries (IBRD), 173 countries (IDA)

## India ranks 40th on International Intellectual Property Index 2021

India ranked 40 among 53 global economies in the 9th International Intellectual Property (IP) Index.

The overall global IP environment improved in 2020, with positive score increasing in 32 of the 53 economies measured by the IP Index.

**The USA topped the Index.**

**About International Intellectual Property Index:** Released annually by the US Chamber of Commerce Global Innovation Policy Centre (GIPC), USA, the Index evaluates Intellectual Property rights in 53 global economies from patent and copyright policies to commercialisation of IP assets and ratification of international treaties.

**2020 World Air Quality Report: India 3<sup>rd</sup> most polluted country; Delhi most polluted capital city**

The report is prepared by the **IQAir (Swiss- Air Quality Technology Company)**.

37 of the 40 most polluted cities in the world are in South Asia.

22 of the world's 30 most polluted cities are in India.

Delhi ranked as the 10th most polluted city and the top polluted capital city in the world.

**World's most polluted cities 2020:**

1st Rank- Hotan, China

2nd Rank- Ghaziabad, India

3rd Rank- Bulandshahr, India

**World's most polluted countries 2020:**

1st Rank- Bangladesh

2nd Rank- Pakistan

3rd Rank- India

**Note:** The 2020 World Air Quality Report is based on PM2.5 data from 106 countries

**India downgraded from 'free' to 'partly free' in democracy report titled "Freedom in the World 2021 - Democracy under Siege"**

India's status as a democracy and free society has been downgraded to "partly free" in the latest annual report on global political rights and liberties by Freedom House, a US government-funded NGO that studies political freedom around the world.

**In the report (2021), India had a score of 67 out of 100.**

**Note:** India had been rated as "free" in Freedom House's reports for 2018, 2019 and 2020.

**About Freedom House:** In 1973, Freedom House launched the Freedom in the World report, which assessed the level of freedom in each country and ranked them with a numerical score and declared them as "free", "partly free" or "not free".

**QS World University Rankings by Subject 2021**

Union Education Minister Shri Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' addressed at the unveiling of QS World University Rankings by Subject 2021.

**12 Indian institutions** have made it to the top 100 of the world - IIT Bombay, IIT Delhi, IIT Madras, IIT Kharagpur, IISC Bangalore, IIT Guwahati, IIM Bangalore, IIM Ahmedabad, JNU, Anna University, University of Delhi, and O.P Jindal University.

Amongst these top 100 ranked institutions, IIT Madras has been ranked 30th in the world for Petroleum Engineering, IIT Bombay has been ranked 41st and IIT Kharagpur has been ranked 44th in the world for Minerals and Mining Engineering, and the University of Delhi has been ranked 50th in the world for Development Studies.

**Note: Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), USA** has continued to remain in the top position.

### UNEP Food Waste Index Report 2021

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and partner organisation WRAP released the Food Waste Index Report 2021.

The report estimates that around 931 million tonnes of food waste was generated in 2019, 61 percent of which came from households, 26 percent from food service and 13 percent from retail.

On a global per capita-level, 121 kgs of consumer-level food is wasted each year, with 74 kgs of this happening in households.

In **India**, the household food waste estimate is **50 kg per capita per year**, or 68,760,163 tonnes a year.

Estimates suggest **8-10 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions** are associated with food that is not consumed.

**Facts about the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP):**

**Formation:** 5 June 1972

**Headquarters:** Nairobi, Kenya

**Executive Director:** Inger Andersen

**Parent organization:** United Nations

### Economic Freedom Index 2021: Singapore ranks 1st, India ranks 121st

Singapore topped the global ranking for the second year in a row.

Overall, the Global Economy remains 'Moderately Free' in the Index 2021.

**1<sup>st</sup> rank:** Singapore (Category- Free)

**2<sup>nd</sup> rank:** New Zealand (Category- Free)

**3<sup>rd</sup> rank:** Australia (Category- Free)

### 121<sup>st</sup> rank: India (Category- Mostly Unfree)

India came in around the middle of the pack among **Asia-Pacific countries ranking 26th out of 40 countries.**

**Economic Freedom Index 2021** was published by US think-tank, The Heritage Foundation. 184 countries were covered in the study this time and the period of study is July 2019 to June 2020.

**Note:** The Heritage Foundation decided to exclude **Hong Kong** from its rankings for the first time ever.

### Hurun Global Rich List 2021: Mukesh Ambani 8th richest in the world

Reliance Industries chairman & managing director and the country's richest man Mukesh Ambani has acquired the eighth spot in the 10<sup>th</sup> edition of Hurun Global Rich List 2021.

**1<sup>st</sup> rank:** Elon Musk (\$197 billion-Tesla)

**2<sup>nd</sup> rank:** Jeff Bezos (\$189 billion-Amazon)

**3<sup>rd</sup> rank:** Bernard Arnault (\$114 billion-LVMH)

**8<sup>th</sup> rank: Mukesh Ambani (\$ 83 billion- Reliance)**

India now has 209 billionaires, of which 177 live in India.

**Note:** In the Hurun Global Rich List 2020, Mukesh Ambani was ranked 9<sup>th</sup>.

### Rankings for Ease of Living Index 2020 and Municipal Performance Index 2020 announced

Shri Hardeep Singh Puri, Minister of State (Independent Charge), Housing and Urban Affairs announced the release of the final rankings of Ease of Living Index (EoLI)2020 and the Municipal Performance Index (MPI) 2020.

The rankings under **Ease of Living Index 2020** were announced for cities with a population of more than a million, and cities with less than a million people.

111 cities participated in the assessment exercise that was conducted in 2020.

### Top 10 Rankings:

Rank	Ease of Living Index			
	Population Million+		Population Less than Million	
	City	Score	City	Score
1	Bengaluru	66.70	Shimla	60.90

2	Pune	66.27	Bhubaneshwar	59.85
3	Ahmedabad	64.87	Silvassa	58.43
4	Chennai	62.61	Kakinada	56.84
5	Surat	61.73	Salem	56.40
6	Navi Mumbai	61.60	Vellore	56.38
7	Coimbatore	59.72	Gandhinagar	56.25
8	Vadodara	59.24	Gurugram	56.00
9	Indore	58.58	Davangere	55.25
10	Greater Mumbai	58.23	Tiruchirapalli	55.24

Similar to the EoLI index, the **assessment framework under Municipal Performance Index 2020** has classified municipalities based on their population- Million+ (municipalities having over a million population) and Less than Million Population. The MPI examined the sectoral performance of 111 municipalities.

<b>Municipal Performance Index</b>					
		Population Million+		Population Less than Million	
Rank	Municipality	Score	Municipality	Score	
1	Indore	66.08	New Delhi MC	52.92	
2	Surat	60.82	Tirupati	51.69	
3	Bhopal	59.04	Gandhinagar	51.59	
4	Pimpri Chinchwad	59.00	Karnal	51.39	
5	Pune	58.79	Salem	49.04	
6	Ahmedabad	57.60	Tiruppur	48.92	
7	Raipur	54.98	Bilaspur	47.99	
8	Greater Mumbai	54.36	Udaipur	47.77	

9	Visakhapatnam	52.77	Jhansi	47.04
10	Vadodara	52.68	Tirunelveli	47.02

**Note: The Ease of Living Index (EoLI)** is an assessment tool that evaluates the quality of life and the impact of various initiatives for urban development.

**The Municipal Performance Index (MPI)** was launched as an accompaniment to the Ease of Living Index. It seeks to examine local government practice in municipalities across areas of services, finance, policy, technology and governance.

## Important Days

### April 2, World Autism Awareness Day

The **United Nations General Assembly** unanimously declared 2 April as World Autism Awareness Day to highlight the need to help improve the quality of life of those with autism.

World Autism Awareness Day, passed in council on 1 November 2007, and adopted on 18 December 2007.

**About Autism:** Autism, also called Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), is a complicated condition that includes problems with communication and behavior

### March 20, International Day of Happiness

The theme for this year is “**Happiness for All, Forever.**”

The International Day of Happiness was established by the United Nations General Assembly on 28 June 2012.

**World Happiness Report 2021:** The Report was released by United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network.

In the report, **Finland was ranked as the happiest country in the world**, for the fourth time in a row.

Afghanistan was ranked the least happy nation.

**India** ranked 139 out of 149 countries in the report.

### March 20, World Sparrow Day

It is an international initiative by the **Nature Forever Society of India** in collaboration with the Eco-Sys Action Foundation (France) and numerous other national and international organisations across the world.

**Note:** The first World Sparrow Day was celebrated in 2010 in different parts of the world.

### March 21, International Day of Forests

The theme for 2021 is "**Forest restoration: a path to recovery and well-being**".

The United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 21 March the International Day of Forests in 2012.

On each International Day of Forests, countries are encouraged to undertake local, national and international efforts to organize activities involving forests and trees, such as tree planting campaigns.

### March 22, World Water Day

The theme for 2021 is '**Valuing Water**'.

World Water Day raises awareness about water and the global water crisis and the main focus of the day is **Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6: water and sanitation for all by 2030**.

The United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution by which 22 March of each year was declared World Day for Water, to be observed starting in 1993.

### March 23, World Meteorological Day

The day is observed as the foundation day of the World Meteorological Organization which was established on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 1950.

It showcases the essential contribution of National Meteorological and Hydrological Services to the safety and wellbeing of society.

The theme for 2021 is "**The Ocean, our climate and weather.**"

### March 15, World Consumer Rights Day

World Consumer Rights Day is an annual occasion dedicated to highlighting **the power of consumers and their rights for a fair, safe and sustainable marketplace for everyone**.

The World Consumer Rights Day 2021 theme is to gather all the consumers in a fight to '**Tackle Plastic Pollution**'.

• **Note: India:** On July 20th, 2020, the new **Consumer Protection Act, 2019** came into force in India, replacing the previous enactment of 1986.

**National Consumer Day** is celebrated on 24 December.

### March 16, National Vaccination Day

India observes National Vaccination Day also known as **National Immunization Day** every year on March 16.

It was first celebrated at the time when the **National Pulse Polio vaccination** drive was launched, in 1995.

### March 07, Janaushadhi Diwas

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi addresses the 'Janaushadhi Diwas' celebrations on 7th March, 2021.

He dedicated to the nation the **7500<sup>th</sup> Janaushadhi Kendra at NEIGRIHMS, Shillong** during the event.

1st March to 7th March was celebrated as '**Janaushadhi Week**' across the nation, with the theme of "**Jan Aushadhi – Seva bhi, Rozgar bhi**".

**About Janaushadhi Diwas:** The 'Janaushadhi Diwas' was observed across the country on March 7, 2019. On the occasion of the 'Janaushadhi Diwas', the Prime Minister Narendra Modi interacted with owners of Janaushadhi Kendras and beneficiaries of the **Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP)** across the country.

### March 08, International Women's Day

The theme of this year is "**Women in leadership: Achieving an equal future in a COVID-19 world**".

**Note:** The United Nations began celebrating International Women's Day in the International Women's Year, 1975. In 1977, the United Nations General Assembly invited member states to proclaim March 8 as the UN Day for women's rights and world peace

### February 28, National Science Day

The day is celebrated every year on 28th of February to commemorate the discovery of the 'Raman Effect'. On this day, Physicist CV Raman announced the discovery of the 'Raman Effect' for which he was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1930.

The theme for National Science Day 2021 is 'Future of Science and Technology and Innovation: Impact on Education Skills and Work'.

**Note:** With a view to promote science and innovation, the government presents the National Science Communication Awards every year on this day.

### February 27, World NGO Day

The day aims to inspire people to become actively involved with NGOs (Non-Governmental Organizations), both in the public and private sectors.

**Note:** The first World NGO Day was observed by the United Nations in 2014, although it was officially recognised and declared in 2010 by 12 member nations of IX Baltic Sea NGO Forum of the Council of the Baltic Sea States.

### March 03, World Wildlife Day

On 20 December 2013, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) proclaimed 3 March – the day of signature of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) in 1973 – as UN World Wildlife Day to celebrate and raise awareness of the world's wild animals and plants.

World Wildlife Day 2021 theme is **"Forests and Livelihoods: Sustaining People and Planet."**

### March 03, World Hearing Day

World Hearing Day is a campaign held each year by the Office of Prevention of Blindness and Deafness of the World Health Organization (WHO).

The theme of the campaign for 2021 is **'Hearing Care for All'**.

**Note:** As per first World Report on Hearing released by World Health Organisation (WHO), 1 in 4 people projected to have hearing problems by 2050 worldwide.

### March 04, National Safety Day

This year's theme is **'Sadak Suraksha (Road Safety).'**

The **National Safety Week** is also celebrated from 4 March to 10 March.

**Note:** National Safety Day was first observed on the foundation day of the National Safety Council in 1972.

**About the National Safety Council:** It was set up by the Ministry of Labour and Employment on 4 March 1966 to develop and bring into practice a voluntary routine on Safety, Health, and Environment.

## Books and Authors

Sanjaya Baru's book **"India's Power Elite: Caste, Class and Cultural Revolution"**

Sanjaya Baru is releasing a book titled, 'India's Power Elite: Caste, Class and Cultural Revolution' in April 2021 by Penguin Random House India.

**Note:** He has earlier written a memoir **'The Accidental Prime Minister'** which was on former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh.

**Book titled "Battle Ready for 21st Century" released at Centre for Land Warfare Studies (CLAWS)**

A book titled "Battle Ready for 21st Century" **co-edited by Lt Gen AK Singh, Distinguished Fellow CLAWS and Brig Narender Kumar, Visiting Fellow CLAWS** was released by Gen Bipin Rawat, CDS and Gen Deepak Kapoor, Former Chief of the Army Staff at Centre for Land Warfare Studies (CLAWS) on 17 March 2021.

The authors with hands-on experience and domain specialisation have endeavoured to define and suggest the ways and means necessary to secure India from emerging security challenges on land, air, sea, space, cyber domain and even cognitive domain.

**Environment Minister launches e-book on Women Forest Officers**

On International Women's Day, Union Minister for Forest, Environment and Climate Change Prakash Javadekar launched an e-book on women forest officials.

This e-book titled "**The Green Queens of India - A nation's pride**" is based on the lives of women forest officials.

This book is a compilation of her life experiences which have been prepared by many women officers together.

### **Prime Minister Narendra Modi releases 11 Volumes of Manuscript with commentaries by 21 scholars on shlokas of Srimad Bhagavadgita**

The Manuscript, published by Dharmarth Trust, is written with an extraordinary variety of Indian calligraphy ranging from Shankar Bhashya to Bhasanuvada.

Dr Karan Singh who is the Chairman Trustee of Dharmarth Trust, Jammu and Kashmir also highlighted the importance of Gita and its message.

### **Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan's autobiography 'The Frontier Gandhi: My Life and Struggle' released in english**

First published in Pashto in 1983, the autobiography of freedom fighter Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, fondly **known as Frontier Gandhi**, is now out in English, announced by publishing house Roli Books.

The book is translated by former Pakistani civil servant and author Imitiaz Ahmad Sahibzada.

This is the "first time" that Khan's autobiography is available in English.

### **The book, titled "Dynasty to Democracy: The Untold Story of Smriti Irani's Triumph" to be released in English**

The English translation of journalist-author Anant Vijay's book "**Amethi Sangram: Aitihasic Jeet Ankahi Dastan**" will be released on March 15.

The book traces Union Minister Irani's journey from her defeat in 2014 to her victory in the Congress stronghold of Amethi, Uttar Pradesh during the 2019 Lok Sabha election.

**Note:** The Hindi book was published in December, 2020.

### **Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi launches the e-book version of Swami Chidbhavanandaji's Bhagavad Gita**

This e-book would deepen the connection between the eternal Gita and the glorious Tamil culture.

**Note: Swami Chidbhavanandaji** was the founder of Sri Ramakrishna Tapovanam Ashram at Thirupparaithurai, Tiruchirapalli, Tamil Nadu.

Swamiji has authored 186 books and all genres of literary composition. His scholarly work on the Gita is one of the most extensive books on the subject.

## **Obituaries**



### **Noted journalist and author Anil Dharker passes away at 74**

Anil Dharker was the founder and director of the Mumbai International Literary Festival.

In his five-decade-long illustrious career, Dharker had been a columnist and writer, a member of the advisory committee of the film certification board and more.

He was a columnist for The Indian Express newspaper and has authored 'The Romance of Salt', a book on Mahatma Gandhi's Dandi March.

### **Writer-Director Sagar Sarhadi passes away**

Veteran Writer-Director Sagar Sarhadi passed away at 88.

Sagar Sarhadi gained recognition in the film industry by writing and co-writing blockbuster films like Kabhi Kabhie, Sawaal, Silsila, Karmayogi, Zindagi, Inkaar, Noorie, Faasle, Anubhav, Deewana and Kaho Naa Pyaar Hai.

### **Kathakali maestro Chemancheri Kunhiraman Nair passes away at 105**

Chemancheri Kunhiraman Nair, also known as **Guru Chemancheri** was a noted **Indian Kathakali actor**.

The Government of India awarded him the fourth highest civilian honor, **Padma Shri** in 2017.

### **Renowned artist, Padma Bhushan awardee Laxman Pai passes away**

Artist and painter from Goa Laxman Pai passed away at 95.

The former principal of the Goa College of Art had several laurels under his name including Padma Bhushan, Padma Shri, Nehru Award, and Lalit Kala Akademi Award.

### **Tanzanian President John Magufuli passes away**

Magufuli won the October 2015 presidential election and was sworn in on 5 November 2015; he was re-elected in 2020.

**Note:** According to the constitution of the African country, **Vice President Samia Suluhu Hassan** will be sworn in as the new president and will serve in the post for the remaining tenure of Magufuli.

She will be Tanzania's first female president.

**Facts about Tanzania:** Country in East Africa

**Capital:** Dodoma

**Currency:** Tanzanian shilling

### **Former Governor of Rajasthan Anshuman Singh passes away**

Justice (retired) Anshuman Singh took charge as the Governor of Rajasthan on January 16, 1999 and remained in office till May 2003.

He was also appointed as the governor of Gujarat in 1998.

He was appointed judge of the Allahabad High Court in 1984 and later became acting Chief Justice of the Rajasthan High Court.

### **Indian athlete Ishar Singh Deol passes away**

Deol had won many medals for the country and the state since 1951 and was awarded the **Dhyan Chand National Award in 2009** for his lifelong contribution towards sports.

Deol was General Secretary of the Punjab Athletes Association for 30 consecutive years and Vice President of the Athletic Federation of India and a member of the Selection Committee for many years.

### **Brahma Kumaris' chief Dadi Hriday Mohini passes away at 93**

Dadi Gulzaar aka Hridaya Mohini was the Administrative head of Prajapita Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University.

### **Malayalam poet Vishnunarayanan Namboothiri passes away**

Namboothiri, 81, one of the widely acclaimed poets of contemporary Malayalam literature, was awarded the Padma Shri in 2014.

He was also a recipient of several literary honours, including the Kerala Sahitya Akademi award.

## **Sports**

### **India vs England Cricket Series 2021**

**(One Day International series)**

India won the 3-match series 2-1.

**Player of the series:** Jonny Bairstow (England)

**Note:** Virat Kohli-led side has now won all the series' in this England's tour of India.

India claimed the Test series 3-1 and then won the five-match T20I series by 3-2.

Virat Kohli became the 3rd Indian Captain to lead Indian side in 200 International matches. (Mohammad Azharuddin-221 matches, MS Dhoni-332 matches)

### **Al Ain World Shooting Para Sport World Cup 2021**

(Al Ain, United Arab Emirates: 15 - 25 March 2021)

**India finishes 3<sup>rd</sup> place** in the medals table in the Al Ain 2021 World Shooting Para Sport World Cup.

Place	Countries	Medals
1	Ukraine	11 Medals (5 Gold 5 Silver 1 Bronze)
2	United Arab Emirates	5 Medals (3 Gold 2 Silver)
3	India	7 Medals (2 Gold 1 Silver 4 Bronze)

**Note:** India's Singhraj and Manish Narwal won gold in World Shooting Para Sport World Cup 2021.

### International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) World Cup 2021

(Dr. Karni Singh Shooting Ranges, New Delhi: 18-29 March 2021)

India tops the medals tally with 15 gold, 9 silver & 6 bronze in ISSF Shooting World Cup 2021.

### MEDAL STANDINGS

Place	Country	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
1	India	15	9	6	30
2	USA	4	3	1	8
3	Italy	2	0	2	4

**Note:** India's Yashaswini Deswal won the first gold medal for India in the Women's 10 Meter Air Pistol final of the ISSF World Cup 2021

### F1 Bahrain Grand Prix 2021

**British Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes) won the F1 Bahrain Grand Prix 2021** held at Bahrain International Circuit, Sakhir, Bahrain.

Max Verstappen (**Red Bull**) got second position and Valtteri Bottas (Mercedes) got third position.

**Note:** This was Hamilton's 96th career Formula 1 victory.

### India vs England cricket (2021)

#### T20 International series

India won the 5-match series 3-2

Player of the Series: Virat Kohli

### **Malaysia's Lee Zii Jia wins All England Badminton Championships 2021 Men's title; Nozomi Okuhara clinches Women's title**

**Malaysia's Lee Zii Jia** has won the **men's single title** as he defeated Denmark's Viktor Axelsen in the finals.

**Japan's Nozomi Okuhara** has won the **women's single title** as she defeated Thailand's Pornpawee Chochuwong in the finals.

### **Shreyas Iyer signs up with Lancashire for Royal London Cup 2021**

English county Lancashire announced the overseas signing of India batsman Shreyas Iyer for the 2021 Royal London Cup.

The top-order batsman is regarded as one of the most attacking and fluent stroke players in Indian cricket and he has played in 21 ODIs and 29 T20 Internationals for his country.

**Note:** The first Indian to join the club was wicketkeeper-batsman Farokh Engineer who joined the club in 1968.

After Engineer retired, four other Indian — Murali Kartik, Dinesh Mongia, VVS Laxman, and Sourav Ganguly have represented the club.

### **Vijay Hazare Trophy 2021 (20 February to 14 March 2021)**

**Final: Mumbai vs Uttar Pradesh**

Mumbai won **Vijay Hazare Trophy 2021 title**.

This is Mumbai's fourth Hazare title.

**Note:** Mumbai captain Prithvi Shaw became the first cricketer to score 800 runs in a single edition of Vijay Hazare Trophy.

### **Virat Kohli becomes first cricketer to score 3,000 runs in T-20 International**

India's Captain Virat Kohli has become the first-ever batsman to score 3,000 runs in T-20 International (T20I).

Kohli achieved the milestone during the second T20I against England at Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad.

He now has 3,001 runs from 87 T20I matches.

**Note:** New Zealand's Martin Guptill comes second in the list with 2,839 runs in 99 matches.

India's Rohit Sharma comes third in the list with 2,773 runs in 108 matches.

### **Thomas Bach re-elected as IOC president**

Olympic champion Thomas Bach has been re-elected for an additional four-year term as President of the **International Olympic Committee (IOC)**.

**Facts about the International Olympic Committee (IOC):**

**Headquarters:** Lausanne, Switzerland  
**President:** Thomas Bach  
**Founded:** 23 June 1894

### **Bhavani Devi becomes first Indian fencer to qualify for the Tokyo Olympics 2021 Games**

Tamil Nadu's Bhavani Devi, 8-time national champion, secured a spot for the Tokyo Olympics at the World Cup in Hungary.  
Bhavani Devi qualifies through the Adjusted Official Ranking (AOR) Method.

### **Mithali Raj becomes first Indian woman cricketer to score 10,000 international runs**

Mithali reached the milestone in the ongoing third One-day International match against South Africa in Lucknow.

**Note:** Mithali is now the **second international cricketer to score 10,000 runs.**

**England's Charlotte Edwards** is the only other woman cricketer who has achieved this feat.

### **ISL (Indian Super League) 2020-21: Mumbai City FC wins title**

Mumbai City lifted their first-ever Hero Indian Super League (ISL) trophy after beating last season's winners ATK Mohun Bagan 2-1 in the final at the Fatorda Stadium in Margao.

**Note:** In February 2021, Mumbai City FC won the **ISL League Winners Shield.**

### **India to host Asian Boxing Championships 2021**

**The International Boxing Association** announced that Asian Boxing Championships 2021 will be hosted by New Delhi, India from May 21-31.

It will be the first boxing tournament in Asia to be held in 2021.

**Facts about the International Boxing Association (AIBA):**

**Headquarters:** Lausanne, Switzerland  
**President:** Umar Kremlev  
**Founded:** 1946

### **India vs England Test Series 2021**

India won the 4- Test match series 3-1

**Player of the series:** Ravichandran Ashwin.

**Note:** India also qualified for the World Test Championship final.

With this win, India will meet New Zealand in the final of the ICC World Test Championship which is scheduled to start from June 18 at Lord's Cricket Ground.

### **Wrestler Bajrang Punia regains world number one ranking**

Indian wrestler Bajrang Punia has regained world number one ranking after clinching a second successive gold medal at the **Matteo Pallicone Ranking Series** in Rome.

Punia defeated Tulga Tumur Ochir from Mongolia in the **65kg freestyle** event final in Rome. Bajrang Punia was ranked at the second spot in the world rankings before the beginning of the Matteo Pallicone Ranking Series.

**Note:** In 2020, the Indian wrestler had defeated USA's Jordan Oliver in the final to clinch the gold medal at the tournament.

Punia had reserved his place in the Tokyo Olympic Games in September 2019 after clinching bronze at the World Championships.

### **PV Sindhu wins silver medal at BWF Swiss Open Super 300, 2021**

Indian Shuttler PV Sindhu won silver medal in the BWF Swiss Open Super 300 (Yonex Swiss Open 2021) at Basel, Switzerland.

She was defeated by Carolina Marin (Spain) in the final of the **Women's Singles Title**

**Note:** Viktor Axelsen (Denmark) won **Men's Singles Title** in the BWF Swiss Open Super 300.

### **Vinesh Phogat wins her 2nd gold in Matteo Pellicone Ranking Series event**

**Indian wrestler Vinesh Phogat** won her second gold medal in the Matteo Pellicone Ranking Series event and reclaimed the **top rank** in the 53-kg category in Rome.

Vinesh defeated Canada's Diana Mary Helen Weicker.

**Note:** Recently, Vinesh had won a gold medal in the women's 53-kg category at XXIV Outstanding Ukrainian Wrestlers and Coaches Memorial in Kyiv, Ukraine.

Vinesh Phogat is the only Indian woman wrestler who has qualified for the **Tokyo Olympics**.

### **Ravichandran Ashwin declared ICC Men's Player of the Month for February 2021**

India's off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin was named the **ICC Men's Player of the Month** for February for his stellar show against England in a four-match Test series.

England's Tammy Beaumont was adjudged the **ICC Women's Player of the Month**.

**Note:** Rishabh Pant won the ICC Men's Player of the Month award for January 2021.

### **Chess player Koneru Humpy wins BBC ISWOTY award for 2020**

Chess player Koneru Humpy from Andhra Pradesh has won the **BBC Indian Sportswoman of the Year award (ISWOTY)** for 2020.

Humpy is the **World Rapid Chess champion** having won the title in December 2019.

She received the **Arjuna Award in 2003** and **Padma Shri in 2007**.

**Note:** the **BBC Indian Sportswoman of the Year** initiative was launched in 2019 to celebrate female achievements in sport and highlight the issues and challenges faced by women in India.

### **Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi delivered the inaugural address at 2nd Khelo India National Winter Games 2021 at Gulmarg**

In the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, the second edition of Khelo India Winter Games (February 26 – March 02, 2021) begins at Gulmarg.

‘Khelo India Winter Games’ has been **organised by the Union Ministry of Youth Affairs And Sports** in collaboration with the J&K Sports Council and the Winter Games Association of J&K.

The games include snowshoe race, ice skating, ice hockey, skiing, nordic skiing, snowboarding, ski mountaineering and ice stock.

### **Yusuf Pathan announces retirement from all formats of cricket**

He played 57 ODIs and 22 T20Is for India between 2007 and 2012.

Pathan was part of the 2007 T20 World Cup as well as the 2011 ODI World Cup, both of which were won by the Indian team.

### **Vinay Kumar announces retirement from all formats of cricket**

Kumar, a pace bowler who has represented India in all formats.

He played 1 Test, 31 ODIs and 9 T20Is for India between 2010 and 2013.

### **Indian men's skeet team wins bronze in ISSF World Cup**

The Indian trio of Mairaj Ahmed Khan, Angad Vir Singh Bajwa and Gurjoat Khangura won the bronze medal in men's skeet team event at the International Shooting Sport Federation tournament (ISSF) Shotgun World Cup in Cairo, Egypt.

The Indians defeated the Kazakhstan team of David Pochivalov, Eduard Yechshenko and Alexandr Mukhamediyev.

### **Vinesh Phogat wins Gold in Ukraine wrestling event**

Indian wrestler Vinesh Phogat has won the gold medal in the women's 53-kg category at XXIV Outstanding Ukrainian Wrestlers and Coaches Memorial in Kyiv, Ukraine.

Vinesh Phogat defeated world number seven Vanesa Kaladzinskaya of Belarus in the finals to win the gold medal.

**Note:** Vinesh Phogat is the only Indian woman wrestler who has qualified for the **Tokyo Olympics**.

### **78<sup>th</sup> Golden Globe Awards 2021**

The Golden Globes for film and television, organised by the Hollywood Foreign Press Association (HFPA), were handed out at a virtual ceremony.

**Following is a list of winners in key categories:**

**Movies:**

BEST DRAMA	Nomadland
BEST COMEDY OR MUSICAL	Borat Subsequent Moviefilm
BEST ACTOR, DRAMA	Chadwick Boseman for "Ma Rainey's Black Bottom"
BEST ACTRESS, DRAMA	Andra Day for "The United States vs. Billie Holiday"
BEST DIRECTOR	Chloé Zhao for "Nomadland"
BEST ANIMATED FILM	Soul
BEST FOREIGN LANGUAGE FILM	Minari(USA)

**Television:**

BEST TV DRAMA SERIES	The Crown
BEST TV COMEDY/MUSICAL SERIES	Schitt's Creek
BEST ACTOR, TV DRAMA	Josh O'Connor for "The Crown"
BEST ACTRESS, TV DRAMA	Emma Corrin for "The Crown"
BEST TV MOVIE OR LIMITED SERIES	The Queen's Gambit

**Odisha to host Indian Women's League**

**The All India Football Federation (AIFF)** has announced that Odisha will host the 2020-2021 Hero Indian Women's League. The dates for the tournament will be announced soon.

**About the Indian Women's League:** It is the top division women's professional football league in India.

The first season of the league was organized in Cuttack in October 2016.

The league is run by the All India Football Federation.

**Facts about the All India Football Federation (AIFF):**

**Headquarters location:** New Delhi

**Founded:** 23 June 1937

**President:** Praful Patel

**Note:** India is scheduled to host the AFC Women's Asian Cup in 2022 which will be followed by the FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup 2022.

### **Sports Ministry restores recognition of Gymnastics Federation of India after 10 years**

Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports has decided to restore the recognition of the **Gymnastics Federation of India (GFI)** as a **National Sports Federation (NSF)**.

The recognition has been granted till December 31, 2021.

**Note:** The GFI was de-recognised by the ministry in 2011 because of infighting in the body.

### **J&K tops medals tally at Khelo India Winter National Games in Gulmarg**

Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir topped the medals tally in the second edition of Khelo India Winter National Games.

**J&K won 11 gold, 18 silver and 5 bronze medals.**

The five-day mega sports event which began on 26th of February, concluded in Gulmarg in north Kashmir's Baramulla district.

**Note: The event was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.**

The event was organised by the Union Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports in collaboration with the J&K Sports Council and the Winter Games Association of Jammu and Kashmir.

### **Indian shuttlers Varun Kapur, Malvika Bansod win Uganda International titles**

Indian shuttlers Varun Kapur and Malvika Bansod won the men's and women's singles titles respectively at the 2021 Uganda International Badminton Tournament in Kampala.

Varun defeated Sankar Muthusamy in men's singles and Malvika defeated Anupama Upadhyaya in the women's singles.

# Monthly Current Affairs

## February 2021

### Important News: State

#### **Prime Minister inaugurates and lays foundation stone of key projects of power and urban sector in Kerala**

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi inaugurated Pugalur - Thrissur Power Transmission Project, Kasaragod Solar Power Project and Water Treatment Plant at Aruvikkara in Kerala.

2000 Megawatt state of the art Pugalur - Thrissur High Voltage Direct Current system inaugurated, is the first HVDC interconnection of Kerala with National Grid.

He also laid the foundation stone of Integrated Command and Control Centre and Smart Roads Project in Thiruvananthapuram.

#### **Hoshangabad in Madhya Pradesh to be renamed as Narmadapuram**

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has announced that Hoshangabad city in the state would be renamed as Narmadapuram.

He made the announcement during the Narmada Jayanti programme held in Hoshangabad.

**Famous attractions in Hoshangabad:** Bori Wildlife Sanctuary, Hill station- Pachmarhi, Satpura Tiger Reserve (STR) also known as Satpura National Park.

#### **Mamata Banerjee launches 'MAA' scheme**

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee launched the "Maa" scheme under which her government would provide a meal at a nominal cost of ₹ 5 to poor people.

They will get a platter of rice, dal, a vegetable and egg curry for ₹ 5 and the state government will bear a subsidy of ₹ 15 per plate.

Self-help groups will operate the kitchens from 1 pm to 3 pm every day and such kitchens will be set up everywhere in the state gradually.

#### **Kerala Governor inaugurates India's first Digital University**

The Governor of Kerala Arif Mohammed Khan has inaugurated the country's first Digital University in the state which has been set up in Kerala's Technocity, Mangalapuram.

**Kerala University of Digital Sciences, Innovation and Technology (KUDSIT-Digital University)** is established by upgrading the two-decade old state government's Indian Institute of Information Technology and Management Kerala (IIITM-K).

### **Puducherry Chief Minister V Narayanasamy resigns**

Puducherry Lt Governor Dr. Tamilisai Soundararajan has forwarded the resignation letter of Chief Minister V Narayanasamy to the Union Home Ministry for consideration.

V Narayanasamy and his cabinet colleagues resigned, after the government lost the confidence vote sought by him in the Legislative Assembly.

**Note:** With the collapse of the government, the Congress now is not a part of the government in any southern state or Union Territory.

Since 2019, the Congress has lost power similarly in Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh.

### **President Ram Nath Kovind inaugurates 'Narendra Modi Stadium', world's largest cricket stadium, in Ahmedabad, Gujarat**

The Motera Stadium (Sardar Patel Stadium), world's largest cricket stadium, was inaugurated by President Ram Nath Kovind, and was renamed the 'Narendra Modi Stadium'.

The President also performed 'Bhoomi Pujan' (ground breaking ceremony) of the '**Sardar Vallabhbhai Sports Enclave**'.

**Note:** 1.32 lakh spectators will be able to witness matches at this stadium. The stadium has 11 pitches, unrivalled by any stadium in the world.

It hosted its first ever pink ball Test match on 24 February 2021 between India and England.

#### **Facts about Gujarat:**

**State Bird:** Greater flamingo

**State Animal:** Asiatic lion

**State Flower:** Marigold

**State Tree:** Banyan

### **Odisha hosts 17th India International Mega Trade Fair 2021**

The 11 days long International Trade Fair from February 19 to March 1 has been organised by the Confederation of Real Estate Developers' Associations of India (**CREDAI**) in collaboration with the Odisha Chamber of Commerce and West Bengal Chamber of Commerce.

Odisha Law Minister Pratap Jena inaugurated the 17th India International Mega Trade Fair at Janata Maidan in Bhubaneswar.

**Note:** Around 9 countries and 19 states of India are participating with a total number of 250 stalls in the trade fair.

The countries participating included Bangladesh, Dubai, Iran, Thailand, Afghanistan, Malaysia, Lebanon and Tunisia.

### **Asia's largest Livestock Research Centre in Salem**

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami inaugurated the **Advanced Institute of Integrated Research in Livestock and Animal Science (AIIRLAS)**, the largest in Asia, near Thalaivasal in Salem district.

The AIIRLAS, which also accommodates the State's fifth veterinary college, was constructed at a cost of Rs 1,023 crore on 1,100 acres.

He also announced a **frozen semen station** that would be established at Karumandurai, in Salem, at a cost of Rs 100 crore soon.

**Facts about Tamil Nadu's UNESCO World Heritage Sites:** Nilgiri Mountain Railway, Brihadishwara Temple, Thanjavur, Gangaikonda Cholapuram, Jayakondam, Airavatesvara Temple, Darasuram, Shore Temple along with the collection of other monuments, Mamallapuram

### **Uttar Pradesh receives award for fastest implementation of Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana**

Union Minister for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Narendra Singh Tomar awarded the top-performing States and Districts for their exemplary work with respect to the implementation of the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi Scheme.

Uttar Pradesh has been awarded in the category of fastest take off in year 2020-21. Nearly 1.53 crore farmers were registered during the period of Dec 2018 to Mar 2019 in state.

**Note:** The Union Minister distributed the awards during an event in New Delhi organized to celebrate the **2nd-year completion of the PM-KISAN scheme**.

**PM-KISAN Scheme:** This flagship scheme of the Narendra Modi government was launched on February 24, 2019. Under this initiative, ₹6,000 is disbursed to farmers with cultivable landholdings.

### **Prime Minister inaugurated and laid the foundation stones of several developmental projects worth over 8000 crore rupees in Tamil Nadu**

The Prime Minister Narendra Modi dedicated to the nation, state-of-the-art Main Battle Tank Arjun Mark 1A which has been indigenously designed and manufactured by the Combat Vehicles Research and Development Establishment of Defence Research and Development Organisation.

Among the projects inaugurated by the Prime Minister in Tamil Nadu include, the Chennai Metro Rail Phase-I extension. The Central Government has accepted their

long-standing demand of DevendrakulaVelalar community to be known as DevendrakulaVelalar. They will now be known by their heritage name and not the six to seven names listed in the Schedule to the Constitution.

**Facts about Tamil Nadu:**

**Capital:** Chennai

**Governor:** Banwarilal Purohit

**Chief Minister:** Edappadi K. Palaniswami

**Prime Minister unveils several development projects worth Rs 6100 crore in Kerala**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi unveiled several key development projects worth 6,100 crore rupees at INS Garuda Naval Air Station at Kochi in Kerala.

The Prime Minister also inaugurated country's first full-fledged international cruise terminal, Sagarika at Cochin Port and Marine Engineering Training Institute of Cochin Shipyard Ltd., the Propylene Derivative Petrochemical Project of Bharat Petroleum Corporation, the Ro-Ro Vessels at Willingdon Islands in Kochi.

**Bihar signs MoU with UNEP for climate resilience and low carbon development**

The Bihar government has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) for climate resilience and low carbon development strategy formulation.

UNEP will provide technical assistance to Bihar to prepare its greenhouse gas inventory and carry out climate impact scenario and vulnerability assessments.

It will also suggest revisions to the State Action Plans on Climate Change.

**Facts about State symbols of Bihar:**

**State Bird:** House Sparrow

**State Animal:** Gaur

**State Flower:** Kachnar

**State Fruit:** Mango

**State Tree:** Peepal tree

**Mandu Festival**

In Madhya Pradesh, the three-day (13-15 February) Mandu Festival was celebrated at Mandu in the historic town of Dhar district.

Handicrafts related to handmade art have been displayed in the Mandu Utsav.

**Mandu** is an ancient fort city in the central Indian state of Madhya Pradesh. It's also known for its Afghan architectural heritage.

**Note: Dino Adventure Park & Fossils Museum** was also inaugurated by the state culture and tourism minister.

The State Minister informed that the Dinosaur Park is the country's first modern fossil park which has 24 eggs and other fossils of dinosaurs on display. The park also provides information related to the life of the dinosaurs.

### **Odisha government to construct 'COVID Warrior Memorial'**

Odisha is set to inaugurate the Covid warrior memorial in Bhubaneswar on Independence Day this year. The memorial will be established at the Biju Patnaik Park in the Capital city.

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik had on January 1 announced the decision to construct the memorial to honour and recognise the sacrifice and selfless service of the frontline workers, who lost their lives fighting the pandemic.

**Note:** The Odisha government also had announced Rs. 50 lakh ex-gratia to all the health personnel (public and private) as well as members of all the support services who died of the pandemic.

### **Bhuri Bai of Madhya Pradesh invited as Chief Guest at Foundation Day celebrations of Bharat Bhavan**

The tribal painter Bhuri Bai of Madhya Pradesh was invited as the Chief Guest at the Foundation Day celebrations of Bharat Bhavan.

When the construction of this building started, she used to work here as a labourer on a daily wage of Rs six.

**Bhuri Bai's award:** Shikhar Samman-Government of Madhya Pradesh in 1986, Ahalya Samman in 1998, Rani Durgavati Award in 2009, **Padma Shri Award in 2021**

### **Prime Minister Narendra Modi launches 'Mahabahu-Brahmaputra' in Assam**

To mark the launch of 'Mahabahu-Brahmaputra', he inaugurated the Ro-Pax vessel operations between Neamati-Majuli Island, North Guwahati-South Guwahati and Dhubri-Hatsingimari.

He laid the foundation stone of Inland Water Transport (IWT) Terminal at Jogighopa and various tourist jetties on River Brahmaputra and launched digital solutions for Ease-of-Doing-Business.

**Note:** 'Mahabahu-Brahmaputra' programme will strengthen water connectivity by Brahmaputra water through port-led development.

#### **Facts about Assam:**

**World Heritage Sites:** Manas Wildlife Sanctuary and Kaziranga Wildlife Sanctuary

### **Prime Minister launches 'Asom Mala' and lays Foundation Stone of two Hospitals in Assam**

The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi laid the Foundation Stone of two hospitals in Biswanath and Charaideo and launched 'Asom Mala', a programme for state highways and major district roads, at Dhekiajuli in Sonitpur District, Assam. 'Asom Mala' has been started in line with 'Bharat Mala Project'.

**About Bharatmala Pariyojana:** It is a centrally-sponsored and funded Road and Highways project of the Government of India. It was established on 31 July 2015.

**Note:** The Prime Minister also dedicated to the nation **the LPG import terminal, 348 km Dobhi – Durgapur Natural Gas Pipeline section**, which is part of the Pradhan Mantri Urja Ganga project.

He also laid the foundation stone of the **second Catalytic-Isodewaxing unit of Haldia Refinery**.

### **Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman attends third phase of Chah Bagicha Dhan Puraskar mela in Guwahati**

In the event, the Assam government distributed financial assistance of 3000 rupees each to nearly 7.5 lakh people belonging to tea garden areas.

**About Chah Bagicha Dhan Puraskar Mela Scheme:** The scheme was launched by the Assam government in Financial Year 2017-18.

The main objective of the scheme is to incentivize and strengthen the efforts of financial inclusion of the tea tribe community.

A sum of Rs 2,500 was transferred to 6.3 lakh bank accounts in the first phase of the Assam Chah Bagicha Dhan Puraskar Mela Scheme in 2017-18. An additional Rs 2,500 was deposited in 7.15 lakh accounts in the second phase in 2018-19.

### **Himachal Pradesh becomes first State in the country to implement e-cabinet**

The new system will bring greater efficiency in the overall process of conducting a cabinet meeting by removing dependencies which arise due to the physical movement of cabinet memos.

**Note:** On April 23, 2020, Uttar Pradesh became the first state to have the requisite infrastructure in all its courts for hearing cases through video conferencing.

### **Madhya Pradesh launches 'SAANS' campaign to reduce infant mortality**

The health department in Madhya Pradesh has launched the **Social Awareness and Action to Neutralise Pneumonia Successfully (SAANS)** campaign with the aim of reducing infant mortality due to pneumonia.

**About SAANS campaign:** It was launched by Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan in 2019 to child mortality due to pneumonia.

Under SAANS, the government is targeting a reduction in pneumonia-caused deaths by 2025 to less than 3 deaths out of 1000 live births.

### **Arvind Kejriwal launches 'Switch Delhi' campaign**

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal launched the 'Switch Delhi' campaign to promote electric vehicles and appealed to people to buy such vehicles to combat pollution in the city.

Under its electric vehicle policy, the Delhi government has planned extensive subsidies on purchase of electric two-wheelers and four-wheelers, besides waiving road tax and registration charges.

**Note:** More than 6,000 electric vehicles have been purchased since the policy launch in August 2020.

The government has fixed an ambitious target of 25 percent electric vehicles among total vehicle registrations in Delhi by 2024.

### **Preliminary survey shows deposits of Lithium in Mandya district of Karnataka**

Preliminary surveys on surface and limited subsurface by Atomic Minerals Directorate for Exploration and Research (AMD) have shown presence of Lithium resources of 1,600 tonnes in the pegmatites of Marlagalla – Allapatna area, Mandya district, Karnataka.

**About Lithium:** The well-known uses of Lithium are in Lithium ion batteries, lubricating grease, high energy additive to rocket propellants, optical modulators for mobile phones and for thermonuclear reactions.

### **Uttar Pradesh announces 16-Digit Unicode to Identify Landholdings**

The revenue department will be issuing the Unicode for marking all kinds of agricultural, residential and commercial land and a person will now be able to know the details of the land with a single click.

**Unicode numbers:** The Unicode number of the land will be 16 digits with the first six digits based on the population of the land, the next 4 digits determining the unique identity of the land. The digits from 11 to 14 will be the number of the division of the land. The last 2 digits will have the details of the category, through which, the agricultural, residential and commercial land will be identified.

### **Delhi government approves 'Mukhyamantri Vigyan Pratibha Pariksha' scholarship scheme**

The Delhi cabinet approved "Mukhyamantri Vigyan Pratibha Pariksha" in which Rs 5,000 will be provided to 1,000 meritorious students of Class 9 in schools of Delhi as a science scholarship.

The scholarship will provide a boost to science education in secondary classes at the school level.

**Note:** Another decision that has been taken by the Delhi Cabinet is to digitise the education department.

**Facts about Delhi: 3 UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Delhi** - Qutb Complex, Red Fort and Humayun's Tomb.

### **Vijayanagara becomes 31st district of Karnataka**

The Karnataka state Cabinet formally approved the borders for the newly carved out Vijayanagara district from the existing Ballary district.

Vijayanagara will now be the 31st district in the state and will comprise six taluks - Hospet, Harapanahalli, Hoovina Hadagali, Hagari Bommanahalli, Kotturu and Kudligi.

#### **Facts about Karnataka:**

**Capital:** Bengaluru

**Governor:** Vajubhai Vala

**Chief Minister:** B. S. Yediyurappa

### **India's First 'Gender Park' in Kerala's Kozhikode**

The Kerala government is all set to launch Rs 300 crore three-tower 'Gender Park' in Kozhikode.

This launch will coincide with the second edition of the International Conference on Gender Equality (ICGE-II).

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan will inaugurate the February 11-13 ICGE-II and the Gender Park.

He will also lay the foundation of the International Women's Trade and Research Centre (IWTRC), a Gender Museum, Gender Library, Convention Centre and an Amphitheatre will also be launched at the event.

### **Justice Sunil Kumar Awasthi tenders his resignation from office of Judge of MP High Court**

Shri Justice Sunil Kumar Awasthi has tendered his resignation from the office of Judge, Madhya Pradesh High Court, in pursuance of proviso (a) to clause (1) of Article 217 of the Constitution.

He was appointed as an Additional Judge of the Madhya Pradesh High Court on October 13, 2016 and as Permanent Judge on March 17, 2018.

**Lucknow Metro becomes the first metro in the country to use ultraviolet (UV) rays to sanitise train coaches**

UPMRC got the idea from the New York Metro's experiment to sanitise trains with UV lamp rays.

The remote operated equipment also reduces the cost by 40 times less than what comes in sanitizing the coach by sodium hypochlorite.

**Facts about Uttar Pradesh Metro Rail Corporation (UPMRC):**

**Founded:** 25 November 2013

**Headquarters:** Lucknow

**Managing Director:** Kumar Keshav

**Kerala's first Human Milk Bank (HMB) to be opened on February 5**

The HMB shall open at the Ernakulam general hospital in the city by Health Minister KK Shailaja.

The milk bank will be set up to ensure breast milk for newborn babies whose mothers cannot breastfeed them.

**Note:** Rotary Club of Cochin Global took the lead to bring the project to the state with two such breast milk banks - one at Ernakulam and the other at Jubilee Medical Mission Hospital at Thrissur.

The collected milk can be stored up to 6 months safely in the bank.

**PGIMER, Chandigarh launches India's first 'Amputee Clinic'**

India's **first amputee clinic** has been launched by the Postgraduate Institute of Medical Education and Research (**PGIMER**), Chandigarh. It was inaugurated by the PGIMER Director Prof. Jagat Ram.

It has been set up to improve the care of amputee patients by providing a wide range of services under one roof and with significant coordination.

It will comprise specialists from various departments including orthopaedics, prosthetists, PMR (physical and medical rehabilitation), psychologists, occupational physiotherapy and nursing departments.

**Note:** PGIMER has also stated that it will run amputee schools based on the successful knee school being run at PGI.

**Punjab CM launches 'Har Ghar Pani, Har Ghar Safai' Mission**

Punjab Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh launched the 'Har Ghar Pani, Har Ghar Safai' mission as part of the state government's campaign to accomplish the goal of 100 percent potable piped water supply in all rural households by 2022.

The scheme is being funded by the World Bank, Jal Jeewan Mission of GoI, NABARD, and State Budget.

He also inaugurated one **Mega Surface Water Supply Scheme** covering 85 villages in the Moga district, 144 new water supply schemes for 172 villages, 121 Arsenic, and Iron removal plants.

### Facts about Punjab:

**Capital:** Chandigarh

**Governor:** V. P. Singh Badnore

**Chief**

**Minister:**

Captain

Amarinder

Singh

## Important News: India

### Transport Minister Shri Nitin Gadkari launches 'Go Electric' Campaign

Shri Nitin Gadkari, the Union Minister for Road Transport & Highways, Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises launched the "Go Electric" Campaign to spread awareness on the benefits of e-mobility and EV Charging Infrastructure as well as electric cooking in India.

**Note:** Electric fuel is a major alternative for fossil fuels which have an import bill of Rs. 8 lakh Crore.

When compared to conventional fuels the electric fuel has low cost, reduced emissions and it is also indigenous.

### 47th Khajuraho Dance Festival begins

The week-long (20<sup>th</sup> -26<sup>th</sup> February) 47th Khajuraho Dance Festival began in Khajuraho, Madhya Pradesh which is based on the Indian classical dance tradition. The festival is being organized by the Culture Department through Ustad Alauddin Khan Music and Arts Academy Bhopal.

**Note:** The ceremony is being held once again in the temple premises after a gap of 44 years.

### Nurturing Neighbourhoods Challenge cohort announced

The Smart Cities Mission, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, announced **25 shortlisted cities** for the 'Nurturing Neighbourhoods Challenge' cohort, in collaboration with the Bernard van Leer Foundation (BvLF) and technical partner WRI India.

The Challenge is a 3-year initiative aimed at supporting early childhood-friendly neighbourhoods under the government's Smart Cities Mission.

**About the Challenge: The Nurturing Neighbourhoods Challenge**, launched on November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020, invited participation from all Smart Cities, capitals of States and UTs, and other cities with population above 5 lakhs were eligible to participate.

### Centre reconstitutes NITI Aayog governing council

The Centre has reconstituted the governing council of the NITI Aayog with **Prime Minister Narendra Modi as its chairperson.**

According to a notification of the Cabinet Secretariat, chief ministers of all states and those of the Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir, Delhi and Puducherry are **full time members of the council.**

The Lieutenant Governors of Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Ladakh, and the administrators of Chandigarh, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Daman and Diu and Lakshadweep will be **special invitees of the governing council.**

**Note: Recently, Prime Minister Narendra Modi chaired the sixth meeting** of the Governing Council of NITI Aayog.

The sixth meeting witnessed the entry of Ladakh for the first time, in addition to the participation of Jammu and Kashmir as a UT.

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

**Formed:** 1 January 2015

**Headquarters:** New Delhi

**Chairperson:** Narendra Modi

**Vice Chairperson:** Rajiv Kumar

**CEO:** Amitabh Kant

**Government of India and World Bank sign project to improve quality of India's Education in Nagaland**

The Government of India, Government of Nagaland and the World Bank signed a \$68 million project to enhance the governance of schools across Nagaland as well as to improve teaching practices and learning environments in select schools.

The “**Nagaland: Enhancing Classroom Teaching and Resources Project**” will improve classroom instruction; create opportunities for the professional development of teachers; and build technology systems to provide students and teachers.

**Facts about World Bank:**

**Headquarters:** Washington, D.C., United States

**Founded:** July 1944

**President:** David Malpass

**MD and CFO:** Anshula Kant

**Membership:** 189 countries (IBRD), 173 countries (IDA)

**National Urban Digital Mission (NUDM) & several digital initiatives launched for transforming Urban Governance**

The National Urban Digital Mission has been launched by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs along with the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.

Several other digital initiatives of MoHUA *vis.* **India Urban Data Exchange (IUDX), SmartCode, Smart Cities 2.0 website, and Geospatial Management Information System (GMIS)** were also launched.

**The National Urban Digital Mission (NUDM):** It will institutionalise a citizen-centric and ecosystem-driven approach to urban governance and service delivery in 2022 cities by 2022, and across all cities and towns in India by 2024.

### **11th 'Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsav' inaugurated at Cooch Behar, West Bengal**

The Governor of West Bengal Shri Jagdeep Dhankhar in the presence of Minister of State (I/C) for Culture and Tourism, Shri Prahlad Singh Patel inaugurated the 11<sup>th</sup> Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsav on 14<sup>th</sup> February, 2021 at Cooch Behar Palace at Cooch Behar in West Bengal.

The eleventh edition of Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsav is being held between 14<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> February, 2021 in West Bengal.

**Note:** Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsav, the flagship festival of this Ministry organized since 2015 with the active participation of Seven Zonal Culture Centres has been playing a pivotal role to take the vibrant culture of India out to the masses instead of confining to auditoria and galleries.

### **Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship launches MGNF with nine IIMs as academic partners**

The Union Minister of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Mahendra Nath Pandey chaired a function 'Transforming skilling through strategic partnerships under SANKALP' and rolling out of the **Mahatma Gandhi National Fellowship (MGNF)**.

The fellows under MGNF will acquire academic expertise and technical competency in understanding the overall skill ecosystem along with being attached to DSCs (District Skill Committees) and help them manage the skill development planning at district level through the mechanism of formulating District Skill Development Plans (DSDPs).

**SANKALP (Skills Acquisition and Knowledge Awareness for Livelihood Promotion)** is a World Bank loan assisted programme to strengthen the district skill administration and the District Skill Committees.

### **Major Port Authorities Bill 2020 passed by Rajya Sabha**

A bill that seeks to provide greater autonomy in decision-making to 12 major ports in the country and professionalise their governance by setting up boards was introduced in the Rajya Sabha.

The Bill 2020 will replace the Major Port Trusts Act of 1963.

**Note: India has 12 major ports** -- Deendayal (erstwhile Kandla), Mumbai, JNPT, Marmugao, New Mangalore, Cochin, Chennai, Kamarajar (earlier Ennore), V O Chidambarnar, Visakhapatnam, Paradip and Kolkata (including Haldia).

Lok Sabha gives nod to **Arbitration and Conciliation (Amendment) Bill 2021**.

Government introduces **Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Amendment) Bill, 2021** in Lok Sabha.

### **Prime Minister lays the foundation stone of Maharaja Suheldev Memorial and development work of Chittaura Lake**

The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone of Maharaja Suheldev Memorial and development work of Chittaura Lake at Bahraich, Uttar Pradesh via video conference.

The Prime Minister also inaugurated the medical College building named after Maharaja Suheldev.

**About Maharaja Suheldev:** He was an Indian king from Shravasti, popularly known to have defeated and killed the Ghaznavid general Ghazi Saiyyad Salar Masud at Bahraich in 11th century.

He is mentioned in the 17th century Persian-language historical romance Mirat-i-Masudi. Since the 20th century, various Hindu nationalist groups have characterized him as a Hindu King who defeated a Muslim invader.

### **Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh launches E-Chhawani portal & mobile app**

The portal has been created to provide online civic services to over 20 lakh residents of 62 Cantonment Boards across the country.

Through the portal, the residents of cantonment areas will be able to avail basic services like renewal of leases, application for birth & death certificates, water & sewerage connections, trade licences, mobile toilet locators and payment of different types of taxes and fees, with just a click of a button.

The portal, jointly developed by **eGov Foundation, Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL), Directorate General Defence Estates (DGDE) and National Informatics Centre (NIC)**, provides a platform to the residents to avail these services from the comfort of their home.

### **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs launches Pilot Pey Jal Survekshan**

Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs has launched a Pilot Pey Jal Survekshan under Jal Jeevan Mission- Urban (JJM-U).

It will be conducted in cities to ascertain equitable distribution of water, reuse of wastewater and mapping of water bodies with respect to quantity and quality of water.

As a first step, the Ministry has decided to launch the Survekshan in 10 cities- Agra, Badlapur, Bhubaneswar, Churu, Kochi, Madurai, Patiala, Rohtak, Surat and Tumkur.

**Note: Jal Jeevan Mission Urban** is designed to provide water supply to all households through taps in all 4,378 statutory towns in accordance with Sustainable Development Goal - 6.

The total outlay proposed for JJM-U is 2 lakh 87 thousand crore rupees which includes 10 thousand crore rupees for continuing financial support to AMRUT Mission.

**Facts about AMRUT (Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation):**

**Launch year:** 2015

**Sector:** Urban planning

**Launched by (Prime Minister):** Narendra Modi

**Ministry:** Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs

### **3rd edition of Indian Sign Language Dictionary with 10,000 terms**

Union Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment Shri Thaawarchand Gehlot virtually released the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of the Indian Sign Language (ISL) Dictionary with 10,000 terms (including 6,000 earlier terms).

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition contains a total of 10,000 terms of everyday use, academic terms, legal & administrative terms, medical terms, technical terms and agricultural terms.

**Note:** The Dictionary has been brought out by the Indian Sign Language Research and Training Centre (**ISLRTC**), an autonomous Institute under the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan), Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment.

The 1<sup>st</sup> Edition of the ISL Dictionary was launched on 23<sup>rd</sup> March, 2018 with 3000 terms and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition with 6000 terms (including earlier 3000 terms) was launched on 27<sup>th</sup> February, 2019.

### **Sandes, the government's new Instant Messaging platform**

The National Informatics Centre has launched an instant messaging platform called Sandes on the lines of WhatsApp.

Like WhatsApp, the new NIC platform can be used for all kinds of communications by anyone with a mobile number or email id.

Although there is no option to transfer the chat history between two platforms, the chats on Government Instant Messaging Systems (GIMS) can be backed up to a users' email.

**Note:** In August 2020, the NIC released the first version of the app, which said that the app could be used by both central and state government officials for intra and inter-organisation communication.

### **Union Minister launches Software Applications and instruction manuals with questionnaire for five All India Surveys**

Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Labour & Employment Shri Santosh Kumar Gangwar launched the trainers' training programme for the All India Surveys being conducted by Labour Bureau, an attached office of Ministry of Labour & Employment by releasing the Instruction Manuals & Questionnaires for the surveys and the software application developed.

**The Labour Bureau is entrusted with five All India surveys:** All India Survey of Migrant workers, Domestic Workers, Employment generated by Professionals, Employment generated in Transport Sector and Quarterly Establishment based Employment

**Note:** The surveys are significant in terms of the path-breaking initiative being taken by the Bureau in terms of use of Information Technology (IT) in the entire chain of data collection to report generation.

### **Cabinet approves Amendments to the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015**

The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi has approved the proposal of the Ministry of Women and Child Development to amend the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 to introduce measures for strengthening Child Protection set-up to ensure best interest of children.

The amendments include authorizing District Magistrate including Additional District Magistrate to issue adoption orders under Section 61 of the JJ Act, in order to ensure speedy disposal of cases and enhance accountability.

**Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015** has been passed by Parliament of India amidst intense controversy, debate and protest on many of its provisions by Child Rights fraternity. It replaced the Indian juvenile delinquency law, Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000, and allows for juveniles in conflict with Law in the age group of 16–18, involved in Heinous Offences, to be tried as adults.

### **1st India-Bahrain Joint Working Group (JWG) meeting in the field of Renewable Energy**

The 1st meeting of the Joint Working Group in the field of Renewable Energy between India and the Kingdom of Bahrain held on February 4, 2021 in virtual format.

H.E. Dr. Abdul Hussain bin Ali Mirza, President of Sustainable Energy Authority led the Bahraini delegation. The Indian delegation was led by H.E. Mr. Dinesh Dayanand Jagdale, Joint Secretary, Ministry of New & Renewable Energy.

Both sides agreed to forging deeper engagement in capacity building and focused cooperation between concerned agencies as well as the private sector of the two countries in this sector, particularly in the field of solar, wind and clean hydrogen.

**Note:** A Memorandum of Understanding between India and Bahrain was signed in July 2018 for promoting bilateral cooperation in the field of Renewable Energy.

**Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Bahrain in August 2019.** This was the first ever Prime Ministerial visit from India to Bahrain.

### **Shri Prahlad Singh Patel virtually attends the 8th Meeting of ASEAN-India Tourism Ministers' meeting**

The Union Minister of State for Culture & Tourism, Shri Prahlad Singh Patel co-chaired the 8th Meeting of ASEAN-India Tourism Ministers meeting with Minister of Tourism of Cambodia H.E. Dr. Thong Khon on February 05, 2021.

The Meeting was in conjunction with the 24<sup>th</sup> Meeting of ASEAN Tourism Ministers (M-ATM).

#### **Initiatives taken by Government of India to revive Tourism activities:**

To organise the **International Buddhist Conclave (IBC)** to create awareness about India's Buddhist Heritage and to increase foreign tourist traffic to Buddhist sites.

**SAATHI** (System for Assessment, Awareness & Training for Hospitality Industry) and the Incredible India Tourist Facilitator (**IITF**) Certification Programme, an online learning platform with the objective of creating a pool of well trained and professional Tourist Facilitators across the country.

To organize a series of webinars under the theme **Dekho Apna Desh**

### **Cabinet Secretary Chairs review meeting of the National Crisis Management Committee (NCMC) to take stock of the Glacial Burst in Uttarakhand and the actions taken**

The National Crisis Management Committee (NCMC) under the chairmanship of Cabinet Secretary, Shri Rajiv Gauba met to review the situation arising out of the natural disaster in Uttarakhand caused by glacial burst.

The glacial burst led to the rising of water levels in the river Rishiganga, which washed away the **Rishiganga small hydro project of 13.2 MW.**

The flash flood also affected the downstream **hydro project of NTPC at Tapovan** on the river Dhauliganga, which is a tributary of the river Alaknanda.

As per the information given by the Central Water Commission (CWC), there is no danger of downstream flooding and the rise in water level has been contained.

### **Schools under Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan to be renamed after Subhas Chandra Bose**

The Ministry of Education has decided to name residential schools and hostels funded under Samagra Shiksha of the Ministry as Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose residential schools or hostels.

**About Samagra Shiksha:** Samagra Shiksha - an overarching programme for the school education sector extending from pre-school to class 12 has been, therefore, prepared with the broader goal of improving school effectiveness measured in terms of equal opportunities for schooling and equitable learning outcomes. It subsumes the **three erstwhile Schemes of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) and Teacher Education (TE).**

**Note:** A total of 1063 residential facilities which include 383 residential Schools and 680 Hostels have been sanctioned to States and UTs so far.

### **National Horticulture Fair 2021 begins in Bengaluru**

The country's largest horticulture event, the five days National Horticulture Fair 2021, has been organized by the **Indian Institute of Horticulture Research (IIHR)** from February 8 to February 12 at its IIHR campus situated in Hessarghatta, Bengaluru.

*The theme of the event is 'Horticulture for Start-up and Stand-up India'.*

Cutting edge technologies, crop varieties, pest and disease management practices, and processing methods will be demonstrated.

**Note:** IIHR is a subsidiary of Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR).

**Facts about the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR):**

**Founded:** 16 July 1929

**Headquarters:** New Delhi

**Director:** Trilochan Mohapatra

### **First ever India Toy Fair-2021 to be organised**

The Government is organising the first ever India Toy Fair from 27th February to 2nd March.

Women and Child Development Minister Smriti Zubin Irani, Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank and Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal jointly inaugurated the website of The India Toy Fair-2021 in New Delhi.

**Note:** According to a Quality Council report in February last year, many of the toys imported from abroad were failing the safety standards. Thereafter import duty on foreign toys was increased from 20 per cent to 60 per cent and a Quality Control Order was issued.

Recently, the Government has organized the **1st Toycathon.**

## **NITI Aayog's Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) & Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) kick-start the India-Australia Circular Economy (I-ACE) Hackathon, 2021**

I-ACE is supported by the Australian Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources (DISER), AIM Atal Incubation Centre network, and various domain experts.

Between 8<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> February 2021, the shortlisted teams were scheduled to be working on creating ingenious solutions.

**About Atal Innovation Mission (AIM):** The Atal Innovation Mission, NITI Aayog, is the Government of India's flagship initiative to promote a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship in the country.

**About Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO):** The Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation is Australia's national science agency and innovation catalyst, solving the greatest challenges through innovative science and technology.

**Note:** The concept of I-ACE joint Hackathon originated in the virtual bilateral summit between the Hon. Prime Minister of India and the Hon. Prime Minister of Australia, held on June 4th, 2020.

## **ICC announces BYJU'S as global partner until 2023**

The three-year agreement will see BYJU'S partner all ICC (International Cricket Council) events over the period, including the forthcoming men's T20 World Cup in India and the women's World Cup in New Zealand.

As a global partner, BYJU'S will have extensive in-venue, broadcast, and digital rights across all ICC events.

**Note:** In August 2019, the company became the official jersey partners of the Indian cricket team.

**Facts about BYJU'S:** Byju's is an Indian educational technology and online tutoring firm.

**Founder:** Byju Raveendran

**Founded:** 2011, Bengaluru

**CEO:** Byju Raveendran

## **Prime Minister addresses 125th anniversary celebrations of 'Prabuddha Bharata'**

Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi addressed the 125th anniversary celebrations of 'Prabuddha Bharata' organised by the Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati in Uttarakhand.

'Prabuddha Bharata' is a monthly journal of the Ramakrishna Order which was started by Swami Vivekananda. It has been in publication since 1896 and carries articles on social sciences and humanities comprising historical, psychological, cultural and social sciences themes.

### **Union Education Minister Shri Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' addresses the inaugural ceremony of the ASEAN-India Hackathon**

The ASEAN-India Hackathon is being organized online from 1st -3rd February 2021. Hackathon will provide a unique opportunity to India and ASEAN countries to solve their common identified challenges under two broad themes of “Blue Economy” and “Education”.

**About ASEAN- India Hackathon:** It is an initiative taken by the Ministry of Education. This unique hackathon offers opportunities for all the 10 ASEAN countries and India to forward their economic and cultural ties through collaboration in education, science and technology.

### **8th India International Silk Fair**

Union Minister for Women & Child Development and Textiles, Smt Smriti Zubin Irani inaugurated the 8th edition of India International Silk Fair on Virtual Portal from 31st January to 4th February.

India International Silk Fair is the Sourcing Fair for silk and silk blend products organised by the Indian Silk Export Promotion Council under the aegis of Ministry of Textiles and sponsored by Department of Commerce.

**Note:** India has a long history of silk production and is the **2nd largest producer of Silk after China.**

India is the only country in the world which produces all the four major varieties of silk i.e. Mulberry, Eri, Tassar, and Muga.

### **Prime Minister to inaugurate 'Chauri Chaura' Centenary Celebrations on 4th February**

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi will inaugurate the Chauri Chaura Centenary Celebrations at Chauri Chaura, Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh, on 4th February 2021.

The day marks 100 years of the 'Chauri Chaura' incident, a landmark event in the country's fight for independence.

Prime Minister will also release a postal stamp dedicated to the Chauri Chaura centenary during the event.

**About Chauri Chaura incident:** It took place on 4 February 1922 at Chauri Chaura in the Gorakhpur district of the United Province (modern Uttar Pradesh) in British India, when a large group of protesters participating in the Non-cooperation movement, clashed with police who opened fire.

### **Pattachitra Artform**

Bhagyashree Sahu belonging to Odisha's Rourkela found mention in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 73rd "Mann ki Baat" for her artwork to promote cloth-based scroll paintings "Pattachitra".

**About Pattachitra:** It is a general term for traditional, cloth-based scroll painting, based in the eastern Indian states of Odisha and West Bengal.

**Geographical Indication (GI) of Pattachitra:** Geographical indication of Patachitra is registered under to different state of India as the style and motif of Odisha and West Bengal Patachitra are so different. The Patachitra of Odisha is registered as Orissa Pattachitra. The Patachitra of West Bengal is registered as Bengal Patachitra.

### **Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu, Vice President, inaugurated the tribal festival 'Aadi Mahotsav' at Dilli Haat in New Delhi**

The Festival 'Aadi Mahotsav' at Dilli Haat, New Delhi is being held from February 01-15, 2021.

The theme of the festival is "A Celebration of the Spirit of Tribal Crafts, Culture and Commerce", which represents the basic ethos of tribal life.

**Note:** The **Aadi Mahotsav** is an annual event that was started in 2017. The festival is being organized by TRIFED (Tribal Co-operative Marketing Federation of India), under the Ministry of Tribal Affairs.

### **Union Ministers jointly launch unified web portal for monitoring progress of GOBARDHAN activities**

Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar, Petroleum Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, Animal Husbandry Minister Giriraj Singh, Jal Shakti Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat and Minister of State for Jal Shakti Rattan Lal Kataria jointly launched a unified web portal for monitoring the progress of GOBARDHAN activities across the nation.

Gobardhan is an important component of Swachh Bharat Mission Phase-2 for organic solid waste management.

**About GOBARDHAN Scheme:** Ministry for Drinking Water and Sanitation on April 30, 2018 launched the **GOBAR - DHAN (Galvanising Organic Bio-Agro Resources Fund) Scheme**.

Under GOBAR-DHAN scheme, solid waste of dung and fields will be changed into compost and fuels such as biogas and bio-CNG.

### **Year-long birth centenary celebrations of legendary classical singer Pandit Bhimsen Joshi begins**

Different events have been organised including SwarBhaskar 100 by Jayateerth Mevundi, 'Abhivadan' by Arya Sangeet Prasarak Mandal.

**Note:** Pandit Bhimsen Joshi (February 4, 1922 - January 24, 2011) was a vocalist from Karnataka.

He received the Bharat Ratna in 2008.

## Important News: World

### **Bangladesh Supreme Court launches Artificial Intelligence (AI) based translation software 'Amar Vasha'**

The software will translate orders and judgements of the Supreme Court from English to Bangla.

**Note:** The Software has been developed with 'EkStep' foundation of India. It is based on their 'Anuvaad' translation software used in India to translate from English to Indian languages including Bangla.

Anuvaad was deployed by the Supreme Court of India as **SUVAS (Supreme Court Vidhik Anuvaad Software)** from November 2019.

### **External Affairs Minister Dr S Jaishankar launches the BRICS-2021 website**

The website will provide comprehensive information about events and activities during the BRICS under the Chairship of India. .

He also launched the upgraded facilities at Sushma Swaraj Bhavan that will serve as the Secretariat for BRICS Summit.

**Note:** The **13th BRICS Summit** will be held under India's Chairship in 2021, and it will be the third time India will host the BRICS Summit after 2012 and 2016.

The theme for India's Chairship for 2021 would be '**BRICS @ 15: Intra-BRICS Cooperation for Continuity, Consolidation, and Consensus**'.

#### **Facts about BRICS:**

**Formation:** 2009

**Countries:** Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa

### **India to gift 2 lakh coronavirus vaccine to UN peacekeepers**

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar made the announcement at the United Nations Security Council open debate on Implementation of Resolution 2532.

25 nations across the world have already received Made in India vaccines and 49 more countries will be supplied in the coming days under '**Vaccine Maitri**' initiatives.

#### **Facts about UN (United Nations):**

**Formation:** 24 October 1945

**Headquarter:** New York, USA

**Secretary General:** Antonio Guterres

### **World Bank report, “Traffic Crash Injuries and Disabilities: The Burden on Indian Society”**

The report titled “Traffic Crash Injuries and Disabilities: The Burden on Indian Society”, was released by Union transport minister Nitin Gadkari.

The report highlights the disproportionate impact of a road crash on poor households that pushes them into a vicious cycle of poverty and debt.

It sheds light on the links between road crashes, poverty and inequality in India.

Post-crash impact among Low Income Households is more severe compared to High Income Households with incidence of fatality among poor households as high as 44% in rural areas compared to 11.6% in urban areas, the report by the World Bank and Save Life Foundation.

**Note:** India is also a signatory to the United Nation’s Brasilia Declaration with the target of reducing road fatalities by 50% by 2020. Union transport minister Nitin Gadkari also said the government aims to bring down road accidents and its related deaths down by 50 percent before 2025.

### **Indian-origin Preeti Sinha to lead United Nations Capital Development Fund**

The United Nations Capital Development Fund has appointed Indian-origin investment and development banker Preeti Sinha as its Executive Secretary.

Sinha succeeds Judith Karl, who retired in February.

**About The United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF):** It makes public and private finance work for the poor in the world's 47 least developed countries.

**Headquarters:** New York, United States

**Founded:** 1966

**Parent organizations:** United Nations General Assembly, United Nations Economic and Social Council

### **US extends New START Nuclear Arms Control Treaty with Russia for five years**

United States has extended the New START (Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty) nuclear arms control treaty with Russia for five years.

The treaty had been set to lapse on 5 February, as the Trump administration had refused to approve the extension. Now the pact has been extended to 5th February 2026.)

**Note:** The treaty, which first went into effect in 2011, limits the United States and Russia to deploying no more than 1,550 strategic nuclear warheads each and imposes restrictions on the land- and submarine-based missiles and bombers to deliver them.

### **14th International Children’s Film festival concludes in Bangladesh (ICFFB)**

179 films from 37 countries were shown at various venues during the 7-day long festival organised by the Children's Film Society (CFS) of Bangladesh.

Apart from Bangladesh, films from India, Armenia, US, UK, Ireland, Japan and China among others were shown in the course of the festival.

Dutch Film Jackie and Oopjen was awarded the Best International Feature Film Award. The Best Director award went to Ani Oganesyanyan for his film Stork's Nest from Armenia. A total of 12 awards were presented to the winners at the concluding ceremony.

Bangladeshi film Maati got The Young Talent Award while Lottery won the Special mention under the Young Talent Award.

### **India, Afghanistan sign MoU to build Shahtoot Dam in Kabul**

External affairs minister S Jaishankar and his Afghan counterpart Haneef Atmar signed the memorandum of understanding (MoU) for building Lalandar or Shatoot dam, which will meet the drinking water needs of two million people in Kabul, provide irrigation water to nearby areas and rejuvenate irrigation and drainage networks.

**Note: Shahtoot dam** is the second major dam being built by India in Afghanistan, after the **Friendship Dam or Salma dam**, inaugurated by Modi and Ghani in June 2016.

As a part of our Development Cooperation with Afghanistan, India has completed more than 400 projects covering all 34 provinces of Afghanistan.

### **US government moves to rejoin UN Human Rights Council**

President Joe Biden has moved to rejoin the United Nations Human Rights Council- UNHRC three years after the former US President Donald Trump withdrew from the global body.

**Note:** Reversing other decisions of former US President, Joe Biden has also joined the World Health Organisation and Paris Climate Accord which the Trump administration withdrew from while he was in office.

#### **Facts about UNHRC (United Nations Human Rights Council):**

**Founded:** 15 March 2006

**President:** Nazhat Shameem

**Headquarters:** Geneva, Switzerland

### **The UAE's Hope Probe has successfully entered orbit around Mars**

The United Arab Emirates' first mission to Mars arrived at the red planet and successfully entered orbit on its first attempt.

The Emirates Mars Mission, known as the Hope Probe, marked the UAE as only the fifth country (after US, the Soviet Union, Europe and India) in history to reach the red planet and the Arab nation's first interplanetary mission.

**Facts about the United Arab Emirates (UAE):**

**Capital:** Abu Dhabi

**Currency:** United Arab Emirates dirham

**President:** Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan

**Nepal decides to award hydropower project to India's Satluj Jal Vidyut Nigam**

Nepal has decided to award the contract for construction of 679 megawatt Lower Arun Hydropower Project to India's Satluj Jal Vidyut Nigam (SJVN).

This was decided at a meeting of the Investment Board Nepal (IBN), chaired by Prime Minister of Nepal.

The project was awarded to the SJVN under the Build, Own, Operate and Transfer (BOOT) delivery method.

**Facts about Nepal:**

**Capital:** Kathmandu

**President:** Bidya Devi Bhandari

**Prime minister:** K. P. Sharma Oli

**Currency:** Nepalese Rupee

**The Myanmar Military Tatmadaw has announced a one year state of emergency in the country**

The Vice President Myint Swe has been made the acting President and all powers have been transferred to the Commander in Chief Min Aung Hlaing.

The development follows detention of the State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi, President Win Myint and other senior leaders from the ruling party National League for Democracy (NLD) by the military.

**Note:** Aung San Suu Kyi took over as the head of the civilian government in 2015 after a long period of military rule in Myanmar. The National Elections held on November last year saw a massive victory for NLD with the military supported USDP performing poorly.

Aung San Suu Kyi won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1991.

**Oxford names "Aatmanirbharta" as Hindi word of the year 2020**

The word was chosen by an advisory panel of language experts Kritika Agrawal, Poonam Nigam Sahay and Imogen Foxell.

**Note:** Previous Hindi words of the year are *Aadhaar* (2017), *Nari Shakti* (2018) and *Samvidhaan* (2019).

**Economy**

### **Government approves eight toy manufacturing clusters worth Rs 2,300 crore to boost India's traditional toys industry**

The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) and the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) are looking to develop toy clusters under existing schemes such as the **Scheme of Fund for Regeneration of Traditional Industries (SFURTI)**.

The government has approved three clusters in Madhya Pradesh, two in Rajasthan, and one each in Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu.

**Note: The first virtual India Toy Fair-2021** will be held from February 27 to March 2, which will offer opportunities to buy toys from over 1,000 exhibitors across the country.

Recently, Union Minister, Shri Nitin Gadkari inaugurated 50 SFURTI (Scheme of Fund for Regeneration of Traditional Industries) clusters in 18 States, which will support over 42,000 artisans in traditional crafts.

### **China returns as top India's trade partner**

China regained its position as **India's top trade partner in 2020** because India was still dependent on the import of heavy machines, home appliances and telecom equipment.

Two-way trade between India and China stood at \$77.7 billion in 2020, according to provisional data from India's commerce ministry.

As a result, the bilateral trade gap with China was at almost \$40 billion in 2020, making it India's largest.

**Note:** Total imports from China at \$58.7 billion were more than India's combined purchases from the U.S. and the U.A.E, which are its second- and third-largest trade partners, respectively.

### **RBI sets up panel to suggest steps for strengthening urban co-operative banks**

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has constituted an expert committee on Urban Co-operative Banks (UCBs) to strengthen and examine the issues within the sector.

**Former RBI Deputy Governor NS Vishwanathan will be the chairman of the eight-member committee.**

The committee has been directed to submit its report within three months from the date of its first meeting.

The committee will also "review the current regulatory/supervisory approach and recommend suitable measures/changes to strengthen the sector, taking into account recent amendments to the Banking Regulation Act, 1949."

### **Amazon to set up its first device manufacturing line in India**

Amazon is setting up its first device manufacturing line in India to make Fire TV sticks locally and has partnered with Cloud Network Technology, a subsidiary of Foxconn, to begin producing the device at its Chennai plant later this year.

It reiterated its commitment to invest \$1 billion into the country to digitise 10 million small and medium businesses by 2025 and create 1 million additional jobs by then.

**Note:** Amazon Fire TV stick is one of the best-selling devices. It is powered by a 1.7 GHz quad-core processor that enables faster streaming in 1080p at 60fps with HDR compatibility.

### **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)'s latest news**

RBI projects **GDP at 10.5 percent in the Financial Year 2021-22.**

**RBI keeps Key Rates Unchanged:** The monetary policy review has decided to continue with an accommodative stance of monetary policy to maintain status quo on key policy rates. The repo rate is kept unchanged at 4 percent and the reverse repo rate at 3.35 percent.

**RBI introduced a risk-based internal audit (RBIA) system for select non-bank lenders and urban co-operative banks (UCBs):** All deposit-taking non-banking financial companies (NBFCs), NBFCs with an asset size of Rs 5,000 crore, and UCBs with an asset size of Rs 500 crore will have to implement the system by March 31, 2022.

**RBI to set up a 24x7 helpline for digital payment services**

RBI has decided to implement, 'One Nation One Ombudsman' approach for grievance redressal. The Integrated Ombudsman Scheme will be rolled out in June 2021.

### **MCA21 Version 3.0 to be launched in Fiscal 2021-22**

During the fiscal 2021-22, the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) will launch data analytics driven MCA21 Version 3.0.

MCA21 system is the first Mission Mode e-Governance project of the Government of India.

MCA21 Version 3.0 Project is a technology-driven forward looking project, envisioned to strengthen enforcement, promote Ease of Doing Business, enhance user experience, facilitate seamless integration and data exchange among Regulators.

**Note:** The key components of MCA21 to be launched during Fiscal Year 2021-22 are: **e-Scrutiny, e-Adjudication, e-Consultation, Compliance Management System (CMS), MCA Lab.**

### **PM SVANidhi scheme: Zomato sign MoU to take street food vendors' businesses online**

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Zomato for empowering street food vendors with new

digital technology and to provide greater income-earning opportunities on the food delivery platform.

**Note:** Recently, MoHUA has signed a MoU with Swiggy to take street food vendors online under the PM SVANidhi scheme.

**About PM SVANidhi (Pradhan Mantri Street Vendor's Atmanirbhar Nidhi) scheme:** It was launched on June 1, 2020, to help the street vendors resume their livelihood activities that were impacted by COVID-19.

### **“Formation and Promotion of 10,000 new Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs)” of Rs. 6865 crore**

Government of India has launched a new Central Sector Scheme titled "Formation and Promotion of 10,000 Farmer Produce Organizations" with a clear strategy and committed resources to form and promote 10,000 new FPOs in the country with budgetary provision of Rs 6865 crore.

**NAFED** would form the specialized FPOs which should necessarily be forwardly linked to the market, agri-value chain, etc. NAFED will provide market and value chain linkages to the FPOs formed by other Implementing Agencies.

**Note:** Recently, during 2020-21, a total of 2200 FPO produce clusters have been allocated for formation of FPOs.

Recently, NAFED has formed & registered **05 Honey FPOs** during current year in Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar & West Bengal.

**About NAFED (National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India):** It is an apex organization of marketing cooperatives for agricultural produce in India. It was established on the auspicious day of Gandhi Jayanti on 2nd October 1958.

### **Economic Survey 2021**

Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman presented the Economic Survey that details the state of the economy ahead of the government's budget for the fiscal year beginning April 1, 2021.

The Economic Survey 2020-2021, authored by a team led by chief economic adviser (CEA) Krishnamurthy V Subramanian, focused on the state of different sectors of the economy.

The Economic Survey has been **dedicated to all the COVID-19 warriors**, who have really helped in upholding India.

**Key highlights:** India's GDP is estimated to contract by 7.7% in FY2020-21.

The survey expects the Indian economy to grow by 11 percent during 2021-22 which is close to the growth forecast of 11.5 percent made by the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

V-shaped economic recovery due to mega vaccination drive, robust recovery in the services sector and robust growth in consumption and investment.

## Union Budget 2021-22

The Union Minister for Finance & Corporate Affairs, Smt Nirmala Sitharaman presented the Union Budget 2021-22 in Parliament on 01 February, which is the first budget of this new decade and also a digital one in the backdrop of unprecedented COVID-19 crisis.

Additionally, also on the path to fast-implementation are the 13 promises of Budget 2015-16-which were to materialize during the AmrutMahotsav of 2022, on the 75<sup>th</sup> year of our Independence.

### The Budget proposals for 2021-22 rest on 6 pillars:

Health and Wellbeing, Physical & Financial Capital and Infrastructure, Inclusive Development for Aspirational India, Reinvigorating Human Capital, Innovation and R&D, Minimum Government and Maximum Governance

### The key highlights of the Union Budget 2021-22 are as follows:

Total spend of around Rs 2 lakh crore on healthcare, **Rs 35,000 crore for the Covid-19 vaccine**, Rs 1.10 lakh crore outlay for railways. To impose Rs 2.5 per litre agri infra cess on petrol and Rs 4 on diesel.

The forthcoming Census could be India's first digital Census, allocating Rs 3,768 crore for FY21.

Mega Investment Textiles Parks (MITRA), Mission Poshan 2.0, PM Aatmanirbhar Swasth Bharat Yojana will be launched.

Government has increased the FDI limit from 49 to 74 per cent in Insurance Companies.

No change in the Income Tax Slabs. Senior citizens who are of 75 years of age and above, having an only pension and interest income will be exempted from filing their income tax return.

Set up of an asset reconstruction company and an asset management company to clean up non-performing assets in the banking sector.

A *voluntary vehicle scrappage policy* has been introduced.

**Note: 15th Finance Commission's final report:** The 15th Finance Commission (Chairman: Mr N. K. Singh) was required to submit two reports. The first report, consisting of recommendations for the financial year 2020-21, was tabled in Parliament on February 1, 2020.

The final report with recommendations for 2021-22 to 2025-26 was tabled along with Budget 2021-22.

## CCI approves acquisition of Indo Gulf Fertilisers by Indorama India Private Limited

The Competition Commission of India (CCI) approves acquisition of Indo Gulf Fertilisers by Indorama India Private Limited (IIPL) under Section 31(1) of the Competition Act, 2002.

**IPL** is principally engaged in manufacture, trading and sale of fertilisers, primarily, phosphatic fertilisers and speciality plant nutrients.

**Grasim's fertiliser division, Indo Gulf Fertilisers (IGF)** is a leading agri-solutions provider. Indo Gulf Fertilisers is an Indian company (a unit of Aditya Birla Nuvo Ltd.) based in Mumbai and is part of the Aditya Birla Group of companies.

### **14 new Minor Forest Produce (MFP) items included under Minimum Support Price (MSP) scheme to provide fair prices to tribal gatherers**

The government has decided to include 14 new minor forest produce items under the mechanism for marketing of minor forest produce through a minimum support price scheme to provide remunerative and fair prices to tribal gatherers of forest produces.

Newly included items are Tasar Cocoon, elephant apple dry, bamboo shoot, malkangani seed and wild dry mushroom among others.

**About MFP (Minor Forest Produce):** The Central government had introduced a minimum support price for a selected list of minor produce items through mechanism for marketing of Minor Forest Produce through Minimum Support Price and development of Value Chain of MFP Scheme in 2011.

### **RBI cancels license of Kolhapur's Shivam Sahakari Bank**

According to the RBI, the licence of Maharashtra-based Shivam Sahakari Bank has been cancelled as it does not have adequate capital and earning prospects.

Consequently, the bank ceases to carry on banking business, with effect from the close of business on January 29, 2021.

With the cancellation of licence and commencement of liquidation proceedings, the process of paying the depositors of Shivam Sahakari Bank as per the Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation (DICGC) Act, 1961 will be set in motion.

**Note:** Recently, RBI cancelled the licence of Vasantdada Nagari Sahakari Bank Ltd., Osmanabad, Maharashtra.

## **Awards and Honors**

### **Team TRIFED bags the award for excellence in PSU for Investment in Start-ups in the Organisational Awards category of the Business Leader of the Year awards**

Team TRIFED (Tribal Co-operative Marketing Federation of India), led by Shri Pravir Krishna, Managing Director, TRIFED, has won 4 awards in the 19<sup>th</sup> Global edition and the 4<sup>th</sup> India Edition of World Leadership Congress and Awards.

TRIFED won a collective award of Excellence in PSU – for investment in start-ups in the Organisational Award Category.

Shri Pravir Krishna, Managing Director won three awards in the Individual Category for his exemplary and inspirational leadership – CEO of the year; Brand Builder of the Year and Entrepreneur of the Year.

## 12 companies selected for the prestigious National Technology Awards 2020 for commercialization of innovative indigenous technologies

The companies have been selected under three categories --indigenous technologies, MSME, and startups.

The awards were given by the Technology Development Board (TDB), a statutory body of the Government of India functioning under Department of Science of Technology for the year 2019-20.

**About TDB (Technology Development Board):** It was established in 1996 with a novel aim of providing financial assistance to Indian companies for commercialization of innovative indigenous technologies.

## US announces anti-corruption award for social activist Anjali Bhardwaj

India's Anjali Bhardwaj was among 12 anti-corruption activists from around the world named by US secretary of state Antony Blinken as the first recipients of the new '**International Anti-corruption Champions Award**'.

Bhardwaj established a foundation by the name of **Stark Nagrik Sangathan (SNS)** that encouraged citizens with a mandate of promoting accountability in the public and government institutions.

For over two decades, she has remained an active member of the right to information (RTI) movement in India.

## Dadasaheb Phalke International Film Festival Awards 2021

### Important winner list:

Best Actress	Deepika Padukone (Chhapaak)
Best Actor	Akshay Kumar (Laxmii)
Critic's Best Actor	Sushant Singh Rajput (Dil Bechara)
Critic's Best Actress	Kiara Advani (Guilty)
Best Film	Tanhaji: The Unsung Warrior
Best International Feature Film	Parasite
Best Director	Anurag Basu (Ludo)
Best Actor (Web Series)	Bobby Deol (Aashram)
Best Actress (Web Series)	Sushmita Sen (Aarya)
Best Web Series	Scam: 1992

**Note:** This year's awards also included the OTT (over-the-top) category.

**Dadasaheb Phalke International Film Festival Awards** were introduced by the Government of India in 1969 to commemorate the Father of the Indian Cinema Dadasaheb Phalke.

### **SERB announces Women Excellence Award 2021**

Four young women fellows of National Science Academies have been awarded for excelling in science and engineering on the International Day of Women and Girls in Science 2021.

The SERB Women Excellence Award that has been conferred on them provides a grant of Rs. 15 lakhs for a period of three years to the awardees to pursue their research ideas.

The four women scientists selected for the awards include **Dr. Shobhna Kapoor, Dr. Antara Banerjee, Dr. Sonu Gandhi** and **Dr. Ritu Gupta**.

**About Women Excellence Award 2021:** The award given by the **Science and Engineering Research Board (SERB)**, a Statutory body of the Department of Science and Technology (DST) supporting basic research in the frontier areas of science and engineering, was launched in the year 2013. It is a one-time award given to women scientists below 40 years of age.

### **Ministry of Tribal Affairs bags Award of Appreciation in the 18th CSI SIG e-Governance Awards 2020**

The Ministry of Tribal Affairs bags the prestigious Award of Appreciation in the Project Category-Central Government Entity – in the 18th CSI SIG eGov Awards 2020 for their Performance Dashboard Empowering Tribals Transforming India through various ICT initiatives.

**About the award:** The Computer Society of India (CSI) has instituted a series of awards for recognizing the contributions made in the field of e-Governance in the country. These awards have been conducted by CSI-SIGegov.

**Note:** The Ministry also recently received the prestigious 5 SKOCH awards for different project, including the prestigious SKOCH Challenger Award for its “Best Performance in eGovernance”.

### **Tamil film Koozhangal wins Tiger award at Rotterdam film festival 2021**

Koozhangal (Pebbles) became the first Tamil film to win the coveted Tiger Award at the 50th Rotterdam Film Festival 2021.

Directed by debutant P S Vinothraj, the film has been produced by actor Nayanthara and Vignesh Shivn.

**Note:** Koozhangal has become the second Indian film ever to have won the award.

The first Indian film to have won the honour was Malayalam filmmaker Sanal Kumar Sasidharan's Durga in 2017.

### **Theodore Baskaran wins Sanctuary Lifetime Service Award 2020**

Sanctuary Nature Foundation honours conservation hero S Theodore Baskaran with Sanctuary Lifetime Service Award 2020 for his role in wildlife conservation and his continuing legacy of writings in Tamil and English to the conservation discourse.

**Sanctuary Lifetime Service Award** was instituted by the Sanctuary Nature Foundation's Sanctuary Wildlife Service Awards in the year 2000 to recognise and draw national attention to the contribution of individuals working for the protection of wildlife and natural habitats in India.

### **The Animal Welfare Board of India (AWBI) awards dedicated for Animal Welfare and Protection-2021**

Shri Giriraj Singh, Minister for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying, Govt. of India distributed the awards on the auspicious day of Vasant Panchami.

The Animal Welfare Board of India (AWBI), the apex body in the country for the welfare and protection of animals, established under Section 4 of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960 conferred 14 Prani Mitra awards and JeevDaya awards 2021 to the individuals, organizations and corporates for their outstanding performance in the field of animal welfare.

### **Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy conferred Skoch Chief Minister of the Year Award**

The Award has been presented to the CM by Chairman, Skoch group, Sameer Kochhar personally at Tadepalli in Andhra Pradesh.

**About SKOCH Award:** SKOCH Award, independently instituted in 2003, is India's honest civilian honour conferred by an independent organisation as a third party assessment. It is the only award in the country that is based on felt-needs assessment and outcome evaluation based on evidence. It recognises people, projects and institutions.

### **WCCB receives Asia Environmental Enforcement Award-2020**

The Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB) has received the Asia Environmental Enforcement Award-2020 awarded by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

Union Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar said that WCCB getting the award twice in three years is a testimony of India's commitment towards ending wildlife crime.

Wildlife Crime Control Bureau has been awarded this year under the Innovation category.

**Note:** Earlier, the Bureau had received the award in 2018 under the same category.

### **Rishabh Pant wins the ICC Men's Player of the Month award for January 2021**

India's wicketkeeper-batsman Rishabh Pant became the first winner of the inaugural **ICC Player of the Month** award.

Pant won the award for his spectacular performances in the two Tests against Australia.

South Africa's **Shabnim Ismail** was named the **ICC Women's Player of the Month** for January 2021.

She was rewarded for her incredible performances across three ODIs and two T20Is against **Pakistan**.

### **Bengaluru airport achieves ACI World's 'Voice of the Customer' recognition**

The Bangalore International Airport Limited's (BIAL) or Kempegowda International Airport Bengaluru has bagged global recognition from the Airports Council International (ACI) World's 'Voice of the Customer' award.

The 'Voice of the Customer' recognises airports that continued to prioritise their customers and remained committed to ensuring that their voice was heard during the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020.

**Note:** Bengaluru Airport has made significant efforts in gathering passenger feedback through ACI's Airport Service Quality (ASQ) programme.

### **Manasa Varanasi crowned Miss India World 2020**

Manasa Varanasi, an engineer from Telangana, emerged as the winner of VLCC Femina Miss India World 2020.

While Haryana's Manika Sheokand was declared VLCC Femina Miss Grand India 2020, Uttar Pradesh's Manya Singh was crowned VLCC Femina Miss India 2020 - runner-up.

**Note:** Manasa Varanasi will represent India at the 70th Miss World pageant in December 2021.

### **Robert Irwin wins Wildlife Photographer of the Year**

Famous wildlife Australian zookeeper and wildlife expert Steve Irwin's son, Robert Irwin has won the first prize in the Natural History Museum's Wildlife Photographer of the Year People's Choice Award.

The image was titled 'bushfire' and was captured through a drone that shows a line of fire burning in between the bushes, dividing it into parts.

Robert captured this image near the Steve Irwin Wildlife Reserve in Cape York, Queensland.

### **A.R. Rahman presented 'Alert Being Icon Award'**

Oscar Award-winning music director A.R. Rahman and social activist from Saidapet Hari Krishnan were among the 14 people who were presented the **4th edition of the Alert Being Awards 2020 by the NGO ALERT.**

The equivalent award for organisations was given to Biocon Foundation founded by Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw.

**Note:** This year, a special category, Alert Being Covid Warriors, was added, and 30 Covid warriors received the Alert Being Covid Frontline Warrior Award for their contribution amid the pandemic.

## **Defense**

### **Successful user trials of DRDO-developed Anti-Tank Guided Missile Systems 'Helina' and 'Dhruvastra'**

Joint User Trials for Helina (Army Version) and Dhruvastra (Air Force Version) Missile Systems have been carried out from Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH) platform in desert ranges.

The missile systems have been designed and developed indigenously by Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).

**Note:** The Helina and Dhruvastra are third generation, Lock on Before Launch (LOBL) fire and forget Anti-Tank Guided Missiles that can engage targets both in direct hit mode as well as top attack mode.

### **Indian Navy Ship Pralaya arrives in Abu Dhabi, UAE to participate in NAVDEX 21 and IDEX 21**

Indian Naval Ship *Pralaya* arrived at Abu Dhabi, UAE to participate in the NAVDEX 21 (Naval Defence Exhibition) and IDEX 21 (International Defence Exhibition), scheduled from 20 to 25 February 2021.

INS *Pralaya*, the second ship of the indigenously built *Prabal* Class Missile Vessels, was commissioned in the Indian Navy on 18 December 2002.

**Note:** Towards enhancing interactions between the two navies, the inaugural edition of Indian Navy – UAE Navy bilateral exercise GULF STAR - 1 was conducted in March 2018.

The next edition of the exercise is likely to be conducted in 2021.

### **Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh inaugurates DRDO Skill Development Centre for Fire Safety Training**

Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh has inaugurated **Skill Development Centre (SDC)** for Fire Safety Training of Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) at Pilkhuwa in Uttar Pradesh.

**The first of its kind in India**, SDC has been created by Delhi based DRDO laboratory Centre for Fire, Explosive and Environment Safety (CFEES).

It will provide fire prevention and fire-fighting training to Defence Fire Service Personnel and combatants from the Armed Forces.

#### **Facts about DRDO (Defence Research and Development Organisation):**

**Formed:** 1958

**Headquarter:** New Delhi

**Chairman:** Dr G. Satheesh Reddy

**Parent Organization:** Ministry of Defence

### **Successful launches of VL-SRSAM missile system**

Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO) conducted two successful launches of Vertical Launch Short Range Surface to Air Missile (VL-SRSAM).

The launches were carried out from a static vertical launcher from Integrated Test Range (ITR), Chandipur off the coast of Odisha.

**Indigenously designed and developed by DRDO for Indian Navy**, VL-SRSAM is meant for neutralizing various aerial threats at close ranges including sea-skimming targets.

### **Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) approves proposals worth Rs 13,700 crore**

Defence Acquisition Council, under the chairmanship of Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh, has approved capital acquisition proposals of various weapons/platforms/equipment/systems, **including 118 Arjun Mk-1A tanks** required by the Indian Army, Indian Navy and Indian Air Force.

Three Acceptance of Necessities (AoNs) for an overall cost of Rs 13,700 crore were accorded.

All these AoNs are in the highest priority category of Defence Acquisition viz 'Buy [Indian-IDD (Indigenously Designed, Developed and Manufactured)].

**Note:** Recently, the state-of-the-art indigenously developed Arjun Main Battle Tank (Mk-1A) was formally handed over by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the Army in Chennai.

### **Defence Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurates more than 57,000 water structures in Madhya Pradesh under 'Jalabhishekam' campaign**

The 'Jalabhishekam' Campaign is fulfilling the intention of 'water for every farm and work for every hand'.

These water structures were created during COVID era by linking the work with the MNREGA scheme.

**Facts about State symbols of Madhya Pradesh:**

**State animal:** Barasingha

**State bird:** Paradise flycatcher

**State tree:** Banyan tree

**State Flower:** Madonna lily

**Indian Navy undertaking mega Exercise 'TROPEX 21' in the Indian Ocean Region**

Indian Navy's largest war game, the biennial "Theatre Level Operational Readiness Exercise" (TROPEX) 21, which commenced in early January is currently underway with participation of all operational units of Indian Navy including ships, submarines, aircraft as well as units of the Indian Army, Indian Air Force and Coast Guard.

The exercise will culminate by the third week of February.

TROPEX is being progressed over distinct phases:

**3 Phases of the Exercise:**

**Phase I:** India's largest coastal defence drill "Sea Vigil" exercise from January 12-13

**Phase II:** Tri-Service Joint Amphibious Exercise "AMPHEX-21" from January 21-25.

**Phase III:** "The weapon workup phase, which concluded recently.

**India joins "Iran-Russia Maritime Security Belt 2021"**

India has joined Iran and Russia in a two-day navy exercise dubbed "Iran-Russia Maritime Security Belt 2021" in the northern part of the Indian Ocean.

Forces and vessels from the navy divisions of both the Iranian army and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) participated in the drill alongside several vessels from the Russian navy.

**Note:** This is the second such joint Russia-Iran exercise since 2019, when the two nations plus China held a four-day exercise.

**Indo-US joint military exercise 'Yudh Abhyas' begins in Rajasthan**

The 16th edition of the Indo-US joint military training exercise 'Yudh Abhyas' commenced at the Mahajan Field Firing Ranges in the western sector of Rajasthan.

Around 250 soldiers from each side will participate in the exercise from February 8-21 at Mahajan field firing range.

**Note:** The **previous version of the joint exercise** was held at Seattle in the United States.

Earlier in January 2021, a five-day exercise was also organized in Rajasthan between the **Air Forces of India and France**.

In the end of 2020, India conducted **Malabar Naval Exercise** with US, Japan and Australia.

### **First women team inducted into CRPF's CoBRA commando unit**

Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) inducted 34 women commandos in its anti-Naxal Commando Battalion for Resolute Action (CoBRA) unit which will undergo training and then will be sent to Naxal hit areas.

According to the CRPF, on the occasion of the 88th all-women battalion Raising Day, these women commandos have been inducted along with the introduction of all Mahila brass band.

#### **Facts about COBRA:**

**Founded:** 2008

**Agency executive:** Anand Prakash Maheshwari, Director General

**Primary governing body:** Central Reserve Police Force

### **Supreme Court stays dismantling of decommissioned aircraft carrier INS Viraat**

A bench headed by Chief Justice S A Bobde issued notice to the Centre and others seeking their responses on a plea filed by a firm which seeks preservation of the ship from being dismantled and for creating it as a museum.

**Note:** The centaur-class aircraft carrier, INS Viraat, was inducted into the Indian Navy in 1987 and decommissioned in 2017.

INS Viraat holds the world record, as mentioned in the Guinness Book of records, for being the longest-serving warship of the world.

### **Asia's biggest Aero show 'Aero India 2021' begins at Bengaluru in Karnataka**

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurated the three-day (03-05 February 2021) mega event that is taking place for the first time in a hybrid mode due to Covid Pandemic. The 13th edition of Aero India show will see participants in both physical and virtual mode.

India will host **Indian Ocean Region Defence Ministers' Conclave** on February 04, 2021 during Aero India 2021.

**Note:** Bengaluru has hosted all 13 editions of the show.

Aero India is a biennial air show and aviation exhibition.

It is organised by the Defence Exhibition Organisation, Ministry of Defence.

The first edition of the air show was held in 1996.

### **Defence Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurates HAL's second LCA production line**

The Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on February 2, 2021, inaugurated the second Light Combat Aircraft- LCA production line of Hindustan Aeronautics Limited.

The Cabinet Committee of Security chaired by PM Modi on January 13, 2021, had given its approval to the massive deal for indigenous defence procurement. The deal is worth Rs. 48,000 crores for the purchase of 83 LCA Tejas Mark 1A fighter jets.

**Facts about HAL (Hindustan Aeronautics Limited):** Public Sector Undertaking (Aerospace and Defence)

**Founded:** 1940 (As Hindustan Aircraft), 1964 (Renamed Hindustan Aeronautics)

**Headquarters:** Bangalore, Karnataka

**Chairman & MD:** R Madhavan

## **New Appointments**

### **Ajai Malhotra becomes first Indian Chairperson of Advisory Committee at Human Rights Council**

Malhotra has previously served as ambassador to Russia, Kuwait, Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations, New York and Romania.

**Facts about the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC):**

**Founded:** 15 March 2006

**President:** Nazhat Shameem

**Headquarters:** Geneva, Switzerland

**Parent organization:** United Nations General Assembly

### **Asian Development Bank (ADB) appoints Woochong Um as Managing Director General**

Um will support Asakawa to institute bank-wide coherence on key initiatives and issues.

Um joined ADB in 1993. Since June 2018, he served as Director General and concurrently Chief Compliance Officer of ADB's sustainable development and climate change department.

**Facts about ADB (Asian Development Bank):**

**Headquarters:** Mandaluyong, Philippines

**Membership:** 68 countries (49 from Asia-Pacific region and 19 from Outside regions)

**President:** Masatsugu Asakawa

**Founded:** 19 December 1966

### **Shri Vijay Sampla assumes charge of Chairman National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC)**

Shri Vijay Sampla has been the former Union Minister of State for Social Justice & Empowerment from 2014-19.

**The National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC):** It is an Indian constitutional body established to provide safeguards against the exploitation of Scheduled Castes to promote and protect their social, educational, economic and cultural interests, special provisions were made in the Constitution. It was formed in 2004.

**Note: Article 338** of the Indian constitution deals with the National Commission for Scheduled Castes.

**Article 338 A** deals with the National Commission for Scheduled tribes.

### **Mario Draghi sworn in as Italy's new prime minister**

The ex-head of the European Central Bank, Mario Draghi, has been sworn-in as Italy's next prime minister.

He will lead a new national unity government to replace Giuseppe Conte's centre-left coalition that collapsed one month ago.

#### **Facts about Italy:**

**President:** Sergio Mattarella

**Capital:** Rome

**Currency:** Euro

### **Puligoru Venkata Sanjay Kumar appointed chief justice of Manipur High Court**

President Ram Nath Kovind has appointed Justice Puligoru Venkata Sanjay Kumar as the Chief Justice of the Manipur High Court.

Kumar is presently the Judge of the Punjab and Haryana High Court.

#### **Facts about Manipur:**

**Capital:** Imphal

**Governor:** Najma Heptulla

**Chief Minister:** N. Biren Singh

### **Tata Motors appoints Marc Llistosella as CEO & MD**

Tata Motors Limited has announced Marc Llistosella as the new CEO (Chief Executive Officer) and MD (Managing Director) of the company effective July 1, 2021. He will take over from the current incumbent Guenter Butschek.

#### **Facts about Tata Motors Limited:**

**Formerly Known:** Tata Engineering and Locomotive Company Ltd. (TELCO)

**Founded:** 1945  
**Founder:** J. R. D. TATA  
**Headquarters:** Mumbai  
**Chairman:** Natarajan Chandrasekaran

### **ISA announces Dr Ajay Mathur as its new Director-General**

International Solar Alliance (ISA) has announced Dr. Ajay Mathur as its new Director General following his election at the first special assembly of ISA members.

Dr Mathur replaces Mr Upendra Tripathy, who has served as Director General since the inception of the ISA.

**Note: International Solar Alliance (ISA)** is an association of 121 countries initiated by India. It aims to work for efficient consumption of solar energy to reduce dependence on fossil fuels.

**Headquarters:** Gurugram, Haryana, India

**Founded:** 30 November 2015

### **Telangana Governor Dr Tamilisai Soundararajan sworn-in as the new Lieutenant Governor of the Union Territory of Puducherry**

Chief Justice of Madras High Court Justice Sanjib Banerjee administered the oath of office to the LG.

**Note:** Soundararajan is the fifth woman to hold the post of Lt Governor of Puducherry, after Chandrawati, Rajendra Kumari Bajpai, Rajani Rai and Kiran Bedi.

**Recently,** Lieutenant Governor of Puducherry Kiran Bedi was removed from her post when the Union Territory was witnessing a political crisis.

### **N. Venudhar Reddy takes over as Principal DG, AIR News**

Senior officer of Indian Information Service N. Venudhar Reddy took over as Principal Director General of AIR (All India Radio) News.

**Note:** Mr. Reddy replaces Jaideep Bhatnagar who is now posted as Officer on Special Duty to the Press Information Bureau, PIB. Mr. Bhatnagar will take over as Principal Director General of PIB from 1st March.

**All India Radio (AIR)**, officially known since 1957 as **Akashvani** ("Voice from the Sky"), is the national public radio broadcaster of India and is a division of Prasar Bharati. It was established in 1936.

### **Ayesha Aziz becomes India's youngest female pilot**

Ayesha Aziz, the 25 -year-old from Kashmir, is the youngest female pilot in the country.

**Note:** In the year 2011, Aziz became the youngest student pilot to get a license at the age of 15 and underwent training to fly a MIG-29 jet at Russia's Sokol airbase the following year.

She later graduated in aviation from the Bombay Flying Club (BFC) and obtained a commercial license in 2017.

### **S. N. Subrahmanyam appointed as Chairman of National Safety Council (NSC)**

The Ministry of Labour & Employment has appointed the CEO and Managing Director of Larsen & Toubro (L&T) Ltd, S. N. Subrahmanyam, as the new Chairman of the National Safety Council.

**Note:** National Safety Council plays a major role to ensure safety in work places under new Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020 (OSH Code, 2020).

### **Praveen Sinha takes over as CBI interim Chief (Director)**

The Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) issued a notification appointing Mr. Sinha, a 1988 batch Gujarat cadre IPS, to take over as the CBI's interim chief till the appointment of a regulator director.

Praveen Sinha, currently Additional Director of the CBI, was appointed as its interim chief as current chief R.K Shukla's two-year tenure ended.

#### **Facts about CBI (Central Bureau of Investigation):**

**Formed:** 1941 as the Special Police Establishment

**Headquarter:** New Delhi

### **Padma Shri awardee and Zoho founder Sridhar Vembu appointed to the National Security Advisory Board (NSAB)**

Vembu is one of the Padma Shri awardees announced by the government of India this year.

The members of NSAB typically have two-year terms. Other new members in this term include former ISRO Chairman K Radhakrishnan, Anshuman Tripathy, faculty at IIM Bangalore, and Arun K Singh, former ambassador to France and the United States.

**Note:** National Security Advisor Ajit Doval is the key advisor to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) on six sensitive verticals including defence, internal security, strategic (nuclear) affairs, space, external affairs and intelligence and receives consultations from the NSAB.

### **Google Cloud appoints Bikram Singh Bedi as Managing Director for India business**

Bedi succeeds Karan Bajwa, who was elevated as Vice President for Asia Pacific region last month.

Bedi will be responsible for leading Google Cloud's sales and operations teams.

Bedi joins Google Cloud from Grofers where he served as President Strategy and New Initiatives.

### **Nigeria's Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala first woman, African to head (Director-General) WTO**

Nigerian economist, Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala has worked previously as the Managing Director of the World Bank. In her home country Nigeria, she was the first female Foreign Minister as well as held the position of Finance Minister twice.

#### **Facts about WTO (World Trade Organization):**

**Headquarters:** Geneva, Switzerland

**Founded:** 1 January 1995

**Membership:** 164 member states

### **Michael Bloomberg re-appointed as United Nations Climate Envoy**

United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres re-appointed Michael Bloomberg as his Special Envoy on Climate Ambition and Solutions.

**Note:** Mr. Bloomberg will support the work of the secretary-general in growing and strengthening the coalition of governments, companies, cities and financial institutions committing to net-zero before 2050 in line with the goals of the Paris Agreement.

### **Lt General Chandi Prasad Mohanty next Vice Chief of Army Staff**

Lieutenant General Chandi Prasad Mohanty will take over as the new vice-chief of Army staff on February 1.

He is presently the Southern Army Commander and will be succeeding Lt General SK Saini on his superannuation.

#### **Facts about Indian Army:**

**Founded:** 1 April 1895

**Headquarters:** New Delhi

**Commander-in-Chief:** President Ram Nath Kovind

**Chief of the Army Staff:** General Manoj Mukund Naravane

### **R S Sharma appointed as new CEO of Ayushman Bharat**

R S Sharma has been appointed as the new Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Ayushman Bharat Scheme (Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana) by the National Health Authority (NHA).

RS Sharma was former chairman of the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI). He will replace Indu Bhushan.

**Note: AB PM-JAY (Ayushman Bharat- Pradhan Mantri Jan Aarogya Yojana):**

It is the world's largest health assurance scheme which aims to provide a health cover of Rs. 5 lakhs per family per year for secondary and tertiary care hospitalization. PM-JAY was launched on 23 September 2018 at Ranchi, Jharkhand.

### **Kaja Kallas becomes first female Prime Minister of Estonia**

The former Member of the European Parliament, Kaja Kallas has become the first female Prime Minister of Estonia as the new two-party coalition government was sworn in on January 26, 2021.

### **Jay Shah takes over as Asian Cricket Council (ACC) President**

BCCI secretary Jay Shah was unanimously elected as the President of the Asian Cricket Council following its AGM held virtually.

He replaces Nazmul Hassan, President, Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB).

**Facts about the Asian Cricket Council (ACC):**

**Headquarters:** Colombo, Sri Lanka

**Founded:** 19 September 1983

**Parent organization:** International Cricket Council

**Note:** ACC is responsible for organizing the Asia Cup tournaments.

### **Bhavya Lal, the Indian-American scientist, has been appointed as the Acting Chief of Staff of the US space agency (NASA)**

Lal brings "extensive experience" in engineering and space technology, serving as a member of the research staff at the Institute for Defence Analyses Science and Technology Policy Institute (STPI) from 2005 to 2020.

Lal served as a member of the Biden Presidential Transition Agency Review Team for the agency and oversaw the agency's transition under the administration of President Biden.

**Facts about NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration):** It is an independent agency of the U.S. Federal Government responsible for the civilian space program, as well as aeronautics and space research.

**Founded:** 1 October 1958

**Headquarters:** Washington, D.C., United States

### **Ajay Singh re-elected as president of Boxing Federation of India**

Spicejet airlines chairman Ajay Singh defeated Ashish Shelar in a contest to get re-elected as president of Boxing Federation India for a second term at the general elections held in Gurugram.

**About Indian Boxing Federation:** It is the Indian national governing body for Olympic boxing and is India's member organization of the International Amateur Boxing Association. It is headquartered in New Delhi. Indian Boxing Federation is also known as all India boxing association.

### **Andy Jassy to replace Jeff Bezos as Amazon CEO**

Amazon founder Jeff Bezos has announced to step down from his position later this year as chief executive of the company he built from a startup into one of the world's most valuable firms.

Andy Jassy is currently serving as CEO of Amazon Web Services (AWS).

#### **Facts about Amazon:**

**CEO:** Jeff Bezos

**Founder:** Jeff Bezos

**Founded:** 5 July 1994

**Headquarters:** Seattle, Washington, United States

## **Science and Technology**

### **American space agency NASA lands its rover 'Perseverance' on Mars successfully**

The American space agency NASA successfully landed its fifth rover 'Perseverance' on Mars in a deep crater near the planet's equator called Jezero.

It will attempt to collect around 30 rock and soil samples, to be eventually sent back to Earth sometime in the 2030s for lab analysis.

### **TIFAC unveils two new initiatives of Technology —SAKSHAM and a Seaweed Mission**

Two new initiatives of Technology Information, Forecasting and Assessment Council (TIFAC):

- (i) **SAKSHAM (Shramik Shakti Manch)**- a dynamic job portal for mapping the skills of Shramiks vis-à-vis requirements of MSMEs to directly connect Shramiks with MSMEs and facilitate placement of 10 lakh blue-collar jobs and
- (ii) **Seaweed Mission** for commercial farming of seaweeds and its processing for value addition towards boosting national economy were launched on the occasion of the 34<sup>th</sup> Foundation Day celebrations.

#### **About Technology Information, Forecasting and Assessment Council (TIFAC):**

It is an autonomous technology think tank under the Department of Science & Technology (DST), Government of India.

**Executive Director:** Pradeep Srivastava  
**Headquarters:** New Delhi  
**Founded:** 1988

### **ISRO tests satellites developed by private sector for the first time**

Two satellites by Indian startups—SpaceKidz India and Pixxel (incorporated as Sygzy)—were tested at the UR Rao Satellite Centre of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) in Bengaluru.

Earlier ISRO had only provided launch facilities to private firms at a cost.

**Note:** In June 2020, ISRO chairman K Sivan had announced that the agency will open its labs, testing facilities and quality facilities to private companies so they don't have to invest in infrastructure.

An independent body, Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre (**IN-SPACe**), was set up to not only to oversee the space activity of the private sector, but also to share ISRO facilities.

### **Jammu and Kashmir to get 1st impact-based flood forecasting system**

Jammu and Kashmir is likely to get the country's first impact-based flood forecasting system in collaboration with the UK space agency, enabling the prediction of the impact impending floods may have on people's lives including, houses, crops, livestock, and transport routes, thereby helping in mitigating several of these challenges.

**Note:** A recent report has put India among the 10 most disaster prone countries in the world and ranked floods as one of the greatest climate-related hazards.

J&K falls in seismic zone IV and V, making it prone to quakes as well.

#### **Facts about Jammu and Kashmir:**

**Union territory established:** 31 October 2019  
**Capital:** Srinagar (May–October), Jammu (Nov–April)  
**Lieutenant Governor:** Manoj Sinha

### **MapmyIndia ties up with ISRO to build an alternative to Google Maps**

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has entered into an agreement with MapmyIndia to develop mapping and other location-based services in India, which MapmyIndia suggested could become an alternative to widely-used Google maps and similar products.

**About MapmyIndia:** It is an Indian technology company that builds digital map data, telematics services, location-based SaaS and GIS AI services. The company was founded in 1992 and is headquartered at New Delhi.

### **Indian astronomers detect huge optical flare from super massive black hole**

According to the Department of Science and Technology, Indian astronomers have reported one of the strongest flares from a feeding super massive black hole or blazar called BL Lacertae.

The analysis can help to trace the mass of the black hole and the source of this emission and can provide a lead to probe mysteries and trace events at different stages of evolution of the Universe.

**BL Lacertae blazar** is 10 million light-years away and is among the 50 most prominent blazars that can be observed with the help of a relatively small telescope.

It was among the 3 to 4 blazars that was predicted to be experiencing flares by the Whole Earth Blazar Telescope (WEBT), an international consortium of astronomers.

### **IIT Madras-incubated startup Pi Beam has launched an electric two-wheeler, PiMo, for Rs 30,000**

PiMo is a vehicle that's between an electric bicycle and entry-level electric scooter.

PiMo, having 90% of components manufactured in India, is a stylishly designed two-wheeler offering a range of 50 km on a single charge with a top speed of 25 kmph.

The company aims to sell 10,000 units by the end of next financial year (2021-22).

**About Pi Beam:** "Pi Beam is an incubated company at IIT-M to bring electric mobility in India. They have been working on vehicles which essentially enable carrying of goods and passengers.

### **Stardust 1.0, the first rocket to run on biofuel**

Recently, Stardust 1.0 was launched from Loring Commerce Centre in Maine, US, a former military base, becoming the first commercial space launch powered by biofuel, which is non-toxic for the environment as opposed to traditionally used rocket fuels.

**About Stardust 1.0:** It is a launch vehicle suited for student and budget payloads. The rocket is 20 feet tall and has a mass of roughly 250 kg. The rocket can carry a maximum payload mass of 8 kg and during its first launch carried three payloads. The rocket is manufactured by bluShift, an aerospace company based in Maine.

### **India's first geothermal power project to be established at Puga village of eastern Ladakh**

India's first ever geothermal power project, known as Geothermal Field Development Project is planned to commission by the end of 2022.

The tripartite MoU was signed between ONGC Energy, LAHDC, Leh and the Power Department of UT Ladakh.

The project will work in different stages. In the first phase of the pilot project, one megawatt (MW) power generation capacity will be generated.

**Note:** **Puga** has been identified as the hotspot of geothermal energy in the country by the scientists. Puga is a place where it is uncovered with a potential of more than 100 mw of geothermal energies.

### **Odisha's Balasore to get Country's first Thunderstorm Research Testbed**

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) is all set to establish the country's first thunderstorm research testbed at Balasore.

The objective of setting up the thunderstorm testbed is to minimalise human fatalities and loss of property due to lightning strikes.

The thunderstorm testbed will be established in collaboration between the Ministry of Earth Sciences, IMD, Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).

**Note:** IMD Director-General Dr Mrutyunjay Mohapatra also revealed that a first-of-its-kind monsoon testbed is also being planned near Bhopal.

### **Square Kilometre Array Observatory launched**

Square Kilometre Array Observatory (SKAO) Council held its maiden meeting and approved the establishment of the world's largest radio telescope.

SKAO is a new intergovernmental organisation dedicated to radio astronomy and is headquartered in the UK.

The Square Kilometre Array Observatory Council aims to build and operate two radio telescope networks, which would be the largest and most complex ones ever conceived.

With these two networks, the intergovernmental organisation hopes to answer some of the fundamental questions regarding the universe. The two networks will be based in South Africa and Australia.

Around 16 countries are currently a part of the project either at a government or national-coordination level or as observers.

**India** is participating in the Square Kilometre Array Observatory at a national-coordination level, led by the National Centre for Radio Astrophysics of the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research.

### **India's first CNG Tractor**

India's first-ever diesel Tractor, converted to **CNG (Compressed Natural Gas)**, will be formally launched by the Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways, Sh. Nitin Gadkari.

The conversion, carried out jointly by Rawmatt Techno Solutions & Tomasetto Achille India, will help farmers increase their income, by lowering costs, and help to create job opportunities in rural India.

**Important benefits of conversion to CNG are:**

It is a Clean Fuel as it has the lowest content of carbon and other pollutants.

It is part of Waste to Wealth as stubble (Parali) can be used as a raw material for producing Bio-CNG which will help the farmers to earn money by selling it to the Bio-CNG production units in their locality

**Visual intelligence tool TEJAS, e-Auction India, 'Work from AnyWhere' portal launched on silver jubilee of NICS**

On the occasion of silver jubilee of National Informatics Centre Services Incorporated (NICS), a public sector enterprise under National Informatics Centre (NIC), Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY), Union Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad has launched visual intelligence tool TEJAS, e-Auction India, 'Work from AnyWhere' and NIC products portfolio.

**Facts about National Informatics Centre (NIC):**

**Founded:** 1976

**Director General:** Neeta Verma

**Headquarters:** New Delhi

**Parent organisation:** Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology

**The Department of Space has entered into a Non Disclosure Agreement (NDA) with Skyroot Aerospace Pvt. Ltd.**

The NDA will enable the company to access the facilities and technical expertise available in ISRO centers to proceed with their launch vehicle development program.

**About Skyroot Aerospace Private Limited:** It is an Indian private aerospace manufacturer and commercial launch service provider located in Hyderabad, Telangana.

The company was founded by former engineers and scientists from ISRO, DRDO, and various aerospace companies.

**Note:** The company has been developing its first launch vehicle, the "Vikram-I," which is on track for its initial launch around December 2021.

**Health**

**Over 1.2 lakh died due to air pollution in India in 2020: Greenpeace Report**

According to the report by **Greenpeace**, a **global climate activist group**, titled '**Greenpeace: Cost to Economy Due to Air Pollution Analysis 2021**', around 1.2 lakh lives were lost due to air pollution in six Indian cities and that the economic losses on account of bad air amounted to over ₹2 lakh crore.

According to the study, there were 54,000 air pollution-related deaths in Delhi, 25,000 in Mumbai, 12,000 in Bengaluru, 11,000 each in Hyderabad and Chennai and around 6,700 in Lucknow.

**Note:** Globally, approximate 160,000 deaths have been attributed to PM2.5 air pollution in the five most populous cities (Delhi, Mexico City, Sao Paulo, Shanghai and Tokyo).

### **Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and CSIR, India sign MoU to promote health research**

Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), India have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to support the development, conduct and promotion of health research in India.

Gates Foundation and CSIR will work together to identify opportunities to initiate scientific and technological collaborations.

**Note: Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR)** is India's premier S&T organization comprising 37 research laboratories focused on diverse scientific and industrial research areas.

#### **Facts about the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation:**

**Founded:** 2000

**Headquarters:** Washington, USA

**Founders:** Melinda Gates, Bill Gates

### **India becomes 1st country in world to identify need for action for Non-Alcoholic Fatty Liver Disease**

Dr Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister of Health & Family Welfare, launched the operational guidelines for Integration of NAFLD (Non-Alcoholic Fatty Liver Disease) with NPCDCS.

**About NPCDCS (National Programme for Prevention & Control of Cancer, Diabetes, Cardiovascular Diseases and Stroke):** In order to prevent and control major NCDs (Non-communicable diseases), the NPCDCS was launched in 2010.

### **Food regulator FSSAI notifies regulations to limit trans fat in food items**

Under the regulation notified on December 29 last year, FSSAI said it has limited industrial TFA (trans fatty acids) to not more than 3 per cent in all fats and oils by January 2021 and not more than 2 per cent by January 2022.

The Food Safety and Standards (Prohibition and Restrictions on Sales) Second Amendment Regulations, 2021, has been notified.

This regulation states that all food products in which edible oils and fats are used as an ingredient should not contain industrial trans fatty acids more than 2 per cent by mass of the total oils/fats present in the product, on and from January 1, 2022.

**Note:** In 2018, the WHO called for elimination of industrially-produced trans fat from the food supply by 2023 and released an action package 'REPLACE' for the same.

**Facts about FSSAI (Food Safety and Standards Authority of India):** It has been established under the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006.

**Founded:** August 2011

**Headquarters:** New Delhi

**Agency executive:** Rita Teotia (Chairperson)

## Environment and Ecology

### Hyderabad gets recognition as '2020 Tree City of the World'

The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization and the Arbor Day Foundation have recognized Hyderabad as a '2020 Tree City of the World'.

Hyderabad earned recognition in the Foundation's second year of the programme along with 51 other cities globally and the only city in India to get this recognition so far.

Most of the cities were from the US, UK, Canada, Australia among other countries.

### New alpine plant species discovered in Arunachal Pradesh

A new species of alpine plant in Arunachal Pradesh's Tawang district has been discovered by a group of scientists of three institutes of the country.

The discovery of the species was published in '**Biodiversitas: Journal of Biological Diversity**'.

The new species belongs to the family of Himalayan sunflower.

It is named as '**Cremanthodium indicum**' and the plant species, which generally flowers from July to August, is endemic to Penga-Teng Tso Lake of Tawang district.

**Note:** The alpine plant species is assessed as critically endangered, according to the IUCN guidelines.

### Mandarin duck sighted after 118 years in Assam

A colourful duck from eastern Asia spotted in Assam after 118 years has raised hopes for a wetland that was affected by a blowout and inferno at a natural gas well in May-June, 2020.

The duck, whose primary habitat is in eastern China and southern Japan, had landed in Assam by accident too.

Its scientific name is *Aix galericulata*.

The **mandarin duck** is a perching duck species native to the East Paleartic. It is medium-sized, at 41–49 cm long with a 65–75 cm wingspan. It is closely related to the North American wood duck.

### **First highway with wildlife protection corridor**

According to Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, The Delhi-Saharanpur-Dehradun Economic corridor will be India's first highway where there will be a 12-kilometer long elevated corridor for protection of wildlife.

The highway project is being developed between Delhi's Akshardham and Dehradun in four sections.

The ministry has decided to execute the Delhi-Dehradun Expressway project under Engineering, Procurement, and Construction (EPC) mode.

This highway project, once completed, will reduce the distance between the two cities from 235 km to 210 km, and travel time from the current 6.5 hours to just 2.5 hours.

### **Reliance gets world's first 'carbon-neutral' oil from US**

This transaction is a first step in the creation of a new market for climate-differentiated crude oil.

Reliance Industries Ltd has sourced the world's first consignment of 'carbon-neutral oil' from the US as it looks to become a net zero-carbon company by 2035.

Reliance got 2 million barrels of consignment. The Oxy Low Carbon Ventures (OLCV), which is a division of US oil major Occidental, had delivered the carbon-neutral oil to Reliance.

Occidental is the first US-based international energy company to announce an ambition to achieve net-zero GHG emissions associated with the use of its products by 2050.

**Note:** Mukesh Ambani's Reliance operates the world's largest single-location oil refining complex at Jamnagar in Gujarat with a capacity of 68.2 million tonnes a year.

### **Srivilliputhur Megamalai Tiger Reserve (SMTR) becomes the fifth tiger reserve in Tamil Nadu**

Tamil Nadu is set to get its fifth tiger reserve spread over one lakh hectares of land under the Meghamalai Wildlife Sanctuary and Srivilliputhur Grizzled Squirrel Wildlife Sanctuary.

The National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) has approved the new tiger reserve.

The proposal states that the new tiger reserve will not only lead to wildlife protection of the country's flagship species but will also result in the rejuvenation of the Vaigai River by protecting the river's origins in these forests.

**Note:** The first tiger reserve in Tamil Nadu – **Kalakkad Mundanthurai** – was formed around 1988-89, which was followed by **Anamalai** and **Mudumalai** in 2008 and 2009. The fourth reserve – **Sathyamangalam** – was created around 2013-14.

This will be the **51st tiger reserve in the country.**

### **South Korea plans to construct world's largest offshore wind farm**

South Korea plans to build an **8.2 GW offshore wind farm** in Jeonnam province by 2030.

The offshore wind farm project is expected to boost South Korea's wind power capacity to 16.5 GW by 2030 from 1.67 GW now.

**Note:** Currently, the world's largest offshore wind farm is **Hornsea 1 in Britain, which has 1.12 GW capacity.**

#### **Facts about South Korea:**

**Capital:** Seoul

**President:** Moon Jae-in

**Currency:** South Korean won

### **Denmark to create world's first energy island in the North Sea**

Denmark approved a plan to build the world's first energy island in the North Sea that will produce and store enough green energy to cover the electricity needs of 3 million European households.

The energy island, which will cost around 210 billion Danish crowns (\$33.9 billion) to build, is an important part of Denmark's legally binding target to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 70% by 2030 from 1990 levels, one of the world's most ambitious.

**Note:** Denmark also has plans for an energy island in the Baltic Sea.

**National Marine Turtle Action Plan launched**

The Ministry of Environment Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) has released 'Marine Mega Fauna Stranding Guidelines' and 'National Marine Turtle Action Plan'.

India has rich marine biodiversity along a vast coastline of over 7,500 km. India's coastal waters and beaches provide foraging and nesting sites for a variety of marine species, including sea turtles.

**Five species of sea turtles are known to inhabit Indian coastal waters and islands.**

These are the Olive Ridley (*Lepidochelys olivacea*), Green (*Chelonia mydas*), Hawksbill (*Eretmochelys imbricata*), Loggerhead (*Caretta caretta*) and the Leatherback (*Dermochelys coriacea*) turtles. Except the Loggerhead, the remaining four species nest along the Indian coast.

They are protected in Indian Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.

### **2021: Year of Indo-French alliance towards a Greener Planet**

Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Shri Prakash Javadekar and Ms Barbara Pompili, the French Minister for Ecological Transition launched the Indo-French Year of the Environment.

The Indo-French Year of the Environment over the period 2021-2022 would be based on **five main themes**: environmental protection, climate change, biodiversity conservation, sustainable urban development, and the development of renewable energies and energy efficiency.

**Note: India** has made significant progress towards climate change action & has already achieved 26% of reduction of emission intensity. As of 2020 the renewable capacity in India stands at 90 GW which includes 36 GW of solar energy & 38 GW of wind energy.

### **India gets its first Centre for Wetland Conservation and Management (CWCM)**

On the occasion of the World Wetland Day, the Minister of State for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Babul Supriyo announced the establishment of a Centre for Wetland Conservation and Management, as a part of the National Centre for Sustainable Coastal Management (NCSCM), Chennai, an institution under the Ministry.

**Note:** India has nearly 4.6% of its land as wetlands, covering an area of 15.26 million hectares and has 42 sites designated as Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites), with a surface area of 1.08 million hectares.

**NamamiGange** is the first of its kind program where Wetland Conservation is integrated with Basin Management Plan.

### **Uttarakhand sets up first arboretum for Shivalik range**

A first of its kind arboretum conserving over 210 species of trees found in the Shivalik range of Himalayas was inaugurated in Uttarakhand's Nainital district.

The arboretum was inaugurated by Ajay Singh Rawat, a noted environmentalist from Uttarakhand.

The Shivalik Arboretum has over 210 tree and shrub species, making it one of the biggest arboretum in the state. Some of the trees preserved include Kafal, Buransh, Tejpat and Sanjeevani.

**Note: Shivalik range or Outer Himalayas** spreads across states and union territories like Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and seven states in the country's northeast.

## Summits and Conferences

### Third Quad Ministerial Meeting

Foreign Ministers of Quad countries - India, Australia, Japan and US - discussed the necessity to promote freedom of navigation in the Indo-Pacific region.

External Affairs Minister Dr S. Jaishankar represented India at the Third Quad Ministerial Meeting.

**Note:** The 1st meeting of Quad was organized in New York in the year 2019 and the 2nd meeting in Tokyo in the year 2020.

### India hosts first meeting of BRICS Finance and Central Bank Deputies

India hosted a meeting of BRICS Finance and Central Bank Deputies virtually and was co-Chaired by Shri. Tarun Bajaj, Secretary Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance, and Dr. Michael Patra, Deputy Governor, Reserve Bank of India.

Other participants included BRICS Finance and Central Bank Deputies of Brazil, Russia, China and South Africa.

**Note: India assumed the BRICS Chairship in 2021**, at a time when BRICS is celebrating its 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

This was the first meeting on the BRICS Financial Cooperation under India Chairship in 2021.

### Union Minister of Education Shri Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank,' delivers inaugural address at the 16th FICCI Higher Education Summit 2021

The 16<sup>th</sup> edition of FICCI higher Education Summit (25th - 27th February 2021) is being organised virtually by FICCI in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

The theme of the summit is '**Higher Education @ 2030: R.I.S.E. – Resilience, Innovation, Sustainability, Enterprise.**'

The Inaugural session also witnessed the release of FICCI- EY report '**Higher Education in India: Vision 2040.**'

**Facts about FICCI** (Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry): It is a non-governmental trade association and advocacy group based in India.

**Founded:** 1927

**Headquarters:** New Delhi

**President:** Uday Shankar

**Founders:** Purshottamdas Thakurdas, Ghanshyam Das Birla

### **Prime Minister addresses NASSCOM Technology and Leadership Forum**

The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi addressed the NASSCOM Technology and Leadership Forum (NTLF) via video conferencing.

It is the flagship event of the National Association of Software and Service Companies (NASSCOM).

The theme of this year's event is 'Shaping the future towards a better normal'.

**Note:** The Prime Minister listed the steps taken in recent times such as National Communication Policy, policy to make India Global Software Product Hub and Other Service Provider (OSP) guidelines which were issued during Corona period.

**Facts about NASSCOM (National Association of Software and Service Companies): It is a non-profit organisation.**

**Chairperson:** U. B. Pravin Rao

**Founded:** 1 March 1988

**Headquarters:** New Delhi

### **India hosts SAARC virtual meet**

India hosted a virtual health secretary-level meeting with South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation countries on February 18, 2021 to discuss the ongoing COVID-19 crisis. Pakistan has been also invited to attend the workshop.

The virtual workshop was held on COVID-19 management and response to the pandemic and exchange of best practices amid the pandemic.

**Note:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi had proposed a Coronavirus Emergency Fund for the SAARC region during a video conference of the SAARC Heads of State on March 15, 2020.

**Facts about SAARC:** The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation is the regional intergovernmental organization and geopolitical union of states in South Asia. Its member states are Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

**Founded:** 8 December 1985, Dhaka, Bangladesh

**Headquarters:** Kathmandu, Nepal

**Secretary General:** Esala Weerakoon

### **1st India-EU High Level Dialogue on Trade and Investment held**

The 1st High Level Dialogue (HLD), co-chaired by the Minister of Commerce and Industry Shri Piyush Goyal and the European Union Executive Vice-President & Trade Commissioner Mr. Valdis Dombrovskis, was held on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2021.

The Ministers also agreed to meet within the next three months, with an objective for reaching consensus on a host of bilateral trade & investment cooperation issues- a bilateral Regulatory Dialogue; an India-EU Multilateral Dialogue.

**Note:** Commitment to the establishment of this Dialogue was a major outcome of the 15th India-EU Leader's Summit held in July 2020.

**Facts about the European Union (EU):**

**Headquarters:** Brussels, Belgium

**Founded:** 1 November 1993

**Members Countries:** 27

The United Kingdom became the first member state to leave the EU on 31 January 2020.

In 2012, the EU was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

**Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurates World Sustainable Development Summit-2021**

The theme of the summit is '**Redefining Our Common Future: Safe and Secure Environment for All**'.

**Note:** The **20th edition of The Energy and Resources Institute's (TERI)** flagship event, the World Sustainable Development Summit, is being organized online from 10-12 February in New Delhi and will bring together a wide number of governments, business leaders, academicians, climate scientists, youth, and the civil society in the fight against climate change.

**2nd Maritime India Summit (MIS) - 2021**

Around 20,000 delegates will participate, 24 partner countries will join and more than 400 Projects are set to be showcased in the 2nd edition of Maritime India Summit (MIS) 2021 to be held virtually from **2nd March to 4th March**.

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi will inaugurate the Maritime India Summit-2021 on 2nd March.

The event is being organized by the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways (MoPSW) jointly with FICCI as Industrial Partner and EY as Knowledge Partner.

MIS-2021 is going to provide a powerful platform for international collaboration and bring in partner countries for mutual exchange of knowledge and opportunities.

**5th Joint Meeting of the India-Japan Act East Forum**

India and Japan held the fifth joint meeting of the India-Japan Act East Forum (AEF) on 28 January 2021 in New Delhi.

The meeting was co-chaired by Shri Harsh Vardhan Shringla, Foreign Secretary, and H.E. Mr. Suzuki Satoshi, Ambassador of Japan to India.

**About Act East Forum (AEF):** It was established in 2017 to provide a platform for India-Japan collaboration in the North Eastern Region under India's "Act East Policy" and Japan's vision for a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific".

## Ranking and Index

### **Bhim Army chief Chandra Shekhar Aazad, five Indian-origin persons, feature in TIME magazine's list of 100 emerging leaders**

**Bhim Army** is an Ambedkarite and dalit rights organisation in India. It was founded by Satish Kumar, Vijay Ratan Singh and Chandrashekhar Azad in 2015.

**Five Indian-origin persons featured in Time:** Twitter lawyer Vijaya Gadde, UK's Finance Minister Rishi Sunak, Instacart founder and CEO Apoorva Mehta, Get Us PPE executive director and doctor Shikha Gupta and founder of nonprofit Upsolve's Rohan Pavuluri

**Note: The 2021 TIME100 Next** is an expansion of TIME's flagship TIME100 franchise of the most influential people in the world and highlights 100 emerging leaders who are shaping the future.

### **India falls to 53rd position in EIU's Democracy Index**

India slipped two places to 53rd position in the 2020 Democracy Index's global ranking as India was ranked 51st in the 2019 Democracy Index.

Norway topped The EIU's latest Democracy Index report titled "Democracy in sickness and in health?" with Iceland, Sweden, New Zealand and Canada making up the top five.

Out of 167 countries, the Democracy Index classifies 23 countries as full democracies, 52 as flawed democracies, 35 as hybrid regimes and 57 as authoritarian regimes.

India has been classified as a 'flawed democracy' along with countries such as the U.S., France, Belgium and Brazil.

**Facts about the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU):** It is the world's leading resource for economic and business research, forecasting and analysis.

**Headquarters:** London, United Kingdom

**Parent organization:** Economist Group

**Founded:** 1946

## **India to be largest source of energy demand growth to 2040: IEA's India Energy Outlook 2021**

India will make up the biggest share of energy demand growth at 25 % over the next two decades, as it overtakes the European Union as the world's third-biggest energy consumer by 2030.

India's energy consumption is expected to nearly double as the nation's gross domestic product expands to an estimated \$8.6 trillion by 2040 under its current national policy scenario.

### **Facts about International Energy Agency (IEA):**

**Headquarters:** Paris, France

**Member Countries:** 30 member countries and 8 association countries

**Executive Director:** Fatih Birol

**Establishment:** November 1974

## **India ranked 86th in Corruption Perception Index 2020**

India's rank is 86 out of 180 nations with a score of 40 released by Transparency International (TI).

India's rank has slipped six places in 2020 as India was ranked at 80th position out of 180 countries in 2019.

New Zealand and Denmark were ranked at first position with scores of 88.

Somalia and South Sudan were ranked lowest at 179th position.

### **Facts about Transparency International (TI):**

**Headquarters:** Berlin, Germany

**Chairperson:** Delia Ferreira Rubio

**Founded:** 4 May 1993

## **India ranks 86th on Covid-19 Response Index**

India has ranked 86th in a coronavirus performance index comprising 98 countries, according to the performance index compiled by the Sydney-based Lowy Institute.

**Top three countries** are New Zealand, Vietnam, Taiwan respectively and Brazil was ranked at the bottom in the list.

The study measured a number of key indicators, including confirmed cases, deaths, cases per million people and deaths per million people.

## **Reliance Jio ranked fifth strongest brand globally**

Billionaire Mukesh Ambani's four-year-old telecom venture Reliance Jio has been ranked the fifth strongest brand globally.

Jio has entered the ranking for the first time and claimed fifth position with a BSI score of 91.7 out of 100 and the elite AAA+ brand strength rating.

**According to the Brand Finance's Global 500, 2021, Chinese mobile app WeChat was at the top position.**

### **UN World Tourism Organization confirms 2020 as 'Worst Year on Record'**

Global tourism suffered its worst year on record in 2020, with international arrivals dropping by 74 percent according to the latest data from the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO).

Destinations worldwide welcomed 1 billion fewer international arrivals in 2020 than in the previous year (2019), due to an unprecedented fall in demand and widespread travel restrictions.

**Facts about the World Tourism Organization:** It is the United Nations specialized agency.

**Headquarters:** Madrid, Spain

**Formation:** 1 November 1974

**Head:** Zurab Pololikashvili

### **India ranks 10th in Asia-Pacific Personalised Health Index**

India ranked 10th out of 11 Asia Pacific countries in a newly-launched health index to measure the progress towards personalised healthcare.

Singapore ranked 1st, Taiwan 2nd and Japan 3<sup>rd</sup> in the index.

**Note:** The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) report 'Asia-Pacific Personalised Health Index', developed by the Copenhagen Institute for Future Studies in partnership with Roche, measures the readiness of 11 health systems across the region — Australia, China, Japan, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand and New Zealand — in adopting personalised healthcare.

### **Maharashtra ranks first in justice delivery in India**

In the second edition of the **India Justice Report (IJR) 2020**, Maharashtra has retained the top spot on delivering justice to people among 18 large and medium sized states, followed by Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Punjab and Kerala.

Only 29 % of Judges in High Courts across the country are women.

Bihar, Uttarakhand, Tripura and Meghalaya have no woman judges in their High Courts.

**About the India Justice Report:** It is an initiative of Tata Trusts in collaboration with Centre for Social Justice, Common Cause, Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, DAKSH, TISS–Prayas, Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy, and How India Lives.

## **PHDCCI: India 2nd most resilient economy among the top 10 leading economies in 2021**

Germany ranks 1<sup>st</sup> in the **PHDCCI International Economic Resilience (IER) Rank** followed by India and South Korea at 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> positions respectively.

The analysis of the leading economies conducted on the basis of the five leading macroeconomic parameters.

India's Real GDP growth rate is projected to be the highest at 11.5% in the year 2021 among the top 10 leading economies in the world.

**About PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry:** It is a proactive National Apex Chamber working as a catalyst in the promotion of industry, trade and entrepreneurship.

**Establishment:** 1905

**President:** Sanjay Aggarwal

**Headquarters:** New Delhi

## **Important Days**

### **21 February, International Mother Language Day**

International Mother Language Day is a worldwide annual observance held on 21 February to promote awareness of linguistic and cultural diversity and to promote multilingualism.

The theme of the 2021 International Mother Language Day is “**Fostering multilingualism for inclusion in education and society.**”

**Note:** The idea to celebrate International Mother Language Day was the initiative of Bangladesh. It was approved at the 1999 UNESCO General Conference and has been observed throughout the world since 2000.

### **20 February, World Day of Social Justice**

World Day of Social Justice is an international day recognizing the need to promote social justice, which includes efforts to tackle issues such as poverty, exclusion, gender equality, unemployment, human rights, and social protections.

The theme of the day is ‘A Call for Social Justice in the Digital Economy’

**Note:** The United Nations General Assembly has decided to observe 20 February annually, approved on 26 November 2007 and starting in 2009, as the World Day of Social Justice.

### **February 13, National Women’s Day**

India celebrates Sarojini Naidu's birthday as National Women's Day every year on February 13.

**About Sarojini Naidu:** Sarojini Naidu was not only a freedom fighter, but she also became the first woman governor of the United Provinces, the present Uttar Pradesh.

She was famous for her nickname 'Nightingale of India' or 'Bharat Kokila' because of her poems.

### **February 13, World Radio Day**

The Day was decided by UNESCO on 3 November 2011 during its 36th conference and subsequently adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2012 as an International Day.

The theme of World Radio Day 2021 was "New World, New Radio".

**Note:** Radio has remained the most resilient and effective mode of communication, which is, till date, used by the majority for receiving information. Even after 110 years, Radio still reaches difficult terrains to connect people.

### **February 12, National Productivity Day**

The formation of the National Productivity Council is being celebrated every year all over the country by commemorating 12th February as Productivity Day.

**About National Productivity Council (NPC):** It, established in the year 1958, is an autonomous organization under Department for Promotion of Industry & Internal Trade, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India.

The NPC is a constituent of the Tokyo-based APO (Asian Productivity Organization), an intergovernmental body, of which the Government of India is a founding member.

### **First Ever International Day of Human Fraternity**

In December 2019, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution to declare 4 February as International Day of Human Fraternity.

International Day of Human Fraternity aims to underline the importance of raising awareness about different cultures and religions, or beliefs, and the promotion of tolerance.

### **International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation**

International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation is a United Nations-sponsored annual awareness day that takes place on February 6 as part of the UN's efforts to eradicate female genital mutilation. It was first introduced in 2003.

The theme of the Day was "No Time for Global Inaction, Unite, Fund, and Act to End Female Genital Mutilation."

### **February 11, International Day of Women and Girls in Science**

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.

The theme is "Women Scientists at the forefront of the fight against COVID-19".

**Note:** The 6th International Day of Women and Girls in Science Assembly is organized by the Royal Academy of Science International Trust (RASIT). The theme is "**Beyond the Borders: Equality in Science for Society**".

### **January 30, Martyrs' Day (Shaheed Diwas)**

Every year, Shaheed Diwas or Martyrs' Day is observed on 30 January in India. This day marks the death anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.

On January 30, 1948, Mahatma Gandhi was assassinated by Nathuram Godse in Birla House.

**Note:** **March 23** is also celebrated as **Martyr's Day** to pay tribute to three extraordinary revolutionaries of India who were hanged to death by the British namely **Bhagat Singh**, Rajguru and Sukhdev.

### **World Leprosy Day 2021**

World Leprosy Day is celebrated on the last Sunday of January every year all over the world to increase knowledge about it and propagate the need and importance of eradicating the disease.

This year World Leprosy Day took place on 31 January.

**In India**, the day is celebrated on January 30, which is also remembered as the death anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, father of the nation.

**National Leprosy Eradication Program** is a health scheme of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India to eradicate leprosy in India. It was launched in 1983 as a continuation of the National Leprosy Control Program of 1955.

### **February 2, World Wetlands Day**

2 February each year is World Wetlands Day to raise global awareness about the vital role of wetlands for people and our planet.

This day also marks the date of the adoption of the Convention on Wetlands on 2 February 1971, in the Iranian city of Ramsar on the shores of the Caspian Sea.

The theme is Wetlands and Water.

**Note:** There are 42 Ramsar sites in India. These are wetlands deemed to be of "international importance" under the Ramsar Convention.

### February 4, World Cancer Day

World Cancer Day is an international day marked on February 4 to raise awareness of cancer and to encourage its prevention, detection, and treatment.

The theme for World Cancer Day 2021 is 'I Am and I Will.'

**Note:** World Cancer Day was originated at the first World Summit against Cancer in 2000. It was held in Paris and was founded by the Union for International Cancer Control (UICC).

Recent studies estimate about one out of six people worldwide died from cancer that's more than HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria combined.

**According to the World Health Organization, India** contributes to nearly 60% of head and neck cancer patients worldwide and this number is expected to double by 2030.

## Books and Authors

### Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu releases a book "Maveric Messiah", a political biography on N.T. Rama Rao

The book was authored by senior journalist, Ramesh Kandula.

**Nandamuri Taraka Rama Rao, popularly known as NTR**, was an Indian actor, producer, director, film editor and politician who served as Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh for seven years over three terms.

### Home Minister Amit Shah releases book 'Rashtra Pratham - 82 varshon ki Swarnim Gatha'

This book depicts the dignified history of CRPF, its entire journey, challenges, successes and dedication.

**Note:** CRPF celebrated its **first-ever Veterans Day**.

The third Friday of February will be celebrated every year as the Veterans Day of the force.

### Award-winning author Irwin Allan Sealy's new novel *ASOCA: A Sutra*

The novel will be presented as an imagined memoir of *Ashoka The Great*.

It will be published by Penguin Random House India.

**Note:** Allan has won the Commonwealth Writers' Prize, Best First Book, Europe and South Asia, the **Sahitya Akademi Award** in 1991, the Crossword Book Award and the **Padma Shri** by the President of India in 2012.

### **Nobel laureate Olga Tokarczuk's art book, 'The Lost Soul'**

Olga Tokarczuk translates *The Lost Soul*, from Polish to English and merged with illustrations to produce a picture book.

First published in Poland in 2017 as *Zgubiona dusza*.

The illustrations were done by Joanna Concejo and translated by Antonia Lloyd-Jones.

It is published by Seven Stories Press.

**Note:** Tokarczuk was awarded the **2018 Man Booker International Prize** for novel 'Flights'.

She was awarded the **2018 Nobel Prize in Literature**.

### **Kabir Bedi's autobiography, 'Stories I Must Tell: The Emotional Journey of an Actor'**

Veteran actor Kabir Bedi will tell the story of his life in his memoir which will be published this April.

This is the story of a middle-class boy from Delhi who met with extraordinary successes. The book is published by Westland Publications.

### **Priyanka Chopra releases her memoir 'Unfinished'**

The former Miss World, Actor-producer Priyanka Chopra Jonas officially turned author with the release of her first book, "Unfinished: A Memoir".

The end result is a book, published by the Michael Joseph imprint, which covers her dual-continent 20-year-long career as an actor and producer and her work as a Unicef Goodwill Ambassador.

### **Mohammad Hamid Ansari authors a book titled 'By Many a Happy Accident: Recollections of a Life'**

The book is published by Rupa Publications.

**Note:** **Mohammad Hamid Ansari** was the vice president of India and chairman of the Rajya Sabha for two consecutive terms from 2007 to 2017.

### **Hunter Biden's memoir titled 'Beautiful Things'**

Hunter Biden, son of President Joe Biden, plans to publish his memoir titled "Beautiful Things" on April 6 through Gallery Books, an imprint of Simon & Schuster.

The book focuses on the life of Hunter Biden's struggles with substance abuse.

**Tamil translation of French novel 'Le mariage de plaisir' won the Romain Rolland Book Prize at the Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival 2021 in Kolkata**

The winners of the prize are translator Dr S A Vengada Soupraya Nayagar and publisher Amutharasan Paulraj of Thadagam Publishers for the Tamil translation of the book, authored by Tahar Ben Jelloun.

**Note: Romain Rolland Book Prize**, started in 2017, aims at awarding the best translation of a French title into any Indian language, including English.

**Dalai Lama's new book 'The Little Book of Encouragement'**

Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama shares quotes and words of wisdom to deal with the new realities of the panic-stricken world along with how to combat rising extremism, polarity and climate change besides his views on Tibet in his new book.

"The Little Book of Encouragement", which has 130 quotes, is edited by Renuka Singh and published by Penguin Random House.

**Note: Dalai Lama** is a title given by the Tibetan people to the foremost spiritual leader of the Gelug or "Yellow Hat" school of Tibetan Buddhism, the newest of the classical schools of Tibetan Buddhism. The 14th and current Dalai Lama is Tenzin Gyatso, who lives as a refugee in India.

**Obituaries**

**Former Governor and High Court Chief Justice (Retd.) M Rama Jois passes away**

M Rama Jois was the Chief Justice of Punjab and Haryana High Court.

He had also served as the Governor of Jharkhand and Bihar and as a member of the Rajya Sabha.

**India tennis legend Akhtar Ali, a former Davis Cup coach, passes away**

Akhtar played eight Davis Cup ties between 1958 and 1964 and also captained the Indian team.

Akhtar was conferred the Arjuna Award in 2000 for his lifetime contribution to tennis.

**Actor-director Rajiv Kapoor passes away**

Bollywood actor and Raj Kapoor's son Rajiv Kapoor passed away.

Rajiv Kapoor, who made his debut in Bollywood with the 1983 film *Ek Jaan Hain Hum*, was best known for the 1985 blockbuster *Ram Teri Ganga Maili*.

### Oscar-winning actress Cloris Leachman passes away at 94

Cloris Leachman was known as one of Hollywood's most prolific performers having won an Academy Award, a Golden Globe, and eight Primetime Emmy Awards.

### Paul J. Crutzen, Nobel laureate passes away

He was awarded the Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 1995 for his work on atmospheric chemistry and specifically for his efforts in studying the formation and decomposition of atmospheric ozone. In addition to studying the ozone layer and climate change, he popularized the term Anthropocene.

## Sports

### IPL Auction 2021: Chris Morris becomes most expensive player in auction history

South-African all-rounder Chris Morris became the costliest player in the history of Indian Premier League (IPL) auction when Rajasthan Royals snapped him up for Rs 16.25 crore.

**Note:** Earlier, Yuvraj Singh was the costliest-ever buy in auction history as he was bought for Rs 16 crore by Delhi Daredevils in IPL 2015.

### Kings XI Punjab renamed as 'Punjab Kings'

Kings XI Punjab has been renamed as 'Punjab Kings' as a part of the franchise's rebranding strategy ahead of the IPL 2021 auction in Chennai.

The Punjab side has been a part of the Indian Premier League since its inaugural season in 2008, and is co-owned by Bollywood actor Preity Zinta, along with businessman Ness Wadia, Mohit Burman and Karn Paul.

### Australian Open 2021

**Location:** Melbourne, Victoria, Australia (8–21 February 2021)

**List of winners:**

Men's singles	Women's singles	Men's doubles	Women's doubles	Mixed doubles
Winner-	Winner-	Winner-	Winner-	Winner-

Novak Djokovic (Serbia)	Naomi Osaka (Japan)	Ivan Dodig (Croatia), Filip Polasek (Slovakia)	Elise Mertens (Belgium), Aryna Sabalenka (Belarus)	Barbora Krejckikova (Czech Republic), Rajeev Ram (America)
<b>Runner-up-</b> Daniil Medvedev (Russia)	<b>Runner-up-</b> Jennifer Brady (America)	<b>Runner-up-</b> Rajeev Ram (America), Joe Salisbury (UK)	<b>Runner-up-</b> Barbora Krejckikova (Czech Republic), Katerina Siniakova (Czech Republic)	<b>Runner-up-</b> Samantha Stosur (Australia), Matthew Ebden (Australia)

**Note: Novak Djokovic (Serbia)** has won his ninth Australian Open title. He has now won 18 Grand Slam men's singles titles.

**Naomi Osaka (Japan)** has now won two Australian Open and the two US Open.

### Karnataka to host second Khelo India University Games in 2021

Union Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju has announced that the second Khelo India University Games (KIUG) will be hosted by Karnataka in 2021.

The Games will be held in Bengaluru's Jain University and other venues in the state, in partnership with the Association of Indian Universities (AIU).

**Note:** In the second edition of the games, **Yogasana and Mallakhamb** have been added.

The **first edition of University games** was held in Bhubaneswar in 2020.

### India's women's contingent finishes at top in 30th 'Adriatic Pearl' tournament in Budva, Montenegro

In Boxing, Arundhati Choudhary, Naorem Babyrojisana Chanu, Alfiya Pathan, Vinka and T Sanamacha Chanu won gold medals, with **five gold, three silver and two bronze medals**.

India's women's contingent thus finished top at the tournament. Uzbekistan (2 gold) and Czech Republic (1 gold) ended at second and third position respectively.

Vinka received the best women's boxer of the tournament award.

With two medals in the men's category, the 19-member Indian team concluded its campaign with an **overall second position (12 medals) with Uzbekistan first and Ukraine third**.

### **Naman Ojha announces retirement from all forms of Cricket**

India wicketkeeper-batsman Naman Ojha has announced his retirement from all forms of cricket on February 15, 2021.

He made his first-class debut for Madhya Pradesh in 2000-01.

He holds the record for the most dismissals by a wicketkeeper in the Ranji Trophy, featured in one Test, one ODI and two T20 Internationals.

### **Japan Olympics Minister Hashimoto to accept role as head of Tokyo 2020**

Japanese Olympics Minister Seiko Hashimoto, a woman who has competed in seven Olympic Games, intends to accept the job of Head of the Tokyo 2020 Organising Committee.

Former chairman of the committee Yoshiro Mori had resigned from the post last week over indecent remarks on women.

**Note:** Originally scheduled to take place between 24 July and 9 August 2020, the Olympic Games are now rescheduled for 23 July to 8 August 2021 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Joe Root becomes first batsman to score 200 in 100th Test**

England skipper Joe Root became the first cricketer to notch up a double century in his 100th Test, touching the milestone on the second day of the first Test against India, at the M.A. Chidambaram stadium in Chennai.

**Note:** Former Pakistan skipper Inzamam ul Haq, who hit 184 against India in Bengaluru in 2005, held the previous best score in the 100<sup>th</sup> Test.

### **Drass Red wins 13th CEC Cup Ice Hockey Championship**

In Kargil Ladakh, Drass Red has won the 13th CEC Cup Ice Hockey Championship beating Hockey Club Chiktan team in the Final match.

The 1st Women CEC Ice Hockey Cup 2021 was lifted by Shakar Chiktan Team defeating Wakha Mulbekh Team.

**Note:** 32 Men teams and 5 Women Teams participated in the tournament which was organized by the District Youth Services & Sports.

### **Ishant Sharma becomes 3rd Indian pacer to take 300 Test wickets**

Fast bowler Ishant Sharma became the 6th Indian and the 3rd pacer from the country to take 300 wickets in Test cricket.

**Note:** Besides Kumble (619) and Kapil (434), Ravichandran Ashwin (377 before this game), Harbhajan Singh (417), and Zaheer Khan (311) are the other bowlers from the country who have reached the landmark.

### **Tamil Nadu beat Baroda to lift Syed Mushtaq Ali T20 Trophy**

In Cricket, Tamil Nadu lifted the coveted Syed Mushtaq Ali T20 Trophy after defeating Baroda by seven wickets in the final at the Sardar Patel Stadium in Ahmedabad.

This was Tamil Nadu's second Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy triumph, after winning their first title way back in 2006-07.

Baroda had won the title twice in the past (in 2011-12 and 2013-14).

### **No Ranji Trophy for first time in 87 years**

For the first time in 87 years, the BCCI decided that it won't be conducting country's premier first-class domestic tournament Ranji Trophy 2020-21.

The cricket body decided to conduct the Vijay Hazare Trophy, instead of having a truncated Ranji Trophy. BCCI has also decided to host the U-19 National One Day tournament for the Vinoo Mankad Trophy and the Women's national 50-over tournament.

**About Ranji Trophy:** The first edition of the Ranji Trophy was held in 1934 and it was the only national cricket championship that was played even during the World War 2.

### **India top medals tally at first Asian Online Shooting Championship**

India's 24-member shooting contingent topped the medals tally in the first Asian Online Shooting Championship.

The squad won four out of the eight gold medals on offer, besides two silver and five bronze medals, for a total of 11 podium finishes.

India's gold winners were Saurabh Chaudhary in the men's 10m air pistol, Divyansh Singh Panwar in the men's 10m air rifle, Kynan Chenai in men's trap and Rajeshwari Kumari in women's trap.

**Note:** The two-day competition was organised by the Kuwait Shooting Federation and saw 274 shooters from 22 Asian countries take part.

### **Indian Cricketer Ashok Dinda announces retirement from all forms of cricket**

Fast bowler, Dinda, who has 420 first-class wickets in his bag, has also played 13 ODIs and nine T20s for India, taking 12 and 17 wickets respectively.

Dinda made his T20 international Debut for India in December 2009 against Sri Lanka and his ODI debut against Zimbabwe in May 2010.

# Monthly Current Affairs

## January 2021

### Important News: State

#### **Floating solar project at Omkareshwar to begin power generation by 2022-23**

The world's largest floating 600 MW solar energy project to be constructed at Omkareshwar dam on Narmada River in Khandwa district of Madhya Pradesh will begin power generation by year 2022-23.

The International Finance Corporation, World Bank and Power Grid have granted in-principle consent for providing aid for the said project development.

Electricity will be produced in about 2000-hectare water area by installing solar panels in the dam.

#### **4th edition of Cherry Blossom Festival**

The 4th edition of the Cherry Blossom Festival, Mao area of Senapati district in Manipur was virtually inaugurated by Chief Minister N Biren Singh.

It was jointly organized by the Department of Tourism and Indian Council of Cultural Relations (ICCR), Shillong in association with the Organizing Committee Flower Festival, Mao.

**Note:** Manipur has been celebrating this festival every year since 2017.

The International Cherry Blossom Festival which is celebrated in Shillong was cancelled too for the global pandemic. Japan is renowned for its Cherry Blossom Festival too.

#### **Arunachal Pradesh can become India's prime producer of Vanadium**

In an exploration being carried out by the Geological Survey of India, the eastern Himalayan State has been placed on the vanadium map and geologists are confident of finding a deposit soon.

**About Vanadium:** In its pure form, it is a grey, soft and ductile element primarily derived from mined iron ore, steel slag, and phyllites. It is a high-value metal that has been used in strengthening steel and titanium.

**Note:** The largest deposits of Vanadium are in China, followed by South Africa and Russia.

#### **India's first Fire Park comes up in Odisha**

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik inaugurated in Bhubaneswar the 'Fire Park', a first of its kind initiative in the country, to bring awareness on fire safety measures.

He also launched a dynamic online portal, 'AgnishamaSeva' of Odisha Fire Service.

Demonstrations on use of first aid fire-fighting equipment, rescue and disaster operations, visit to exhibition hall, screening of films and distribution of leaflets on fire safety will be part of the activities.

### **Prime Minister releases financial assistance to over 6 lakh beneficiaries in Uttar Pradesh under PMAY-G**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi released financial assistance of around Rs 2,691 crores to 6.1 lakh beneficiaries in Uttar Pradesh under the Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana - Gramin (PMAY-G) scheme.

**Note:** Prime Minister had given the clarion call of "Housing for All by 2022", for which a flagship programme of **PMAY-G** was launched on November 20, 2016. So far 1.26 crore houses have already been built across the country under the PMAY-G.

The beneficiaries of PMAY-G, in addition to the unit assistance, are also provided support of unskilled labour wages under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) and assistance of Rs. 12,000 for construction of toilets through Swachh Bharat Mission-Gramin (SBM-G).

#### **Facts about Uttar Pradesh:**

**Governor:** Anandiben Patel

**Chief Minister:** Yogi Adityanath

**Capital:** Lucknow

### **Prime Minister appointed chairman of Somnath Temple Trust**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi was appointed the new chairman of the trust which manages the world famous Somnath Temple at Prabhas Patan town in Gujarat's Gir-Somnath district.

After former PM Morarji Desai, Narendra Modi is the second Prime Minister who has been appointed the chairman of the temple trust. As per trust records, PM Modi has become the eighth chairman of the trust.

**Note:** The post of the Somnath Trust's chairman fell vacant after the death of the incumbent, former Gujarat Chief Minister Keshubhai Patel, in October last year. Patel had served as the chairman for 16 years (2004-2020).

### **India's first air taxi service starts from Chandigarh.**

Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar inaugurated air taxi services from Chandigarh to Hisar under the UDAN scheme of the Central Government.

For the first time in the country, a small aircraft in the form of an air taxi is being used for services.

The air taxi service will be operated by AirTaxi India which was granted the Scheduled Commuter Airline Permit by the Indian aviation regulator Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) in December 2020.

### **India's first Labour Movement museum to come up in Kerala**

The country's first Labour Movement Museum, showcasing the history of world labour movement, would be launched in Kerala's houseboat tourism hub, Alappuzha.

The New Model Cooperative Society Limited, previously run by the Bombay Company, has been converted into the Labour Movement Museum.

It is being built as part of the Alappuzha Heritage Tourism project.

**Facts about Kerala:** Kerala has the highest literacy rate in the country.

**Capital:** Thiruvananthapuram

**Chief Minister:** Pinarayi Vijayan

**Governor:** Arif Mohammad Khan

### **Madhya Pradesh becomes first State to give power subsidy to farmers through DBT**

Madhya Pradesh has become the first State to give electricity subsidy through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) scheme. With this, it has fulfilled a power reform condition as proposed by the Centre and thus eligible for additional borrowing.

Successful implementation of the reform has made the State eligible to mobilise additional financial resources equivalent to 0.15 percent of its Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP).

The Department of Expenditure has granted permission to the State to mobilise additional financial resources of Rs. 1,423 crore through Open Market Borrowings.

**Note:** Recently, the historical fort cities of **Gwalior and Orchha** in Madhya Pradesh have been included in the **list of UNESCO's world heritage cities** under its urban landscape city programme.

### **1st small-scale LNG (Liquefied Natural Gas) supply infrastructure of Shell Energy India at Hazira, Gujarat**

Union Minister for Petroleum, Natural Gas and Steel Dharmendra Pradhan inaugurated the first small-scale LNG supply infrastructure of Shell Energy India at its LNG terminal at Hazira in Gujarat.

This will now augment Shell's natural gas supply offerings in India to include supply of LNG via trucks.

**Note:** The Government of India is promoting natural gas through various policy and regulatory reforms towards making India- a gas-based economy by increasing the share of gas in India's primary energy mix to 15 per cent.

### **Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani announced the 'Horticulture Development Mission' (Bagayat Vikas Mission)**

The aim of this mission is to double the income of farmers involved in medicinal and horticulture farming.

The government has included Kutch, Surendranagar, Patan, Sabarkantha and Banaskantha districts in the first phase.

**Under this mission**, a tax on land conversion will be waived off. Lease amount applicable will be Rs 100 to Rs 500 per year per acre during 6th to 30th year. Lease holders will be able to set up solar panel, windmills to generate energy for their own use, but will not be allowed to sell it.

**Note: Chief Minister of Gujarat also announced that the state government has decided to rename dragon fruit as 'Kamalam'.** This fruit is largely grown in Kutch, Navsari and different parts of Saurashtra.

### **Maharashtra government renamed Nagpur's Gorewada International Zoo as Balasaheb Thackeray Gorewada International Zoological Park**

The zoological park will come up on nearly 2,000 hectares forest land. It also said that Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray will inaugurate the Indian safari at the zoo on January 26.

**Note:** Aiming to protect forests and promote tourism, Prakash Javadekar, Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC), had announced the setting up of the 'international-standard' bio park in August 2019. The task was entrusted to the Forest Development Corporation of Maharashtra Ltd.

### **Home Minister Amit Shah attends first BTR (Bodoland Territorial Region) Accord Day celebration at Kokrajhar in Assam**

**Note:** The BTR accord was signed on January 27, 2020 in New Delhi.

**Facts about Bodoland Territorial Region:** The Bodoland Territorial Region is an autonomous region in Assam, Northeast India.

**Government body:** Bodoland Territorial Council

**Districts:** 4

**Established:** 9 February 2003

**Headquarters:** Kokrajhar

Union Home Minister also launched the **Ayushman CAPF** scheme in Guwahati for about 28 lakh central arms forces and their families in all the states where Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana is in operation.

### **Ministry of Tribal Affairs virtually launches "Shramshakti" Digital Data Solution for Migrant Workers**

The Union Minister of Tribal Affairs Shri Arjun Munda launched "ShramShakti", a National Migration Support Portal at a programme held at Panjim, Goa.

It would effectively help in the smooth formulation of state and national level programs for migrant workers.

He also launched a **tribal migration cell, a tribal museum at Goa** and "**ShramSaathi**", a training manual for migrant workers.

**Note:** The Chief Minister of Goa, Pramod Sawant informed that **Goa is going to be the first destination state of India to set up a dedicated migration cell** to address diverse issues of migrant workers.

### **India's longest road arch bridge in Meghalaya**

Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma inaugurated India's longest road arch bridge, the Wahrew Bridge at Sohbar in East Khasi Hills district.

The bridge connects Bholaganj and Sohbar to Nongjri in East Khasi Hills, bordering Bangladesh.

**Note:** The funds for the construction of the bridge were sanctioned from the Non-Lapsable Central Pool of Resources of the Union ministry of development of Northeastern region (DoNER).

### **24th "Hunar Haat" at Avadh Shilpgram, Lucknow (UP)**

The Ministry of Minority Affairs is organising the 24<sup>th</sup> "Hunar Haat" at Avadh Shilpgram, Lucknow (UP) from 22<sup>nd</sup> January to 04<sup>th</sup> February, 2021 with the theme of "Vocal for Local".

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Shri Yogi Adityanath inaugurated the "Hunar Haat" on 23<sup>rd</sup> January, 2021.

**Note:** In the coming days, "Hunar Haat" will be organised at Mysore, Jaipur, Chandigarh, Indore, Mumbai, Hyderabad, New Delhi, Ranchi, Kota, Surat/Ahmedabad, Kochi, Puducherry and other places.

### **Gujarat inks pact with Adani Ports for India's largest multi-modal logistics park**

The Gujarat Government inked an agreement with India's largest ports operator, Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone Ltd (APSEZ), to set up India's largest multi-modal logistics park.

The park, which will be spread across 1,450 acres at Virochan Nagar near Sanand automobile hub, will attract investments worth ₹50,000 crore in the logistics and transport space.

This park will be directly connected with the Dedicated Freight Corridor and all major ports. The park will have a dedicated Air Cargo Complex.

#### **Facts of about Gujarat:**

**Capital:** Gandhinagar

**Governor:** Acharya Devvrat

**Chief Minister:** Vijay Rupani

### **Haridwar teen Shrishti Goswami becomes Uttarakhand CM for one day**

To mark the National Girl Child Day (24 January), Haridwar teenager Shrishti Goswami took charge as the chief minister of Uttarakhand for one day.

19-year-old Goswami, a student of BSc Agriculture, lives in Daulatpur village of the district.

The one-day chief minister had administered from Gairsain, the summer capital of the state.

**Note:** She had in 2018 become the Chief Minister of Uttarakhand Bal Vidhan Sabha. In 2019, she went to Thailand to take part in Girls' International Leadership.

### **Madhya Pradesh CM launches 'PANKH Abhiyan'**

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan launched the 'PANKH Abhiyan' under the 'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao' scheme in order to aid in empowerment and growth of the girl child on the occasion of National Girl Child Day (24 January).

**PANKH:** 'P' stands for protection, 'A' for awareness of their rights, 'N' for nutrition, 'K' for knowledge and 'H' for health. The abhiyan will go on for a year.

**Facts about Madhya Pradesh:** Recently, UNESCO has allotted Panna Tiger Reserve in Madhya Pradesh 'Biosphere Reserve' status.

### **Uttar Pradesh becomes the first state in the country with two airstrips on expressways**

One airstrip is on Lucknow-Agra Expressway while the other is near Kurebhar on Purvanchal Expressway (3,300-metre-long airstrip).

Airstrips on expressways are designed to facilitate emergency landing and take-off of fighter planes.

**Facts about Uttar Pradesh:** Recently, 'Udyam Sarathi' app was launched on UP Diwas by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath to promote entrepreneurship among youth and help them explore new opportunities for self-employment.

### **Maharashtra launches 'Jail Tourism' initiative from Pune's Yerawada Jail**

The Prison Department of Maharashtra launched its jail tourism initiative starting with more than 150-year-old Yerawada Central Prison in Pune.

**About Yerawada Jail:** It is the largest jail in Maharashtra and one of the largest maximum security prisons in the country. Several freedom fighters including Mahatma Gandhi, Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak were imprisoned at Yerawada jail. Poona Pact between Gandhi and Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar was signed here.

### **Meghalaya selected for Special Award for Information Technology applications in Elections**

The Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, Meghalaya was selected for a Special Award for Information Technology applications in Elections by the Election Commission of India (ECI), in the National Best Electoral Practices Awards-2020.

**Facts about Meghalaya:**

**Capital:** Shillong

**Governor:** Satya Pal Malik

**Chief Minister:** Conrad Sangma

## **Important News: India**

**PM delivers inaugural address at National Metrology Conclave**

The Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi delivered inaugural address at the National Metrology Conclave 2021.

The theme of the conclave is 'Metrology for the Inclusive Growth of the Nation'.

He dedicated 'National Atomic Timescale' and 'Bhartiya Nirdeshak Dravya Pranali' to the Nation and laid the Foundation Stone of 'National Environmental Standards Laboratory'.

The Conclave was organised by Council of Scientific and Industrial Research-National Physical Laboratory (CSIR-NPL), New Delhi, on its 75th year of inception.

**Note:** Bhartiya Nirdeshak Dravya would help the industry to make quality products in sectors like Heavy metals, Pesticides, Pharma and Textiles by drafting a 'Certified Reference Material System'.

### **MEA launches 'Global Pravasi Rishta Portal' and mobile app**

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) launched the Global Pravasi Rishta Portal and app in order to connect with nearly 3.12 crore Indians across the world.

The app aims at creating a three-way communication between the Indian missions, ministry and the Indian diaspora.

The app will be used by the Indian nationals and diaspora, while the portal will be used by the Indian missions.

### **Indian Railways completes 180 Kmph speed trail run of Vistadome Tourist Coach**

The vistadome tourist coaches are European-style coaches, with technologically advanced features for improving passenger's comfort and offer a panoramic view during the train journey. These vistadome coaches mostly operate in mountain railways.

The coach has been manufactured by the Integral Coach Factory (ICF), Chennai.

**Note:** Earlier, the first vistadome Linke Hofmann Busch (LHB) coach for the broad gauge (BG) lines was cleared for the 180 km per hour oscillation trial.

### **Union home minister Amit Shah inaugurates "National Police K-9 Journal."**

The publication of the Police K9 Journal is another step in creating an ecosystem in the country to train and learn on augmenting this vital resource.

This is a unique initiative which will further enrich the subjects related to Police Service Canine (K-9) (PSK) teams in the country.

**Note:** A special 'Police K9 Cell' was established in November 2019 under the Police Modernisation Division of the ministry of home affairs with the mandate of 'Mainstreaming and Augmentation of Police Service K9s in the country'.

### **PM inaugurates 450 km Kochi-Mangaluru natural gas pipeline**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the 450-km Kochi-Mangaluru natural gas pipeline at a cost of Rs 3,000 crore built by GAIL (India) Ltd. marks an important milestone towards the creation of "One Nation One Gas Grid".

The pipeline will carry natural gas from Kochi in Kerala through Ernakulam, Thrissur, Palakkad, Malappuram, Kozhikode, Kannur and Kasargod districts to Mangaluru in Dakshina Kannada district of Karnataka.

**Note:** Natural gas pipeline network will be doubled in 5-6 years and CNG stations will be raised to 10,000 from current 1,500.

### **PM dedicates to nation new Section of Western Dedicated Freight Corridor and flags off world's first Double Stack Long Haul Container Train**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi dedicated to the nation the 306-Kilometre long New Rewari-New Madar Section of the Western Dedicated Freight Corridor.

He also flagged off the world's first Double Stack Long Haul 1.5 Kilometre long Container Train hauled by electric traction from New Ateli -New Kishangarh.

### **Rashtriya Kamdhenu Aayog to hold online exam on cow science**

Rashtriya Kamdhenu Aayog (RKA) has announced that it will hold a countrywide online examination on 'gau vigyan' (cow science) on February 25.

This is the first-ever exam of this kind-'Kamdhenu Gau Vigyan Prachar Prasar Examination'. This exam will be held annually.

**Note:** RKA comes under the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying. It was set up by the Centre in February 2019, and is aimed at "protection and development of cows".

### **Government of India's UJALA and SLNP completes six years of Illuminating India efficiently**

Launched by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi on January 5, 2015, the Government of India's zero subsidy Unnat Jyoti by Affordable LEDs for All (UJALA) and Street Lighting National Programme (SLNP) marks their sixth anniversary.

Both the programmes are being implemented by Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL), a joint venture of PSUs under the Ministry of Power, Government of India since their inception.

**Note:** EESL has an ambitious plan in the SLNP portfolio for next 4-5 years where it intends to bring investment to the tune of INR 8,000 crores by 2024 by covering the entire rural India. It is expected that more than 30 million LED streetlights would be retrofitted/installed by EESL.

### **National Youth Parliament Festival 2021**

The Finals of National Youth Parliament Festival (NYPF) 2021 was held in the Central Hall of Parliament.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the Valedictory Function of National Youth Parliament Festival 2021.

The objective of the National Youth Parliament Festival is to hear the voice of youth between 18 and less than 25 years of age, who will join various careers in coming years, including public services.

The 2nd National Youth Parliament Festival 2021 was launched on 23rd of December 2020 across the country at district, state and national level.

**Note:** The first NYPF 2019 was organised from 12 January to 27 February 2019 at District, State and National level.

### **51st International Film Festival of India (IFFI)**

From 16 January to 24 January, 2021, the 51st Edition of the International Film Festival of India is going to be held in Goa.

On 11 January, 2021, the International Film Festival of India announced this edition's Country in Focus. **For the 51st IFFI, the Country in Focus is Bangladesh.**

**About International Film Festival of India:** It was founded in 1952. It is conducted jointly by the Directorate of Film Festivals (under Ministry of Information and Broadcasting) and the state Government of Goa.

### **Suriname's Indian-origin President to be Chief Guest at Republic Day 2021**

Chandrikapersad Santokhi, Indian-origin President of Suriname, will be the chief guest at India's Republic Day Parade on January 26, 2021.

**Note:** The Suriname President was earlier the Chief Guest at the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Convention, which was conducted by the Ministry of External Affairs.

India had initially invited UK PM Boris Johnson to be the Republic Day Chief Guest but the British PM later decided to cancel his visit due to the escalating COVID-19 situation in the United Kingdom.

### **The Supreme Court stayed the implementation of the three farm laws and set up a committee**

The court formed a four-member committee of experts to listen to the grievances of the farmers on the farm laws and the views of the government and make recommendations.

The committee will comprise agricultural economist Ashok Gulati, Pramod Kumar Joshi, Director South Asia International Food Policy Research Institute, Anil Ghanwat of the Sethkari Sangathan and B S Mann of the Bharatiya Kisan Union.

**The laws whose implementation has been suspended are-** (i) The Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, 2020 (ii) Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Act, 2020 (iii) Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act, 2020

### **Heritage Conservation Committee approves construction of new parliament building**

A few days ago, the Supreme Court cleared the decks for the ambitious Central Vista Project, which covers a three-km stretch from Rashtrapati Bhavan to India Gate in Lutyens' Delhi, by upholding the environmental clearance and the notification for change in land use.

Additional secretary of the Union Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry is the chairman of the Heritage Conservation Committee.

**Note:** The Central Vista revamp, announced in September, 2019 envisages a new triangular Parliament building, with a seating capacity for 900 to 1,200 MPs that is to be constructed by August, 2022 when the country will be celebrating its 75th Independence Day. The common Central Secretariat is likely to be built by 2024 under the project.

### **Prime Minister Narendra Modi flags off eight trains connecting different regions of the country to Kevadiya in Gujarat**

This was the first time in the history of Railways that trains have been flagged off for the same destinations from different corners of the country.

The new connectivity between Kevadiya and Chennai, Varanasi, Rewa, Dadar and Delhi along with MEMU service between Kevadiya and Pratapnagar and broad gauging of Dabhoi-Chandod and new Line between Chandod- Kevadiya will script a new chapter in the development of Kevadiya.

**Note:** Kevadiya Station is India's first railway station to start with green building certification.

The Statue of Unity, situated near Kevadiya in Gujarat's Narmada district, is the world's tallest statue.

### **3rd phase of PMKVY (Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana) launched**

The 3<sup>rd</sup> phase of PMKVY was launched by the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship in 600 districts across the country.

Skill India Mission-PMKVY 3.0 envisages training of eight lakh candidates over a scheme period of 2020-2021 with an outlay of Rs 949 crore.

**Note:** The government had launched the PMKVY scheme in 2015 to mobilize youth to take up skill training with the aim of increasing productivity and aligning the training and certification to the needs of the country. The scheme was revamped as PMKVY -2 in 2016 with an aim to train one crore youth by the year 2020.

### **First National Road Safety Month 2021**

The first-ever National Road Safety Month (January 18-February 17) was inaugurated by Union Minister for Defence Shri Rajnath Singh and Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Shri Nitin Gadkari to build awareness about road safety and reduce road accidents in India.

The theme is "Sadak Suraksha- Jeevan Raksha".

**Note:** During the last few years, a road safety week was being organised, but considering the importance of the issue, a month-long programme has been made this year.

As per a recent report, around 400 people die every day in India due to road accidents. India tops in the number of road accident deaths across the 195 countries.

### **Ministry of Railways approves the naming of Train No. 12311/12312 Howrah-Kalka Mail as "Netaji Express"**

Howrah -Kalka Mail is a very popular and one of the oldest trains of Indian Railways. The Howrah-Kalka Mail is running between Howrah (Eastern Railway) and Kalka (Northern Railway) via Delhi.

### **IIT Roorkee collaborates with MoRTH to focus on teaching & training for Development of Highway Infrastructure**

Indian Institute of Technology, IIT Roorkee has collaborated with the Minister of Road Transport & Highways (MoRTH) to focus on research and development, teaching & training for the Development of Highway Infrastructure.

This collaboration of MoRTH with IIT-Roorkee will strengthen R&D activities in the Road Sector and the Chair professor is expected to provide leadership in conducting and coordinating research, development, and teaching in the area of Development of Highway Infrastructure.

### **Bharat Parv 2021 to be inaugurated by Lok Sabha Speaker Shri Om Birla on 26th January 2021**

The annual event Bharat Parv is being organised on a virtual platform from 26<sup>th</sup> Jan to 31<sup>st</sup> Jan 2021 wherein themed pavilions of multiple States & UTs will showcase their tourism destinations, cuisine, handicraft and other features.

**Note:** Ministry of Tourism, Government of India organizes Bharat Parv every year since 2016 in front of the ramparts of the Red Fort on the occasion of Republic Day Celebrations from 26th to 31st January.

### **Republic Day parade: Uttar Pradesh wins best tableau award**

Uttar Pradesh was adjudged the best tableau among the 32 tableaux that participated in the Republic Day Parade this year.

The tableau of Uttar Pradesh was based on the theme Ayodhya: Cultural Heritage of Uttar Pradesh.

The tableau of Tripura was adjudged the second best followed by Uttarakhand's at third.

## **Important News: World**

### **India begins its two-year tenure as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) on January 1, 2021**

In 2021, India, Norway, Kenya, Ireland and Mexico join non-permanent members Estonia, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Tunisia and Vietnam and the five permanent members China, France, Russia, UK and the US in the Council.

It will be India's 8<sup>th</sup> term.

India will be UNSC President in August 2021 and will preside over the Council again for a month in 2022.

### **Denmark's Oscar nominee 'Another Round' to be opening movie at 51st IFFI in Goa**

The 51st International Film Festival of India (IFFI) will be held in Goa from 16 to 24 January. The ceremony will begin with Thomas Winterberg's film Another Round.

**Note:** The International Jury for 51st edition of International Film Festival of India has been announced with eminent filmmakers from across the world.

**Argentine filmmaker Pablo Cesar** has been named as the Chairman of the jury. The other jury members are Prasanna Vithanage of Sri Lanka, Abu Bakr Shawky of Austria, Priyadarshan of India and Rubaiyat Hossain of Bangladesh.

### **Japan to join Five Eyes alliance**

**Note:** The **Five Eyes** is an alliance of five major nations including the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, New Zealand and Australia.

The US and the UK formed a secret treaty known as the 'BRUSA Agreement' in May 1943 for cooperation in intelligence sharing.

This agreement was later formalized as the 'UKUSA Agreement' in 1946. The Five Eyes was an outcome of the UKUSA Agreement.

### **US Congress passes "Malala Yousafzai Scholarship Act" for Pakistani women**

The US Congress has passed the "Malala Yousafzai Scholarship Act" which will expand the number of scholarships available to Pakistani women to receive higher education under a merit and needs-based programme.

Passed by the House of Representatives in March 2020, the bill was passed by the United States Senate by a voice vote on January 1.

**Note:** On October 10, 2014, Malala shared the Nobel Peace Prize with Indian children's rights activist Kailash Satyarthi for her "struggle against the suppression of children and young people and for the right of all children to education".

### **Japan to launch the first wood-based satellite by 2023**

Japan's Sumitomo Forestry firm and Kyoto University goals to launch the world's first wood-based space satellite to fight the drawback of space junk.

**Note:** According to the European Space Agency (ESA) statistical model, there are greater than 130 million items of anthropogenic space debris due to human actions. The debris can journey at a pace of greater than 22,300 mph and may affect different satellites.

### **Cabinet approves signing of Memorandum of Cooperation between India and Japan on Partnership in "Specified Skilled Worker"**

The present Memorandum of Cooperation would set an institutional mechanism for partnership and cooperation between India and Japan on sending and accepting skilled Indian workers, who have qualified the required skill and Japanese language test, to work in fourteen specified sectors in Japan.

These Indian workers would be granted a new status of residence of "Specified Skilled Worker" by the Government of Japan.

### **India to chair 3 important committees of United Nations Security Council (UNSC)**

India began its eighth term as a non-permanent member of the UNSC on January 4, 2021.

The 3 key subsidiary bodies of UNSC are **Taliban Sanctions Committee** (also called the 1988 Sanctions Committee), **Counter Terrorism Committee** (for 2022) and **Libya Sanctions Committee**.

### **India and Japan Sign MoU to enhance cooperation in the field of ICT (Information and Communications Technology)**

MoU was signed by Union Minister for Communications, Electronics and IT Ravi Shankar Prasad and the Japanese Minister for Internal Affairs and Communications Takeda Ryota.

Department of Telecom, Government of India and Ministry of Communications, Government of Japan will enhance mutual cooperation in the field of 5G technologies, telecom security, submarine optical fiber cable system to islands of India, spectrum management, smart cities, high altitude platform for broadband in unconnected areas, disaster management and public safety etc.

### **Donald Trump becomes first US President to be impeached twice**

Donald Trump became the first US president in history to be impeached twice when the House of Representatives voted to charge him with inciting mob attack on Congress.

The second impeachment of Donald Trump occurred on January 13, 2021, one week before his term was due to expire.

He has been previously impeached in December 2019 for abuse of power and obstruction of Congress.

### **Uganda's President Museveni wins sixth term**

Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni has scored a decisive election victory to win a sixth term.

The 76-year-old Museveni has been in power since 1986 and is one of Africa's longest-serving leaders.

**Facts about Uganda:** Country in East Africa

**Capital:** Kampala

**Currency:** Ugandan shilling

### **Russia withdraws from Open Skies Treaty**

Russia announced that it was leaving the Open Skies Treaty (OST), an accord between over 30 countries that allows participants to fly unarmed reconnaissance flights over any part of their fellow member states.

In November 2020, the United States left the OST.

**Facts about Open Skies Treaty:** It establishes a program of unarmed aerial surveillance flights over the entire territory of its participants. It entered into force on January 1, 2002.

### **Iran, six other nations lose right to vote in UNGA**

Iran and six other nations lost their right to vote in the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) because they have not paid their dues.

The other countries losing their UNGA voting rights are Niger, Libya, the Central African Republic, Congo Brazzaville, South Sudan and Zimbabwe.

Three more countries - Comoros, Sao Tome and Principe and Somalia - will be allowed to continue to vote despite missing dues payments, because they sufficiently demonstrated that they are incapable of paying.

**Note: Under Article 19 of the Charter of the United Nations,** a Member State in arrears in the payment of its dues in an amount that equals or exceeds the contributions due for two preceding years can lose its vote in the General Assembly.

### **United Nations Human Rights Office urges release of Bhima Koregaon Activists**

The UN Human Rights office has expressed serious concern about the detention of human rights defenders in India, including those arrested in the controversial Bhima Koregaon case, and has urged the Indian authorities to release the detainees “at the very least on bail”.

**Note: 2018 Bhima Koregaon violence** refers to violence during an annual celebratory gathering on 1 January 2018 at Bhima Koregaon to mark the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Bhima Koregaon.

A small village in Pune district of Maharashtra, Bhima-Koregaon is associated with an important phase of Maratha history. On January 1, 1818, a Dalit-dominated British Army had defeated a Peshwa army, led by Peshwa Bajirao II, in Koregaon.

### **First-ever treaty to ban nuclear weapons enters into force**

The first-ever treaty to ban nuclear weapons (Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons-TPNW) entered into force, hailed as a historic step to rid the world of its deadliest weapons but strongly opposed by the world's nuclear-armed nations.

When the treaty was approved by the U.N. General Assembly in July 2017, more than 120 approved it. But none of the nine countries known or believed to possess nuclear weapons - the United States, Russia, Britain, China, France, India, Pakistan, North Korea and Israel - supported it and neither did the 30-nation NATO alliance.

The treaty received its 50th ratification on 24 October 2020 and came into effect from 22 January 2021.

### **Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa has won a second term as Portugal's president**

The 72-year-old former leader of the Social Democratic Party won 61 percent of the vote.

**Facts about Portugal:** Portugal is a southern European country on the Iberian Peninsula, bordering Spain.

**Capital:** Lisbon

**Currency:** Euro

### **UN report on Ageing Dams**

Ageing Dams in India, US, other nations pose growing threat according to UN report. The report, titled '**Ageing water infrastructure: An emerging global risk**' and compiled by United Nations University's Canadian-based Institute for Water, Environment and Health, says most of the 58,700 large dams worldwide were constructed between 1930 and 1970 with a design life of 50 to 100 years.

In India, there are over 1,115 large dams that will be roughly 50 years old in 2025, more than 4,250 large dams in the country will be over 50 years old in 2050 and 64 large dams will be more than 150 years old in 2050.

The report said that approximately 3.5 million people are at risk if India's Mullaperiyar dam in Kerala, built over 100 years ago, "were to fail".

**Note:** The report said that 32,716 large dams (55% of the world's total) are found in just four Asian countries: China, India, Japan, and South Korea - a majority of which will reach the 50-year threshold relatively soon.

### **India pledges \$150,000 for UN peacebuilding**

TS Tirumurti, permanent representative of India to the United Nations announced a pledge of USD 150,000 to activities of the UN fund for 2021.

UN Secretary General António Guterres expressed that he was grateful to the countries that committed to provide over \$439 million in support of the UN's work toward peacebuilding & conflict prevention through the UN Peacebuilding Fund.

As a part of its 2020-24 strategy, the Peacebuilding Fund has put forth a comprehensive scenario covering a horizon of five years. The Fund requires 1.5 billion dollars for 2020-2024.

## **Economy**

### **'Toycathon 2021' to promote manufacturing of indigenous toys**

Union Minister of Education Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' and Union Minister of Women and Child Development Smriti Irani launched a virtual toy hackathon 'Toycathon 2021'.

The ToyCathon2021 is being organised to create awareness among school students about the rich cultural heritage of our country.

**Note:** The toys market is Rs 7 lakh crores in the world. In our country, 80 per cent of toys are imported.

### **IRDAI to launch standard home insurance policy- Bharat Griha Raksha**

Bharat Griha Raksha is an effective home insurance policy that offers coverage against a wide range of perils, like fire, natural catastrophes, impact damage of any kind, riot, strike, malicious damages, acts of terrorism, and bursting and overflowing of water tanks etc.

**Note:** The **IRDAI** (The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India) had issued guidelines on 4 January, announcing that the Standard Fire and Special Perils (SFSP) Policy provided for in the erstwhile All India Fire Tariff (AIFT) 2001 will be replaced by the following standard products that shall be mandatorily offered by all general insurers from 1 April.

### **Union Minister for Railways Piyush Goyal launched Indian Railways' Freight Business Development Portal as the one-stop solution for all the needs of freight customers.**

The new portal will be a game-changer in ensuring ease of doing business with Railways as it aims to bring more transparency and professional support.

The portal will ensure that all operations stay customer-centric, reduce the costs for logistics providers, provide an online tracking facility for suppliers, and also simplify the process of goods transportation.

### **RBI cancels the licence of Vasantdada Nagari Sahakari Bank Ltd., Osmanabad, Maharashtra**

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has cancelled the licence of Vasantdada Nagari Sahakari Bank Ltd., Osmanabad, Maharashtra with effect from the close of business on January 11, 2021.

Consequent to the cancellation of its licence, Vasantdada Nagari Sahakari Bank Ltd., Osmanabad, Maharashtra is prohibited from conducting the business of 'banking' which includes acceptance of deposits and repayment of deposits as defined in Section 5(b) read with Section 56 of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949 with immediate effect.

### **First time in history, Union Budget 2021 to be paperless**

Union Budget 2021, slated to be presented on February 1, is going to be completely paperless in the wake of the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

The Budget papers - the Union Budget and Economic Survey - will not get printed, soft copies will be provided.

### **"New Foreign Trade Policy 2021-2026" to be rolled out from April**

Union Ministry of Commerce and Industry said that India's new Foreign Trade Policy (FTP) 2021-2026, under formulation, will come into effect from April 1, 2021, for five years and will strive to make the country a leader in international trade.

**Note:** District Export Hubs Initiative will be an important part of the new FTP.

### **Tesla incorporates fully owned subsidiary in Bengaluru for its electric vehicles**

US-based Electric car maker, Tesla has incorporated a fully owned subsidiary in Bengaluru as a first step to set up an R&D unit and a manufacturing plant for its electric vehicles in the country.

Tesla has registered its 100 percent subsidiary, as - Tesla India Motors and Energy Pvt Ltd, according to disclosures with the Ministry of Corporate Affairs.

### **Reserve Bank of India has set up a working group to study digital lending activities of the regulated and unregulated players**

The group will suggest steps to regulate digital lending including online lending platform and mobile lending.

The six-member panel comprising four RBI internal and two external members is expected to submit its report within three months. Jayant Kumar Dash, Executive Director, RBI will be chairman of the group.

### **Flipkart, NITI Aayog collaborate to enhance Women Entrepreneurship Platform**

In an effort to enhance community experience for women entrepreneurs in India, e-commerce marketplace Flipkart and NITI Aayog have come together to launch the revamped Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP).

**Note:** The idea of the platform was first mooted by NITI Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant who announced the setting-up of a Women Entrepreneurship Platform at 8th Global Entrepreneurship Summit held in Hyderabad during 2017, with an overarching theme of 'Women First, Prosperity for All.'

### **RBI proposes 4-tier structure for tighter regulation of NBFCs**

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has proposed a tighter regulatory framework for non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) by creating a four-tier structure with a progressive increase in intensity of regulation.

The regulatory and supervisory framework of NBFCs should be based on a four-layered structure: NBFC-Base Layer, NBFC-Middle Layer, NBFC-Upper Layer, NBFC-Top Layer.

**Note: Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC)** is a company registered under the Companies Act, 1956 engaged in the business of loans and advances.

#### **Facts about RBI:**

**Headquarters:** Mumbai

**Established:** 1 April 1935

**Governor:** Shaktikanta Das (25<sup>th</sup> Governor)

### **Cabinet approved Minimum Support Price (MSP) of Copra for 2021 season**

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, has given its approval for the Minimum Support Price (MSP) of copra for the 2021 season.

The MSP for Fair Average Quality (FAQ) of milling copra has been increased, by Rs.375/-, to Rs. 10335/- per quintal for 2021 season from Rs. 9960/- per quintal in 2020.

The MSP for ball copra has been increased, by Rs.300/-, to Rs. 10,600/- per quintal for 2021 season from Rs. 10300/- per quintal in 2020.

The approval is based on recommendations of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP).

**Note:** India is number one in production and productivity of copra in the World. It is mainly grown in the 12 coastal states.

### **India: Total FDI inflow of US\$ 58.37 billion received during April to November, 2020**

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) is a major driver of economic growth and an important source of non-debt finance for the economic development of India.

India received a total FDI inflow of US\$ 58.37 billion during April to November, 2020. It is the highest ever for the first 8 months of a financial year and 22% higher as compared to the first 8 months of 2019-20 (US\$ 47.67 billion).

**Note: UN report:** FDI inflows into India jump by 13% to \$57 billion in 2020.

The report said China became the largest recipient of FDI, attracting an estimated \$163 billion in inflows, followed by the US with \$134 billion.

### **Indian economy to report narrow contraction of 8% in FY21, 11.5% GDP growth in FY22: IMF**

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) on January 26, 2021 revised its gross domestic product (GDP) projections upward for the current fiscal year and FY 2022 in its forecast update submitted to the World Economic Outlook report.

The IMF has predicted India's economy to **contract narrowly by 8 percent** in the current financial year in comparison to the earlier **projected contraction of 10.3 percent**.

India is predicted to **grow by 11.5% in 2021-22** and 6.8% in 2022-23.

The IMF has projected the world economy to contract by 3.5 percent in 2020.

The global economy is projected to grow 5.5% in 2021 and 4.2% in 2022.

**Note: FICCI** survey forecasts 8% GDP contraction in FY21.

Indian economy may grow at 7.3% in the calendar year 2021 by the **United Nations**.

## **Awards and Honors**

### **Pt. Satish Vyas conferred upon the prestigious Tansen Samman 2020**

Madhya Pradesh recently hosted Tansen Music Festival in the city of Gwalior. In the inaugural ceremony renowned santoor player Pt. Satish Vyas was conferred upon the prestigious Tansen Samman.

Bhopal-based institution Abhinav Kala Parishad was honoured with Raja Mansingh Tomar award.

Tansen Samaroh is organized jointly by Ustad Alauddin Khan Kala Evam Sangeet Academy and Department of Culture, Govt. of Madhya Pradesh.

### **Indian Railways bags 13 awards at the 'National Energy Conservation awards 2020'**

Indian Railway has bagged 13 awards in three prestigious categories of National Energy Conservation Awards (NECA) for the year 2020, organized by the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE), Ministry of Power.

Some important awards are: In the transport category', Western Railway has been awarded the First Prize.

In the Building Category, Divisional Railway Manager's offices at Bhavnagar have won the first prize.

In Railway workshops subcategory, Diesel Loco Shed, South Central Railway, Vijayawada has bagged the First prize.

### **Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister of Health and family Welfare inaugurated the 5th National Kayakalp Awards**

The Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India launched a National Initiative 'Kayakalp' on 15th May 2015 to ensure hygiene, sanitation and cleanliness in Public Health Facilities in India.

Some Important awards are: **AIIMS (All India Institutes of Medical Sciences) Bhubaneswar** has been adjudged as the best central government hospital under B category for cleanliness for third consecutive year. It had earlier received the award in 2018 as well as in 2019 for becoming the second cleanest hospital among category B hospitals.

**JIPMER (Jawaharlal Institute of Postgraduate Medical Education and Research)** has been awarded the second prize for the year 2019-20. The award was for the category Group A Central government health facilities. JIPMER had bagged the second place in 2018-19 and third place in 2017-18.

### **Shri Amresh Kumar Chaudhary has been awarded prestigious "Chief of Army Staff Commendation."**

Shri Amresh Kumar Chaudhary has been awarded prestigious "Chief of Army Staff Commendation" for his outstanding contribution to Armed Forces during critical period of Covid19 pandemic and its various operations.

He is currently working as Chief Controller in Mil Rail.

**About Mil Rail:** Mil Rail is responsible for overall coordination, strategic planning & execution of Railway Logistics support to Defence forces during peace & emergency situations.

**The Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MoTA) received the coveted “SKOCH Challenger Award”-“Best Performance in e-Governance” for its various initiatives taken during last year**

The Ministry also received **3 Gold Awards** for its initiatives namely “Eco-Rehabilitation of tribal villages through Innovative design in water management using Ice-stupa”, Swasthya: Tribal Health and Nutritional Portal and the Performance Dashboard “Empowering Tribals Transforming India”.

SKOCH Challenger Award conferred to the Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR) under “Transparency in Governance” category for IT-led initiatives and transformational reforms.

**Note:** The SKOCH Challenger Award was given virtually during the 70<sup>th</sup> SKOCH Summit (SKOCH Public Policy Forum).

**Indian Mathematician Nikhil Srivastava named joint winner of Michael and Sheila Held Prize**

Nikhil Srivastava from the University of California, Berkeley, Adam Marcus, EPFL and Daniel Alan Spielman from Yale University will receive the 2021 Michael and Sheila Held Prize.

**Note: Michael and Sheila Held Prize** is presented annually and honours outstanding, innovative, creative, and influential research in the areas of combinatorial and discrete optimisation, or related parts of computer science, such as the design and analysis of algorithms and complexity theory.

It was established in 2017 by the bequest of Michael and Sheila Held.

**Coal India arms NCL, CCL and WCL get the Coal Minister’s Award 2020**

Union Minister of Coal & Mines Shri Pralhad Joshi presented “Coal Minister’s Award” to three coal companies of Coal India Ltd. - Northern Coalfields Ltd (NCL), Central Coalfields Ltd (CCL) and Western Coalfields Ltd (WCL).

Shri Joshi also launched ‘**Project Passion**’-the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) of Coal India Ltd (CIL) which will help improve business performance and growth of the company with enhanced data integrity.

The Minister inaugurated a **new Coal Handling Plant (CHP)** at Krishnashila Coal Project of NCL.

**Padma Awards 2021**

Padma Awards, the highest civilian award, which were instituted in 1954, is announced every year on the occasion of Republic Day.

This year the President has approved conferment of 119 Padma Awards. The list comprises 7 Padma Vibhushan, 10 Padma Bhushan and 102 Padma Shri

Awards. 29 of the awardees are women and the list also includes 10 persons from the category of Foreigners/NRI/PIO/OCI, 16 Posthumous awardees and 1 transgender awardee.

**7 persons will get Padma Vibhushan-** They include former Japan Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, sculptor Sudarshan Sahoo, Islamic scholar Maulana Wahiduddin Khan, Eminent Singer S P Balasubramaniam (Posthumous), Dr. Belle Monappa Hegde (Medicine), Narinder Singh Kapany (Posthumous) from United States of America and B. B. Lal (Archaeology).

**10 persons will get Padma Bhushan-** They include former Lok Sabha Speaker Sumitra Mahajan, Singer K S Chithra, prominent poet Chandrashekhara Kambara and retired Civil Servant Nripendra Misra. Former Gujarat Chief Minister late Keshubhai Patel, Former Assam Chief Minister late Tarun Gogoi and Former Union Minister late Ram Vilas Paswan will be honoured with Padma Bhushan posthumously.

**102 persons will get Padma Shri-** They include Social Worker Sindutai Sapkal, Musician Bombay Jayashri, British film director Peter Brook and Greek Indologist Nicholas Kazanas. Former Governor of Goa late Mridula Sinha, Spanish-Indian Jesuit priest and author late Father Vallés will be given the award posthumously.

**Note: Maha Vir Chakra Award:** Colonel B Santosh Babu, the Commanding Officer of 16 Bihar Regiment, who lost his life during the Galwan Valley clash last year, will be posthumously awarded with Maha Vir Chakra.

### **Danish World War II drama 'Into the Darkness' bags Golden Peacock Award at 51st IFFI**

The epic World War II film 'Into the Darkness' (De forbandede år) which portrays the story of a Danish electronics factory owner who is forced to produce for the occupying Nazi forces, has won the coveted Golden Peacock Award at the just-concluded 51st edition of the International Film Festival of India (IFFI). It is directed by Anders Refn.

### **Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar- 2021**

32 children have been awarded the Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar-2021.

**About Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar:** It, formerly known as the National Child Award for Exceptional Achievement, is India's Highest Civilian Honour bestowed upon exceptional achievers under the age of 18.

The award was instituted by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India in 1996 to recognize children with exceptional abilities and outstanding status in various fields such as arts, culture, design, innovation, research, sports, social service and bravery.

### **ICC announces introduction of 'ICC Player of the Month' awards**

The award will recognise and celebrate the best performances of both male and female cricketers across all forms of international cricket.

An independent ICC Voting Academy comprising former players, broadcasters, and journalists from around the world, will team up with fans to vote for the ICC Men's Player of the Month and ICC Women's Player of the Month.

**Facts about ICC (International Cricket Council):**

**Chairperson:** Greg Barclay

**CEO:** Manu Sawhney

**Headquarters:** Dubai, United Arab Emirates

## Defense

### **Maiden flight trial of SAHAYAK-NG, Air Droppable Container**

Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) along with Indian Navy conducted the successful maiden test trial of 'SAHAYAK-NG' India's first indigenously designed and developed Air Dropped Container from IL 38SD aircraft (Indian Navy) off the coast of Goa.

The trial was conducted by Indian Navy to enhance its operational logistics capabilities and provide critical engineering stores to ships.

Two DRDO laboratories i.e. NSTL, Visakhapatnam and ADRDE, Agra were involved in the development of SAHAYAK-NG container along the industry partner M/s Avantel for GPS integration.

**Note:** SAHAYAK-NG is an advanced version of SAHAYAK Mk I.

### **Myanmar Navy inducts Indian submarine INS Sindhuvir**

Myanmar formally commissioned INS Sindhuvir into its Navy. India had delivered it to Myanmar in October 2020.

The Myanmar Navy named the Indian ship UMS Minye Theinkhathu.

It is the first submarine in the Myanmar Navy's arsenal. The former Soviet-era submarine was in operation in the Indian Navy since 1988.

**Note:** India and Myanmar share a long 725-kilometre maritime boundary along the Bay of Bengal.

### **BEL signs contract with Indian Navy for Initial supply of indigenously developed Laser Dazzlers**

Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) has signed a contract with Indian Navy for initially supply 20 Light Amplification by Stimulated Emission of Radiation Dazzlers (Laser Dazzlers).

The **Laser Dazzler** is used as a non-lethal method for warning and stopping suspicious vehicles/boats/aircrafts/UAVs/pirates etc. from approaching secured areas during both day and night.

**Note:** Ministry of Defence has signed contract with Bharat Electronics Limited for procurement of 10 Lynx U2 Fire Control systems for frontline warships of Indian Navy under Buy (Indian) category.

### **Sea Vigil-21: Indian Navy starts second edition of coastal defence exercise**

The second edition of the coastal defence exercise 'Sea Vigil-21' has been started on January 12 and will continue till January 13, 2021.

The exercise aims at assessing India's preparedness in the domain of coastal defence and maritime security.

The exercise by the Indian Navy will be undertaken along the entire 7,516 km coastline and Exclusive Economic Zone of India.

**Note:** The inaugural edition of the exercise was conducted in January 2019. This is a biennial exercise.

### **Cabinet approves Procurement of 83 Light Combat Aircrafts (LCA) 'Tejas' from HAL (Hindustan Aeronautics Limited) for Indian Air Force**

The Cabinet has approved procurement of 73 LCA Tejas Mk-1A fighter aircrafts and 10 LCA Tejas Mk-1 Trainer aircrafts at the cost of Rs. 45,696 Crore along with Design and Development of Infrastructure sanctions worth Rs.1,202 Crore from Hindustan Aeronautics Limited.

It is the first "Buy (Indian-Indigenously Designed, Developed and Manufactured)" category procurement of combat aircrafts with an indigenous content of 50% which will progressively reach 60% by the end of the programme.

### **India's first indigenously developed 9mm Machine Pistol**

India's first indigenous 9mm Machine Pistol has been jointly developed by DRDO and Indian Army.

The Machine Pistol fires the in-service 9mm ammunition and sports an upper receiver made from aircraft grade Aluminium and lower receiver from carbon fibre. 3D Printing process has been used in designing and prototyping of various parts including trigger components.

The weapon is aptly named "Asmi" meaning "Pride", "Self-Respect" & "Hard Work".

### **DRDO hands over Motor Bike Ambulance Rakshita to CRPF**

Institute of Nuclear Medicine and Allied Sciences (INMAS), Delhi-based DRDO laboratory, handed over Rakshita, a bike-based casualty transport emergency vehicle to the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF).

The bike ambulance will help in overcoming the problems faced by Indian security forces and emergency health care providers.

**Facts about DRDO (Defence Research and Development Organisation):** It is an agency under the Department of Defence Research and Development in the Ministry of Defence of the Government of India.

**Founded:** 1958

**Headquarters:** New Delhi

**Secretary, Department of Defence R&D and Chairman:** Dr G Satheesh Reddy

### **Five day Indo-French Air exercise 'Ex Desert Knight-21' begins in Jodhpur**

Indian Air Force and French Air and Space Force are conducting a bilateral Air exercise, Ex Desert Knight-21 in Jodhpur (20-24 January).

The French side will participate with Rafale, Airbus A-330 Multi-Role Tanker Transport, A-400M Tactical Transport aircraft. The Indian Air Force (IAF) aircraft participating in the exercise will include Rafale, Mirage 2000, Sukhoi-30 MKI among other aircraft.

**Note:** Defence exercises between India and France are **Garuda (Air), Varuna (Naval) and Shakti (Army)**

### **Successful flight test of Smart Anti-Airfield Weapon (SAAW)**

DRDO successfully conducted a captive and release trial of indigenously developed Smart Anti-Airfield Weapon (SAAW) from Hawk-I of Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) off the Odisha coast.

SAAW is indigenously designed and developed by DRDO's Research Centre Imarat (RCI) Hyderabad.

This is 125 Kg class smart weapon, capable of engaging ground enemy airfield assets such as radars, bunkers, taxi tracks, and runways etc. up to a range of 100 kms.

### **Successful maiden test launch of Akash-NG Missile**

DRDO conducted the successful maiden launch of Akash-NG (New Generation) Missile from Integrated Test Range off the coast of Odisha.

Akash-NG is a new generation Surface to Air Missile meant for use by Indian Air Force.

The Akash-NG system has been developed with better deployability compared to other similar systems with canisterized launcher and much smaller ground system footprint. The test launch was carried out by a combined team of DRDO, BDL (Bharat Dynamics Limited) & BEL (Bharat Electronics) in the presence of the representatives of Indian Air force.

### **BSF launches operation 'Sard Hawa' at Rajasthan border**

Border Security Force (BSF) on January 21 launched operation 'Sard Hawa' at the western international border of Rajasthan, under which vigil will be beefed-up to check the instances of infiltration due to the dense fog in the area.

This operation will continue till January 27 with an aim that there is no intrusion.

Significantly, BSF runs Operation "Garam Hawa" in summer season and operation "Sard Hawa" during the winter season as a routine exercise.

**Facts about Border Security Force (BSF):** It is India's Primary border guarding organisation on its border with Pakistan and Bangladesh.

**Headquarters:** New Delhi  
**Founded:** 1 December 1965  
**Director-General:** Rakesh Asthana

### **Joint Military Exercise in Andaman Sea**

Towards enhancing joint operational readiness, Indian Armed Forces conducted a large-scale conjoint military training exercise “KAVACH” along with “AMPHEX-21” in the Andaman Sea and Bay of Bengal.

The exercise was conducted under the aegis of Andaman and Nicobar Command (ANC) with participation of Eastern Naval Command (ENC) and Army Southern Command (SC) involving assets of Army, Navy, Air Force and Coast Guard.

## **New Appointments**

### **ISRO chairman K Sivan gets one-year extension as Department of Space secretary**

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved the extension of tenure of K Sivan, secretary, Department of Space and chairman, Space Commission, for a period of one-year beyond January 14, 2021, that is up to January 14, 2022.

### **Suneet Sharma appointed new chairman of Railway Board**

The Central government appointed Suneet Sharma as new Chairman and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Indian Railway Board (Ministry of Railways) and ex-officio Principal Secretary to Government of India.

Sharma has replaced Vinod Kumar Yadav.

### **Umesh Sinha appointed Dy Election Commissioner**

Umesh Sinha has been appointed as the deputy election commissioner in the Election Commission of India. Sinha, a 1986-batch IAS officer (retired) of the Uttar Pradesh cadre, is at present the secretary-general in the commission.

### **Soma Mondal assumes charge as Chairman of SAIL**

Smt. Soma Mondal has taken over as Chairman of Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) w.e.f. 01.01.2021. She was the Director (Commercial) of SAIL prior to this.

She is the first-ever women head of the body. She replaces Anil Kumar Chaudhary.

### **Pankaj Mithal takes oath as new chief justice of J&K and Ladakh high court**

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha administered the oath of office to Justice Pankaj Mithal as the new chief justice of the common high court for the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir and Union Territory of Ladakh in Jammu.

### **Alexander Ellis appointed new British high commissioner to India**

Ellis has held several posts, including deputy national security adviser in the cabinet office, director-general in the department for exiting the European Union, and the British ambassador to Portugal.

Ellis succeeds Philip Barton.

### **Former India striker Abhishek Yadav has been appointed as the first deputy general secretary of All India Football Federation (AIFF)**

Yadav has been serving as national team's director since January 2018.

### **Karan Bajwa to head Google Cloud in Asia Pacific**

Google Cloud announced the elevation of Karan Bajwa as its new leader for the Asia Pacific. Presently, Bajwa leads Google Cloud in India.

Bajwa succeeds Rick Harshman.

### **A K Goswami sworn in as Chief Justice of Andhra Pradesh High Court**

Governor Biswabhusan Harichandan administered the oath of office to Justice Goswami.

Justice Goswami was the Chief Justice of Sikkim High Court prior to his appointment as CJ of AP HC, in place of Justice J K Maheshwari, who was shifted to Sikkim.

### **The Union government has appointed R S Sharma, former TRAI chief, as the chairperson of an empowered committee for administration of Covid-19 vaccine**

A ten member team has been constituted to be headed by Sharma. Top health ministry and UIDAI officials are part of the empowered committee.

**Note:** He has also been included as a member of the National Expert Group on Vaccine Administration of Covid-19 that was formed in August 2020 and is headed by Niti Aayog member, VK Paul.

### **US-India Business Council (USIBC) selected Biocon Executive Chairperson Kiran Mazumdar Shaw as one of its vice-chairs**

US Chamber of Commerce's USIBC announced three vice-chairs to its 2021 Global Board of Directors. The two other business executives joining Shaw as vice-chairs are Amway CEO Milind Pant and Edward Knight who is the vice-chair at Nasdaq.

**Note:** The three new appointees will now work with USIBC President Nisha Biswal and the Council's policy directors.

### **Jayant Khobragade appointed India's next Ambassador to ASEAN Secretariat**

Jayant N Khobragade, an Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officer, has been appointed as India's next Ambassador to ASEAN Secretariat in Jakarta.

Khobragade is currently serving as joint secretary at headquarters of the ministry in Delhi.

**Facts about Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN):** It is considered one of the most influential groupings in the region, and India and several other countries including the US, China, Japan and Australia are its dialogue partners.

**The 10 member countries of ASEAN** are Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Brunei, Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar and Cambodia.

**Headquarters:** Jakarta, Indonesia

**Founded:** 8 August 1967

### **Government appoints Siddhartha Mohanty as Managing Director (MD) of LIC from Feb 1**

Mohanty will be replacing TC Suseel Kumar, who is set to retire on January 31, 2021. Presently Mohanty is the chief operating officer of LIC Housing Finance.

**Facts about Life Insurance Corporation of India:**

**Headquarters:** Mumbai

**Chairperson:** M R Kumar

**Founder:** Government of India

**Founded:** 1 September 1956

### **Justice Gita Mittal appointed chairperson of BCCC**

The Board of Directors of the Indian Broadcasting Foundation (IBF) has appointed Justice Gita Mittal, former chief justice of Jammu & Kashmir high court, as the new chairperson of Broadcasting Content Complaints Council (BCCC).

Mittal will succeed former Supreme Court judge, Justice Vikramajit Sen, whose tenure as BCCC chairperson has ended.

Justice Gita Mittal, who served as the first woman Chief Justice of Jammu & Kashmir High Court, is also the **first woman chairperson of BCCC**.

**About BCCC:** Founded in June 2011, BCCC is the independent self-regulatory body set up by the IBF to examine content-related complaints relating to all non-news and general entertainment channels in India.

## **Science and Technology**

### **Prime Minister lays foundation stone of Light House projects (LHPs)**

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone of Light House projects (LHPs) under the Global Housing Technology Challenge-India (GHTC-India) at six sites across six States. The programme seeks to build over 1,000 houses each in six cities in 12 months.

The LHPs are being constructed at Indore (Madhya Pradesh), Rajkot (Gujarat), Chennai (Tamil Nadu), Ranchi (Jharkhand), Agartala (Tripura) and Lucknow (Uttar Pradesh).

He also released a certification course on innovative construction technologies named NAVARITIH (New, Affordable, Validated, Research Innovation Technologies for Indian Housing).

### **BARC develops eye cancer therapy for treatment of ocular tumours**

Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC), Mumbai develops eye cancer therapy in the form of the first indigenous Ruthenium 106 Plaque for treatment of Ocular Tumours.

The handling of plaque is very convenient for the Surgeon and it has been acknowledged to be at par with the international standards.

**Note:** Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) is developing Bullet Proof Jackets for security personnel and in the Agricultural sector, radiation techniques to extend shelf life of vegetable and food products are being applied.

### **Indian Oil launches first remote monitoring system for oil refineries**

Indian Oil Corp (IOC), the country's largest fuel retailer, announced it has launched the country's first remote monitoring system for oil refineries' turbines.

The project, located in Hyderabad, was inaugurated by oil minister Dharmendra Pradhan.

The Remote Monitoring & Operation Centre for Tracking of Indian Oil's Refinery Gas Turbines was implemented by BHEL-GE Gas Turbine Services (BGGTS), a joint venture of BHEL and General Electric.

This analysis will help in detection and diagnosis of emerging issues relating to gas turbines.

### **Skyroot Aerospace becomes first Indian company to test-fire solid-fueled rocket engine 'Kalam-5'**

Indian Space startup, Skyroot Aerospace, has proven the crucial propulsion technology of their maiden rocket Vikram-1, with the latest test-firing of an engine. Vikram-1 rocket is powered by four engines - three solid-fuel stages and one Liquid-fuel stage that the firm has designed and developed.

In August 2020, the company had tested its liquid-fueled engine and now has proven the technology of the solid-fueled engine (Kalam-5), by successfully test-firing a miniature version.

Kalam-5 is the first of five Kalam series of solid rocket motors.

### **Education Minister lays foundation stone of IIT Hyderabad's TiHAN Foundation**

Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' has laid the foundation stone of the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Hyderabad's TiHAN Foundation.

Technology Innovation Hub on Autonomous Navigation Systems for Unmanned Aerial Vehicles and Remotely Operated Vehicles at IIT Hyderabad, known as 'TiHAN Foundation' has been incorporated as a Section-8 company by the institute in June 2020.

### **DRDO Signs MoU with MAHA-METRO for implementation of Advanced Biodigester Mk-II Technology in Metro Rail Network**

Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), Government of India's premier research agency and Maharashtra Metro Rail Corporation (MAHA – METRO), a joint venture company of the GoI and Government of Maharashtra are working together to conserve water and protect the environment by installing DRDO's eco-friendly biodigester units in its facilities.

DRDO's biodigester is an indigenous, green and cost-effective technology, with a rare distinction of having one of the largest numbers of DRDO-licensees.

**Note:** Indian Railways has already installed about 2.40 lakh biodigesters in its fleet of passenger coaches.

### **Khadi Prakritik Paint**

Union Minister for Road Transport & Highways Nitin Gadkari launched an innovative new paint – India's first cow dung paint - developed by Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC).

The eco-friendly, non-toxic paint, called "*Khadi Prakritik Paint*" is a first-of-its-kind product, with anti-fungal, anti-bacterial properties.

It is available in two forms – distemper paint and plastic emulsion paint.

**Note:** The project was conceptualized by Chairman KVIC in March 2020, and later developed by Kumarappa National Handmade Paper Institute, Jaipur (a KVIC unit).

### **ISRO to adopt 100 Atal Tinkering Labs to promote education**

Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) will adopt one hundred Atal Tinkering Labs across the country to promote education in the field of Space Education and Space Technology related innovations for school students.

To foster entrepreneurship and innovation, Atal Innovation Mission, NITI Aayog has established over seven thousand Atal Tinkering Labs across the country.

### **Union Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan dedicates coastal research vessel 'Sagar Anveshika' to Nation at Chennai Port Trust**

Sagar Anveshika will enable scientists to conduct various oceanographic research missions.

Marine scientists can travel six kilometers below the sea and stay for more than 16 hours and can conduct research activities.

**Note:** NIOT (National Institute of Ocean Technology) already has Research Vessel- Sagar Kanya, Sagar Sampada, Sagar Nidhi, Sagar Manjusha & Sagar Tara.

### **National Informatics Centre (NIC) and Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), Ministry of Education along with Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), NITI**

### **Aayog, provided the CollabCAD Software and released a comprehensive e-book on CollabCAD 3D modeling**

NIC and CBSE also signed a Memorandum of Understanding for 'CollabCAD Software Support and Training for Students and Faculty in Engineering Graphics Curriculum for CBSE affiliated Schools' for a period of 10 years.

**About CollabCAD:** It is the first indigenous tool created by NIC in partnership with Bhabha Atomic Research Centre and Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre. It is a collaborative network-enabled and desktop software system, providing a total engineering solution from 2D drafting & detailing to 3D product design for students and faculty of Engineering Graphics Curriculum.

### **Dr. Harsh Vardhan dedicates an Innovation Portal developed by National Innovation Foundation (NIF) – India to the nation**

The Union Minister for Science & Technology, Dr. Harsh Vardhan dedicated an Innovation Portal, developed by National Innovation Foundation (NIF) – India, an autonomous body of the Department of Science and Technology (DST), Government of India, to the nation.

The National Innovation Portal (NIP) is currently home to about 1.15 lakh innovations scouted from common people of the country, covering Engineering, Agriculture, Veterinary and Human Health.

### **India's first indigenously designed & developed 'Driverless Metro Car.'**

Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh, unveiled state-of-the-art 'Driverless Metro Car' for Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA).

Indigenously designed & developed state-of-the-art Driverless Metro trains are being manufactured at BEML Bangaluru Complex.

MMRDA project has 63 percent indigenous content which will enhance to 75 percent in next two to three years.

Shri Rajnath Singh also launched the Aerospace Assembly Hangar, situated within BEML's Bangalore Complex, and unveiled the first indigenously manufactured Tatra Cabin by BEML.

### **Dr Harsh Vardhan inaugurates the new entity CSIR-NIScPR with a new Vision**

The Union Minister of Science & Technology Dr. Harsh Vardhan inaugurated a new institute of Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) i.e. CSIR-National Institute of Science Communication and Policy Research (CSIR-NIScPR).

The new institute has been established consequent to the merger of two prestigious institutes of CSIR namely, CSIR-National Institute of Science Communication and Information Resources (CSIR-NISCAIR) and CSIR-National Institute of Science, Technology and Development Studies (CSIR-NISTADS) which work at the interface of S&T and Society; and Science Communication and Policy Research.

### **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) to establish Quantum Computing Applications Lab in collaboration with Amazon Web Services (AWS)**

Quantum computing is an emerging field harnessing the laws of quantum mechanics to build powerful tools to process information and has the potential to solve computational problems that are beyond the reach of classical computers.

It will also provide quantum computing as a service to the government ministries and departments, researchers, scientists, academia, and developers, to enable advances in areas such as manufacturing, healthcare, agriculture, and aerospace engineering.

#### **Facts about Amazon Web Services:**

**CEO:** Andy Jassy

**Founder:** Amazon.com

**Founded:** 2006

**Headquarters:** United States

### **Elon Musk's SpaceX creates new world record; launches 143 satellites on single rocket**

The 143 satellites launched include commercial and government CubeSats, microsats and 10 Starlink satellites.

With these satellites, SpaceX aims to provide near-global broadband internet coverage all over the world by 2021.

The launch vehicle for the SpaceX record-breaking flight was the Falcon 9 rocket.

**Note:** SpaceX has beaten the Indian space agency ISRO's record of deploying 104 satellites in a single launch in February 2017.

### **New ant species discovered from Kerala named after JNCASR researcher, evolutionary biologist Prof. Amitabh Joshi**

Two new species of a rare ant genus have been discovered in India. The species of the ant genus *Ooceraea* found in Kerala and Tamil Nadu add to the diversity of this rare genus. They differ from others of the same genus on the basis of the number of antennal segments.

One of them found in the Periyar Tiger Reserve of Kerala, has been named *Ooceraea joshii*, in honour of Prof. Amitabh Joshi, a distinguished evolutionary biologist from **Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research (JNCASR)** an autonomous institute of the Department of Science & Technology, Government of India.

The other, named *Ooceraea decamera*, was discovered from Alagarkoil in Madurai.

### **CSIR-CMERI unveils the first-ever 'Aqua Rejuvenation Plant' which facilitates an Organic Farming Model through treated Waste Water**

CSIR-Central Mechanical Engineering Research Institute, Durgapur unveiled the first-ever Waste Water Treatment Technology Model which purifies Waste Water for Irrigation/Farming purposes.

Prof. (Dr.) Harish Hirani, Director, CSIR-CMERI inaugurated the 'Aqua Rejuv' at CSIR-CMERI colony in Durgapur (West Bengal).

**Aqua Rejuvenation Plant (ARP)** is an Integrated Waste Water Rejuvenation Model which has Six-Stage purification profile for comprehensive treatment of Waste Water, based upon diverse purification parameters.

## Health

### **Covishield and Covaxin are the first two Covid-19 vaccines to be approved in India**

Drugs Controller General of India (DGCI) has given approval for restricted use in emergency situations of vaccines- Covishield from Serum Institute of India (SII) based on the Oxford AstraZeneca vaccine and Covaxin from Bharat Biotech.

The decision of the DGCI came after the Subject Expert Committee (SEC) of Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) recommended their emergency use.

### **Dr. Harsh Vardhan inaugurates CEPI Centralized network lab at DBT-THSTI Faridabad**

The Minister for Science & Technology, Health & Family Welfare and Earth Sciences Dr. Harsh Vardhan inaugurated one of the seven labs of the world called as the centralized network lab of **Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI)** established at Translational Health Science & Technology Institute (THSTI), Faridabad.

**Note:** CEPI is an innovative partnership between public, private, philanthropic, and civil organizations, launched at Davos in 2017, to develop vaccines to stop future epidemics.

### **Longitudinal Ageing Study of India (LASI) Wave-1, India Report**

Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister for Health & Family Welfare released India Report on Longitudinal Ageing Study of India (LASI) Wave-1.

The National Programme for Health Care of Elderly, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare has undertaken the Longitudinal Ageing Study of India, through International Institute for Population Sciences, (IIPS), Mumbai in collaboration with Harvard School of Public Health, University of Southern California, USA, Dte.GHS, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and National Institute on Ageing.

It is India's first and the world's largest ever survey that provides a longitudinal database for designing policies and programmes for the older population in the broad domains of social, health, and economic well-being.

## **Prime Minister Narendra Modi launches the pan India rollout of COVID-19 vaccination drive on 16 January**

This is the world's largest vaccination program covering the entire country.

**Note:** India's drugs regulator gave emergency use authorisation to Covishield, produced by Pune-based Serum Institute of India after securing licence from British pharma company AstraZeneca, and Covaxin, indigenously developed jointly by Hyderabad-based Bharat Biotech and Indian Council of Medical Research scientists.

## **Environment and Ecology**

### **India's first pollinator park opens in Uttarakhand**

The Uttarakhand forest department dedicated the newly built Pollinator Park to the public, claiming it to be the country's first such park, spread over 4 acres in Haldwani in Nainital district.

The park has more than 40 pollinator species with displays on the mechanism of pollination of plant species by various species of butterflies, honeybees, birds, insects, moths, beetles, wasps, and small mammals.

### **India to be a co-chair of regional forum to conserve wildlife habitats**

After successfully increasing population of wild animals such as tigers, lions and leopards through protecting their habitats, India will be the co-chair of the IUCN-supported Asia Protected Areas Partnership (APAP) for three years.

The APAP, formally launched at the IUCN World Parks Congress in Australia in 2014, is chaired by IUCN Asia and co-chaired by an APAP country member. India will replace South Korea which held this position for three years till November, 2020.

### **Standing Committee of National Board of Wildlife approves advisory for Human-Wildlife Conflict management**

The advisory envisages empowering gram panchayats in dealing with the problematic wild animals as per the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.

Utilising add-on coverage under the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojna for crop compensation against crop damage due to Human Wildlife Conflict and augmenting fodder and water sources within the forest areas are some key steps envisaged to reduce Human Wildlife Conflict and payment of a portion of ex-gratia as interim relief.

**Note:** The National Board for Wildlife is constituted by the Central Government under Section 5 A of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

### **Euphranta siruvani -New species of fruit fly from India named after Siruvani in Western Ghats**

Euphranta siruvani is a new species of fruit fly in the family Tephritidae. This species is reported from the Siruvani which is an ecological hot spot located in the Western Ghats of India.

This species has been collected from a non forest area near Siruvani in Coimbatore district of Tamil Nadu, India. This species is differentiated from other species of Euphranta by the presence of a 'V' shaped black band on the wing.

### **PCRA launches a month long mass awareness campaign 'SAKSHAM' to spread awareness about 'Green and Clean Energy'**

With a view to create awareness among the consumers of fossil fuels, Petroleum Conservation Research Association (PCRA), Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas launched a month long campaign 'SAKSHAM' (Sanrakshan Kshamata Mahotsav), highlighting the adverse health and environmental impacts of increasing carbon footprints.

The campaign through various pan-India activities such as cyclothon, farmer workshops, seminars, painting competition, CNG vehicle driving contest, etc will spread awareness among masses about the advantages of using clean fuels.

### **Zoological Survey of India (ZSI): Sunderbans is home to 428 species of birds**

Indian Sunderbans is home to 428 species of birds, a recent publication "Birds of the Sunderban Biosphere Reserve" by ZSI.

**About Indian Sundarbans:** The Sundarbans National Park is a national park, tiger reserve, and biosphere reserve in West Bengal, India.

It is a UNESCO World Heritage Site inscribed in 1987, and it has been designated as a Ramsar site since 2019.

It is considered as a World Network of Biosphere Reserve (Man and Biosphere Reserve) from 1989.

Indian Sundarbans were considered endangered in a 2020 assessment under the IUCN Red List of Ecosystems framework.

### **Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari approved a proposal to levy a "Green Tax" on old vehicles which are polluting the environment**

Some important principles to be followed while levying the Green Tax are: Transport vehicles older than 8 years could be charged Green Tax at the time of renewal of fitness certificate, at the rate of 10 to 25 % of road tax, Personal vehicles to be charged Green Tax at the time of renewal of Registration Certification after 15 years, Electric vehicles and alternate fuels like CNG, ethanol, LPG and vehicles used in farming, such as tractor, harvester, tiller etc to be exempted.

### **CAQM setting up Decision Support System for air quality for Delhi-NCR**

The Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) in NCR and adjoining areas has begun the process of setting up a Decision Support System (DSS).

It will have a web, Geographical Information System (GIS) and multi-model based operational and planning decision support tool.

The Commission has entrusted the task to expert groups from reputed knowledge institutions of the country for framework development of Air Quality Management Decision Support System. These are India Meteorological Department (IMD), IITM-Pune, The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI), IIT-Delhi, NEERI and C-DAC Pune. The System will use Artificial Intelligence (AI) to help improve the air quality.

**Note:** Recently, the Centre has set up the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) in Delhi-NCR and adjacent areas with former Delhi chief secretary M M Kutty as the new body's first chairperson.

## Summits and Conferences

### India sets up high-level group for South Asia energy security

The center has set up a high-level group to help build a South Asia-focused energy security architecture.

The high-level group, headed by former Union power secretary Ram Vinay Shahi, is named the South Asia Group for Energy (SAGE).

It has been set up under the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA)-run think tank Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS).

### Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the 16th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Convention on January 9, 2021

The theme of the event was 'Contributing to Aatmanirbhar Bharat'.

The names of Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Awardees 2020-2021 will also be announced.

**Youth Pravasi Bhartiya Divas** was observed on the theme "**Bringing together Young Achievers from India and Indian Diaspora**" on 8 January 2021.

**About Pravasi Bhartiya Divas (PBD):** This day has its own significance as it is the day when Mahatma Gandhi returned from South Africa in 1915.

*The first Pravasi Bharatiya Divas or Non-Resident Indian Day was celebrated on 9 January, 2003. Its format has been revised since 2015 to celebrate the PBD once every two years.*

### 4<sup>th</sup> 'One Planet Summit' for biodiversity

**The Summit was organized by France, in cooperation with the United Nations and the World Bank on January 11, 2021.**

The summit's theme is "Let's act together for nature!"

The Summit programme focused on biodiversity preservation: the protection of terrestrial and marine ecosystems, the promotion of agroecology, the mobilization of funding for biodiversity, and the link between deforestation, species and human health.

### **Shri Piyush Goyal inaugurates the 'Prarambh': Startup India International Summit'**

The two day 'Prarambh', Startup India International Summit (15-16 January 2021) held in New Delhi, with members of BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation) countries participating in the inaugural event.

The Summit was organized by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, M/o Commerce & Industry.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced a seed fund worth Rs 1,000 crore for startups to provide them with initial capital to start and grow their business during the summit.

**Note:** The summit marked the fifth anniversary of the Startup India initiative launched by Modi on this day in 2016.

### **Britain invites PM Modi to attend G7 Summit to be held in June this year**

The United Kingdom has invited Prime Minister Narendra Modi to attend the G7 Summit as a guest. The G7 Summit is to be held on June 11-13 this year.

A statement by the British High Commission said, UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson is also likely to visit India ahead of the G7 Summit.

Besides India, Australia and South Korea have also been invited as guest countries.

**Facts about G7:** The heads of government of the member states, as well as the representatives of the European Union, meet at the annual G7 Summit.

**Founded:** 1975

**Members:** United Kingdom, United States, Japan, France, Germany, Canada, Italy

### **Climate Adaptation Summit 2021**

The online international Climate Adaptation Summit (CAS) 2021 on 25 and 26 January was hosted by the Netherlands, convened global leaders and local stakeholders.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on January 25, 2021 addressed the Climate Adaptation Summit 2021 and said that India is targeting 450 gigawatt of renewable energy capacity by the year 2030.

**Note:** The 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference, also known as **COP26**, is the 26th United Nations Climate Change conference. It is scheduled to be held in Glasgow, Scotland, from **1 to 12 November 2021** under the presidency of the United Kingdom.

### **PM Modi addresses World Economic Forum's Davos Dialogue**

The Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the World Economic Forum's Davos Dialogue on January 28, 2021.

The Prime Minister asserted that India is working on all the four factors of Industry 4.0- connectivity, automation, artificial intelligence or machine learning and real-time data.

The Davos Dialogues agenda marks the launch of the World Economic Forum's Great Reset Initiative in the post Covid-19 world.

**About World Economic Forum:** It is an international NGO that was founded on January 24, 1971. Klaus Martin Schwab is the founder and executive chairman of the World Economic Forum. The World Economic Forum hosts its annual meeting in Davos, Switzerland at the end of January.

### **India signs Strategic Partnership Agreement with International Energy Agency (IEA)**

The Framework for Strategic Partnership between the International Energy Agency (IEA) members and the Government of India was signed on 27th January, 2021 to strengthen mutual trust and cooperation & enhance global energy security, stability and sustainability.

The MoU was signed by Mr. Sanjiv Nandan Sahai, Secretary (Power) from the Indian side and Dr. Fatih Birol, IEA Executive Director from the IEA side.

#### **Facts about International Energy Agency:**

**Headquarters:** Paris, France

**Membership:** 30 member countries

**Executive Director:** Fatih Birol

**Establishment:** November 1974

**Note:** In March 2017, India joined the IEA as an association country. (Total 8 association countries are in IEA).

## **Ranking and Index**

### **RBI unveils digital payment index**

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has constructed a composite Digital Payments Index (DPI) to capture the extent of digitisation of payments across the country.

The RBI-DPI has been constructed with March 2018 as the base period. The DPI for March 2019 and March 2020 work out to 153.47 and 207.84 respectively, indicating appreciable growth.

**Note:** The RBI-DPI comprises five broad parameters that enable the measurement of deepening and expansion of digital payments in the country over different time periods.

These parameters include Payment Enablers (weight 25%), Payment Infrastructure – Demand-side factors (10%), Payment Infrastructure – Supply-side factors (15%), Payment Performance (45%) and Consumer Centricity (5%).

### **Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar released Management Effectiveness Evaluation (MEE) report of 146 National Park and Wildlife Sanctuaries in the country**

At present, India has a network of 903 Protected Areas covering about five percent of the total geographic area of the country.

70 percent of the global tiger population, 70 percent of Asiatic lions and more than 60 percent of leopard's population in country, is a certificate of India's thriving biodiversity.

The Minister also announced that from this year onwards ten best National Parks, five Coastal and Marine parks and top five Zoos in the country will be ranked and awarded every year.

Javadekar also launched the Management Effectiveness Evaluation of Indian Zoos framework which proposes guidelines, criteria and indicators for evaluation of zoos of the country.

### **India ranks 85<sup>th</sup> in World's most powerful passports index 2021**

Henley Passport Index 2021 has revealed the list of the world's most powerful passports and India has been ranked 85th on it.

India's passport got a visa-free score of 58, which means Indian passport holders can visit 58 countries without prior visa.

**First rank-** Japan (191), **Second rank-** Singapore (190)

Iraq and Afghanistan are the countries with the worst passport with score 28 and 26 respectively.

### **At 18 million, India has the world's largest diaspora population**

India has the largest diaspora population in the world with 18 million people from the country living outside their homeland in 2020. India's large diaspora is distributed across the United Arab Emirates (3.5 million), the United States of America (2.7 million) and Saudi Arabia (2.5 million).

Other countries hosting large numbers of Indian migrants included Australia, Canada, Kuwait, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar and the United Kingdom.

Other countries with a large diaspora population included Mexico and Russia (11 million each), China (10 million).

The US remained by far the largest country of destination of international migrants with 51 million migrants in 2020, equal to 18 percent of the world's total. Germany hosted the second largest number of migrants worldwide at around 16 million.

**Note:** The report 'International Migration 2020 Highlights' was released by the Population Division of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA).

### **11 domestic companies in Hurun's top 500 list, India ranked 10th**

Total 11 private Indian firms have made it to the list of 500 most valuable companies across the world, and the country is ranked 10th on the chart.

Mukesh Ambani-led Reliance Industries ranked 54<sup>th</sup>, Tata Consultancy Services' ranking 73rd globally and making it the second most valuable Indian firm.

The list of 500 is led by consumer technology major Apple and is followed by Microsoft and Amazon.

**Note:** The Hurun Global 500 List recognizes the world's top 500 non-state-owned companies, which are ranked according to their market capitalization or valuations.

### **NITI Aayog releases 2nd edition of India Innovation Index-2020**

The index demonstrates the government's continued commitment towards transforming the country into an innovation-driven economy.

In the India Innovation Index-2020, the States and Union Territories have been divided into 17 Major States, 10 North-East and Hill States and 9 Union Territories and Small States for effectively comparing their performance.

Karnataka stands at the first position in the Major States category.

In the North East and Hill States category, Himachal Pradesh stands at first position.

Delhi stands at the first position in the Union Territories and small States category.

**Facts about NITI Aayog:** It is a policy think tank of the Government of India.

**Formed:** 1 January 2015

**Headquarters:** New Delhi

**Chairperson:** Shri Narendra Modi

### **The Global Risks Report 2021**

The 16<sup>th</sup> edition of the Global Risks Report, published by the World Economic Forum with support from Marsh McLennan in partnership with SK Group and Zurich Insurance Group, highlights the disruptive implications of major risks, including the COVID-19 pandemic that may reshape our world in 2021 and over the next decade.

**Note:** World Economic Forum's Davos Agenda scheduled to be held in virtual mode between 25-29 January, 2021.

**Facts about World Economic Forum:** It is an international NGO.

**Headquarters:** Cologne, Switzerland

**Founded:** January 1971

**Leader:** Klaus Schwab

### **Global Firepower Nations Index (2021) - Military Strength Ranking**

According to the defence analytics website, Global powers ranked by potential military strength.

The finalized Global Firepower ranking below utilizes **over 50 individual factors** to determine a given nation's **PowerIndex ('PwrIndx')** score with categories ranging from military might and financials to logistical capability and geography. There are currently **138 countries** considered for the Global Firepower (GFP) annual defense review (which currently covers the year 2021).

First rank- United States of America

Second rank- Russia

Third rank- China

**Fourth rank- India**

Fifth rank- Japan

### Global Climate Risk Index 2021

The Global Climate Risk Index 2021, released by **Germanwatch -an NGO based in Bonn, Germany**, analyses to what extent countries and regions have been affected by impacts of weather-related loss events.

The most recent data available for 2019 and from 2000 to 2019 were taken into account.

The countries and territories affected most in 2019 were Mozambique, Zimbabwe as well as the Bahamas.

For the period from 2000 to 2019 Puerto Rico, Myanmar and Haiti rank highest.

**India ranks seventh** among countries most affected in 2019 by climate change.

### Important Days

#### January 04, World Braille Day

World Braille Day is celebrated every year on January 4 to commemorate the birth anniversary of Louis Braille who was the inventor of Braille for persons with visual disabilities.

Braille is a code which represents letters that can be recognized by visually impaired individuals by their sense of touch.

**Note:** The first World Braille Day was celebrated on January 4 in 2019 after it got approval from the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) via a proclamation in November 2018.

#### January 10, World Hindi Day

Hindi is not only the country's most-spoken language, but it is **the third most-spoken language in the world** with 615 million speakers after English, Mandarin, according to the UN.

Every year on Jan 10, World Hindi Day is marked to commemorate the anniversary of the first World Hindi Conference that took place in 1975 in Nagpur, Maharashtra. The then Prime Minister of India, Indira Gandhi, had inaugurated the conference. The World Hindi Day was observed for the first time in 2006.

**Note:** National Hindi Divas is celebrated annually on September 14.

### **January 12, National Youth Day**

National Youth Day is celebrated on 12 January being the birthday of Swami Vivekananda. In 1984 the Government of India declared this day as National Youth Day and since 1985 the event is celebrated in India every year.

### **Government decides to celebrate birthday of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose as 'Parakram Diwas' on 23rd of January every year**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will attend the Parakram Diwas event in Kolkata and will inaugurate an exhibition there.

**Note:** Recently Government has decided to constitute a High Level Committee headed by Shri Amit Shah, Union Home Minister to commemorate the 125th Birth Anniversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose.

### **January 23, Parakram Diwas 2021**

Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose Jayanti or officially "Parakram Diwas" is a national event celebrated in India to mark the birthday of a prominent Indian freedom fighter Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose.

He was the head of Indian National Army (Azad Hind Fouj). He was the founder-head of the Azad Hind Government.

**Note:** The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi attended the 125th Birth Anniversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose in Kolkata.

Sustainable Environment and Ecological Development Society (SEEDS) and Dr. Rajendra Kumar Bhandari have been selected for the **Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar** for their excellent work in Disaster Management.

### **January 24, National Girl Child Day**

It was started by the Ministry of Women and Child Development and the Government of India in 2008, with the purpose to spread awareness among people about all the inequalities girls face in the Indian society.

In January 2015, Narendra Modi government had launched Beti Bachao Beti Padhao scheme with an objective to address the issue of declining Child Sex Ratio.

Sex Ratio at Birth has improved by 16 points from 918 in 2014-15 to 934 in 2019-20.

### **January 24, International Day of Education**

This year's theme for International Education Day is "Recover and Revitalize Education for the COVID-19 Generation."

As per UNESCO data, around 258 million children are out of school, 617 million children and adults cannot read and do basic math.

**Note:** The United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution proclaiming this day as International Day of Education on December 3, 2018, in celebration of the role of education for peace and development.

### January 25, National Tourism Day

Every year on 25 January National Tourism Day is celebrated in India to raise awareness and educate people about the importance of tourism and the role it plays in the Indian economy.

**Note:** The **World Tourism Day** is celebrated on 27 September.

### 25 January- National Voters Day (NVD)

The theme for this year's NVD, '**Making Our Voters Empowered, Vigilant, Safe and Informed**', envisages active and participative voters during elections.

The National Voters' Day has been celebrated on January 25 every year since 2011, all across the country to mark the foundation day of Election Commission of India, i.e. 25th January 1950.

**Note:** During the event, the Honourable President of India will confer the **National Awards for the year 2020-21** and launch ECI's Web Radio: '**Hello Voters**'.

Union Minister Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad will launch the **e-EPIC** programme and distribute **e-EPICs and Elector Photo Identity Cards to five new voters**.

### January 24, Uttar Pradesh Diwas

Theme of Uttar Pradesh Divas was 'Self-reliant Uttar Pradesh: Women, youths, Farmers: Development of all, Honour to All.'Sabka Vikas Sabka Samman '.

Uttar Pradesh Diwas is observed as the **foundation day of this state**. It was on this very same day in 1950, Uttar Pradesh had got itself renamed. Earlier the state was known as United Provinces. On May 2017, it was announced by the UP state government that the 24th January will be celebrated as Uttar Pradesh day (Uttar Pradesh Diwas).

**Note:** On this day (24 January 2021), **Laxman Award and Rani Laxmibai Award** were given to male and female sportspersons who have achieved remarkable achievement in the world of sports.

On this day (24 January 2021), '**Mukhyamantri Abhyudaya Yojana**' announced by CM Yogi Adityanath to give a free coaching facility to the youth. In this coaching center, IAS, IPS and PCS officers will directly give coaching to the students of the state.

### January 26, Republic Day of India

India is celebrating its 72nd Republic Day this year.

**Note:** Republic Day of India is celebrated on January 26 to mark the day when the Constitution of India came into effect. The Constitution of India, which was

adopted by the Constituent Assembly on November 26, 1949, came into effect on January 26, 1950.

**Flight lieutenant Bhawana Kanth** will be a part of the Republic Day parade this year to become the first woman fighter pilot to take part in India's biggest ceremonial event on January 26.

This year, **Rafale fighter** jet will also take part in the Republic Day parade for the first time.

**A tableau from Union Territory of Ladakh** will participate in the Republic Day Parade on Rajpath for the first time this year.

For the first time, a 122-member strong contingent of the **Bangladesh Armed Forces** will participate at the Republic Day celebrations.

On the occasion of Republic Day, 2021, 73 personnel have been **awarded Fire Service Medals**.

A total of 946 Police personnel have been awarded Medals (**Award of Gallantry Medals / Service Medals**) on the occasion.

The President of India has approved the conferment of **Jeevan Raksha Padak Series of Awards – 2020** on 40 persons.

## Books and Authors

### The book titled "Modi India Calling - 2021" released

A coffee table book filled with over hundreds of photographs of Prime Minister Narendra Modi from his 107 overseas and bilateral visits was released on the 16th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas.

The idea of this book was given by senior BJP leader Vijay Jolly. It was released by Delhi BJP president Adesh Gupta.

### Manipur Governor released book "Making of a General A Himalayan Echo"

Manipur Governor Dr Najma Heptulla released a book titled "Making of a General-A Himalayan Echo" authored by (Retd) Lt General Konsam Himalaya Singh.

### January 15, Indian Army Day

On the occasion of the 73rd Army Day on January 15, Army chief MM Naravane lauded the "supreme sacrifice" of the bravehearts in the line of duty.

Army Day is celebrated on 15 January every year in India, in recognition of Field Marshal Kodandera M. Cariappa taking over as the first Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army from General Sir Francis Butcher, the last British Commander-in-Chief of India, on 15 January 1949.

### Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant released a book 'Manohar Parrikar- Off the Record'

The book has been written by senior journalist Shri Waman Subha Prabhu.

The book is a collection of memories of Shri Waman Prabhu who happened to be with late Parrikar during the journey of his life. In this book the author endeavored

to narrate the multi-faceted personality of late Mr. Manohar Parrikar who served as Chief Minister of Goa.

## Obituaries

### **Former Union minister Buta Singh passes away**

Singh, a senior Congress leader, served as Lok Sabha MP for eight terms from the Jalore constituency in Rajasthan. He also served as the governor of Bihar.

### **Legendary music director Shantanu Mohapatra passes away**

Mohapatra was associated with the Odia music industry for almost 60 years. He had many firsts to his credits in the field of Odia music as a music composer.

### **Olympic bronze and World Cup winning hockey player Michael Kindo passes away**

He played three Men's Hockey World Cup in 1971, 1973 and 1975 where India bagged bronze, silver and gold medals respectively.

He also represented in the 1972 Olympic Games where India secured a bronze medal. Kindo received the Arjuna Award in 1972.

### **Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose's niece Chitra Ghosh passes away**

Chitra Ghosh, the youngest daughter of Sarat Chandra Bose and niece of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, passed away.

Professor Chitra Ghosh made pioneering contributions to academics and community service.

### **Tamil writer A Madhavan passes away**

A Madhavan had won the Sahitya Akademi Award 2015 for his collection of short stories, *Ilakkiya Chuvadukal*. The Tamil Nadu government has honored him with the prestigious Kalaimamani Award.

### **Former Gujarat Chief Minister Madhavsinh Solanki passes away**

The veteran Congress leader Madhavsinh Solanki was Chief Minister of Gujarat four times between 1976 and 1990. He was the longest-serving Chief Minister of the state before Narendra Modi.

He was also India's External Affairs Minister under Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao.

### **Senior Telugu journalist Turlapati Kutumba Rao passes away**

Veteran journalist and Padma Shri awardee Turlapati Kutumba Rao died in Vijayawada.

Rao is known for his contribution to Telugu journalism with 4,000 biographies and 16,000 public speeches which won him a place in the world records.

**Eminent social worker Padma Shri D Prakash Rao passed away**

Rao was conferred with the prestigious Padma Shri award in 2019 by the Government of India for his contribution towards boosting the value of education among slum and orphan kids in Cuttack.

**Renowned writer Ved Mehta passes away**

Indian-American novelist Ved Mehta, who overcame blindness and became widely known as the 20th-century writer most responsible for introducing American readers to India.

He was the MacArthur Prize fellow and member of the British Royal Society of Literature.

**Legendary Indian classical musician and Padma Vibhushan awardee Ustad Ghulam Mustafa Khan passes away**

He was awarded the Padma Shri in 1991, followed by Padma Bhushan in 2006 and Padma Vibhushan in 2018.

In 2003, he was awarded the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award.

**Veteran Actor and Director Biswajit Chatterjee has been conferred Indian Personality of the Year Award, at 51st IFFI**

The 51st edition of the International Film Festival of India (IFFI), Goa has conferred Shri Biswajit Chatterjee, veteran actor, producer, director and singer of Hindi and Bengali cinema, with the Indian Personality of the Year Award.

**World renowned oncologist Dr. V Shanta passes away**

Dr. Shanta was the Chairperson of Adyar Cancer Centre, Chennai.

Dr. Shanta's contribution to the field of oncology, had earned her the Magsaysay, Padma Shri, Padma Bhushan and Padma Vibhushan awards.

**Former Arunachal Pradesh Governor Mata Prasad dies**

Mata Prasad served as minister in the Congress government in Uttar Pradesh in 1988-89 and was appointed as Governor of Arunachal Pradesh in 1993.

**Veteran Singer Narendra Chanchal passes away**

Chanchal was known for his religious songs and bhajans. He won the Filmfare Award for Best Male Singer for Bobby.

**Former India and Mohun Bagan goalkeeper Prasanta Dora dies aged 44**

Prasanta made his national debut in 1999 against Thailand in the Olympic qualifiers. He represented Bengal in the Santosh Trophy.

At club-level, Prasanta started his career at the Tollygunge Agragami before moving to Calcutta Port Trust, Mohammedan Sporting, Mohun Bagan and East Bengal.

## Sports

### **Leon Mendonca becomes India's 67th Chess Grandmaster**

Goa's 14-year-old Leon Mendonca has become India's 67th chess Grandmaster by winning the third and final norm at a tournament in Italy.

Mendonca is the second GM from the coastal state.

The first GM from Goa is Ivana Maria Furtado, she achieved it in 2011.

Chennai player G Akash, had in July, become the country's 66th Grandmaster.

### **Claire Polosak becomes first female match official in men's Test match**

Australia's Claire Polosak became the first female match official in a men's Test match when she took up the fourth umpire's role in the third Test between India and Australia.

**Note:** The 32-year-old from New South Wales had, earlier, already earned the distinction of being the first woman on-field umpire in a men's ODI match during ICC's Division 2 league between Namibia and Oman played at the Windhoek in 2019.

### **In UT Ladakh, Khelo India Ice Hockey Tournament organised at Chiktan in Kargil district**

Alongwith 11 teams from different villages of Chiktan, for the first time two Women Teams of Chiktan also participated in the Khelo India Games.

Shakar Chiktan SDM, Kacho Asgar Ali khan inugurated the tournament.

### **Jigmet Dolma from India secured fourth position in the Dhaka Marathon 2021**

Jigmet Dolma is an SPO of Ladakh police.

In the full marathon, among the SAARC and local runners, Bahadur Singh of India became the champion in the men's category and Pushpa Bhandari of Nepal became the champion in the women's category.

In the marathon, Hicham Lakohi of Morocco came first in the elite competition of the marathon in men's category while Angela Jim Asunde from Kenya won the women's category in the same event.

### **First ever Ice climbing festival celebrated in Nubra valley**

In Leh, the first ever Ice climbing festival was celebrated in Nubra valley.

To promote winter tourism in Nubra valley, Nubra Adventure Club, with the help of Social activist Dr. Nordan Otzer, has organized the seven day Ice Climbing festival.

### In Ladakh, a 13-day Khelo India Zaskar Winter Sport & Youth festival 2021 began from 18th January

A series of snow based activities are scheduled for next 13 days in the Snow bound, picturesque remote Zaskar.

The first ever Zaskar winter festival would definitely open a new arena in Ladakh for adventure and Nature loving tourists and a boost for local Youth to hone up their skills in winter sports to represent India.

### Team India creates history; clinches test series against Australia 2-1

India becomes the first Asian team to win at the Gabba.

India created history by defeating Australia by three wickets in the fourth and final Test at the Gabba in Brisbane and retained the Border-Gavaskar Trophy.

**Note: Recent series between India and Australia**

**T20 International series:** India won the 3-match series 2-1

**One Day International series:** Australia won the 3-match series 2-1

### Yonex Thailand Open badminton tournament 2021

**Location:** BANGKOK, THAILAND

It was the first badminton tournament of 2021 by Badminton World Federation (BWF).

**List of winners**

Men's singles	Women's singles	Men's doubles	Women's doubles	Mixed doubles
<b>Winner-</b> Viktor Axelsen	<b>Winner-</b> Carolina Marin	<b>Winner-</b> Lee Yang, Wang Chi-Lin	<b>Winner-</b> Greysia Polii, Apriyani Rahayu	<b>Winner-</b> Dechapol Puavaranukroh, Sapsiree Taerattanachai
<b>Runner-up-</b> Angus Long	<b>Runner-up-</b> Tai Tzu-Ying	<b>Runner-up-</b> Goh V Shem, Tan Wee Kiong	<b>Runner-up-</b> Jongkolphan Kititharakul, Rawinda Prajongjai	<b>Runner-up-</b> Praveen Jordan, Melati Daeva Oktavianti