

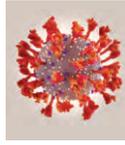
# ENGINEERS' EXCLUSIVE Current Affairs MADE EASY

UPSC Engineering Services Examination, State PSCs, SSC and other examinations



### General Bipin Rawat

The sudden demise of India's first CDS in a helicopter crash leaves a void in the Indian defense forces.



### Omicron Variant

A highly contagious variant of COVID-19 is spreading rapidly around the world.



### Nobel Prizes 2021

The Nobel Prize committee announces the winners for Sciences, Literature, Peace, and Economics.

## G20 Rome Summit 2021



Jnanpith Award  
2021 Announced

Barbados : World's  
Newest Republic

Recent Current  
Affairs Questions

# NEXT IAS

BIG LEARNINGS MADE EASY

## General Studies

Pre-cum-Main **Foundation Course**  
for **CSE 2023**

**OFFLINE CLASSES**

**ONLINE CLASSES**

- ✓ Classes by experienced & renowned faculties.
- ✓ Well designed comprehensive study materials.
- ✓ Mandatory weekly classroom tests.
- ✓ Weekly classes for Current Affairs and newspaper analysis.
- ✓ Systematic subject sequence and well-framed modules.
- ✓ Personalized Academic Coach for academic support.
- ✓ Unique concept of classroom workbooks.
- ✓ Professionally managed & interactive classrooms.

## Optional

**Foundation Course** for **CSE**

**OFFLINE CLASSES**

**ONLINE CLASSES**

- |                                                                                                          |                                                                                                     |                                                                                                        |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Economics</b><br/>by <b>Vibhas Jha Sir</b></li> </ul>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Geography</b><br/>by <b>Alok Ranjan Sir</b></li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Sociology</b><br/>by <b>Rajkumar Rai Sir</b></li> </ul>    |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Philosophy</b><br/>by <b>Dharmendra Kumar Sir</b></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Anthropology</b><br/>by <b>Ayaz Khan Sir</b></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Mathematics</b><br/>by <b>Maneesh Singh Sir</b></li> </ul> |

- ✓ Focus on individual attention.
- ✓ Exclusive study materials.
- ✓ Test Series of 7-8 tests for revision of course.
- ✓ Well framed modules with systematic subject sequence.
- ✓ Comprehensive coverage with in-depth analysis of each concept.

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ENGINEERS' EXCLUSIVE

# Current Affairs

**MADE EASY**

**Annual Edition**  
*for*  
**ESE 2022**  
**Preliminary Examination**



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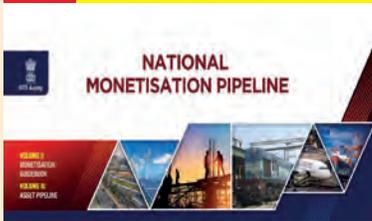
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# Contents

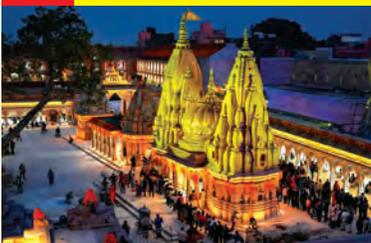
## 08 Current Economic Issues



## 36 Environment & Wildlife



## 52 National Affairs



## 106 International Affairs



## 127 Science & Technology



## 145 Defence in News



## 154 Miscellaneous

## 171 ESE-2020 Toppers' Interview

## 175 Recent Current Affairs Questions

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# MADE EASY Classroom Students Top in Engineering Service Exam 2020

## Electrical Engineering

### Electrical Engineering

**10** Selections in  
Top 10

**19** Selections in  
Top 20

**59** Selections out of  
62 vacancies

**95%** of Total Selections  
are from MADE EASY



**1**  
AIR

**Shashank Gaur**  
Classroom Course, Test Series,  
Interview Guidance Program

**2**  
AIR



**Abhishek Singh**  
Classroom Course

**3**  
AIR



**Vikash Shankar**  
Classroom Course,  
IGP

**4**  
AIR



**Anupam Samantaray**  
Test Series,  
IGP

**5**  
AIR



**Parveen Kumar**  
Classroom Course,  
Online Test Series, IGP

**6**  
AIR



**Vishwasimhaa S B**  
Online Test Series,  
IGP

**7**  
AIR



**Dinesh Kumar Singh**  
Classroom Course,  
Test Series, IGP

**8**  
AIR



**Gagan Ghunawat**  
Test Series

**9**  
AIR



**Akshay Kr. Tamrakar**  
Classroom Course,  
Test Series, IGP

**10**  
AIR



**Rajat Dixit**  
Classroom Course, IGP  
Postal Course, Test Series

**12**  
AIR



**Surendra Prajapat**  
Classroom Course,  
IGP

**13**  
AIR



**Gyan Chand**  
Classroom Course,  
Test Series, IGP

**14**  
AIR



**Suresh Kumar Prajapati**  
Classroom Course,  
IGP

**15**  
AIR



**Ved Prakash Sharma**  
Classroom Course,  
IGP

**16**  
AIR



**Anurag Kumar**  
Classroom Course

**17**  
AIR



**Ankit Goyal**  
Interview Guidance  
Program

**18**  
AIR



**Ankita Bansal**  
Classroom Course,  
IGP

**19**  
AIR



**Premeek Nain**  
Interview Guidance  
Program

**20**  
AIR



**Abhishek Jangir**  
Test Series,  
IGP

**21**  
AIR



**Aba Lawate**  
Classroom Course,  
Test Series, IGP

**22**  
AIR



**Hanuman Suman**  
Classroom Course,  
IGP

**23**  
AIR



**Saroj Kumari**  
Classroom Course,  
IGP

**24**  
AIR



**Darshit Kataria**  
Classroom Course,  
Test Series, IGP

**25**  
AIR



**Meena Hooda**  
Classroom Course,  
Test Series, IGP

**26**  
AIR



**Anshul Kumar**  
Test Series

**27**  
AIR



**Shashank Tiwari**  
Classroom Course,  
Test Series, IGP

**28**  
AIR



**Rahul Bachkheta**  
Classroom Course,  
IGP

**29**  
AIR



**Ram Kumar**  
Interview Guidance  
Program

**30**  
AIR



**Ajay Malav**  
Test Series,  
IGP

**31**  
AIR



**Prithvi Kota**  
Classroom Course,  
Test Series, IGP

**32**  
AIR



**Patil Tejas Kiran**  
Classroom Course,  
Test Series, IGP

**33**  
AIR



**Nikhil Kumar**  
Classroom Course, IGP  
Postal Course, Test Series

**34**  
AIR



**Saurabh Raj**  
Classroom Course,  
IGP

**35**  
AIR



**Nikunj Jindal**  
Interview Guidance  
Program

**36**  
AIR



**Rohit Pal**  
Classroom Course,  
Test Series, IGP

**37**  
AIR



**Mukesh Saini**  
Classroom Course

**38**  
AIR



**Naveen Kumar**  
Classroom Course, IGP  
Online Course, Test Series

**39**  
AIR



**Kalepu Bharatchandra**  
Classroom Course,  
Test Series, IGP

**40**  
AIR



**Mukesh Kumar**  
Classroom Course,  
Online Course, Test Series

**41**  
AIR



**Hari Kishan Choudhary**  
Classroom Course,  
Test Series, IGP

**42**  
AIR



**Nikul Rohin**  
Classroom Course,  
IGP

**43**  
AIR



**Parmar Sunny Mukeshkumar**  
Classroom Course, IGP  
Postal Course, Test Series

**44**  
AIR



**Abhishek Kumar Bhaskar**  
Classroom Course,  
Test Series, IGP

**45**  
AIR



**Shubham Goyal**  
Classroom Course,  
Test Series, IGP

**46**  
AIR



**Sreeram Budaraju**  
Test Series,  
IGP

**47**  
AIR



**Vivek Singh**  
Classroom Course,  
IGP

**48**  
AIR



**Prateek Jadaun**  
Classroom Course, IGP  
Postal Course, Test Series

**49**  
AIR



**Manjul Kr. Meshram**  
Classroom Course,  
Test Series, IGP

**50**  
AIR



**Suresh Kr. Kadela**  
Classroom Course,  
Test Series, IGP

**51**  
AIR



**Piyush Meena**  
Classroom Course,  
Test Series, IGP

**53**  
AIR



**Amit Jeph**  
Classroom Course,  
IGP

**54**  
AIR



**Bir Singh**  
Classroom Course,  
Test Series, IGP

**55**  
AIR



**Lokesh Kumar**  
Classroom Course,  
IGP

**57**  
AIR



**Keshav Singh**  
Classroom Course,  
IGP

**58**  
AIR



**Kanika Meena**  
Classroom Course,  
Test Series, IGP

**59**  
AIR



**Jeetram Meena**  
Classroom Course,  
IGP

**60**  
AIR



**Shreya Rai**  
Classroom Course,  
IGP

**61**  
AIR



**Manoj H P**  
Interview Guidance  
Program

**62**  
AIR



**Nitin Kumar**  
Classroom Course,  
Online Test Series

# MADE EASY Classroom Students Top in Engineering Service Exam 2020

# E&T Engineering

## E&T Engineering

**9** Selections in  
Top 10

**18** Selections in  
Top 20

**70** Selections out of  
75 vacancies

**93%** of Total Selections  
are from MADE EASY



**1**  
AIR

**Tapan Prakash Jha**  
Classroom Course, Test Series,  
Interview Guidance Program

**2**  
AIR  
**Parth Batra**  
Classroom Course,  
Test Series, IGP

**3**  
AIR  
**Rahul Naredi**  
Classroom Course,  
Test Series, IGP

**4**  
AIR  
**Shubham**  
Classroom Course,  
Test Series, IGP

**5**  
AIR  
**Manoj Kumar**  
Classroom Course,  
Test Series, IGP

**6**  
AIR  
**Saurav Kumar Singh**  
Test Series,  
IGP

**7**  
AIR  
**Raghav Purwar**  
Test Series,  
IGP

**9**  
AIR  
**Chhavi Jain**  
Online Course,  
Postal Package, IGP

**10**  
AIR  
**Laksheswari Kumari Jaiswal**  
Classroom Course,  
Test Series, IGP

**11**  
AIR  
**Shivam Kr. Srivastav**  
Classroom Course,  
IGP

**12**  
AIR  
**Surabhi Agrawal**  
Classroom Course,  
Test Series, IGP

**14**  
AIR  
**Arti Singh**  
Classroom Course,  
Test Series, IGP

**15**  
AIR  
**Priyamvada**  
Classroom Course,  
Test Series, IGP

**16**  
AIR  
**Shantanu Sharma**  
Classroom Course,  
Test Series, IGP

**17**  
AIR  
**Arjun Agarwal**  
Classroom Course,  
Test Series, IGP

**18**  
AIR  
**Vikas Gautam**  
Classroom Course,  
IGP

**19**  
AIR  
**Kavindar Tiwari**  
Interview Guidance  
Program

**20**  
AIR  
**Aditya Pandey**  
Classroom Course,  
Test Series, IGP

**21**  
AIR  
**Akhil Rajput**  
Classroom Course,  
Test Series, IGP

**22**  
AIR  
**Nitin Panchal**  
Classroom Course,  
Test Series, IGP

**23**  
AIR  
**Swarnim Singh**  
Classroom Course,  
IGP

**24**  
AIR  
**Logesh Kumar V**  
Interview Guidance  
Program

**25**  
AIR  
**Mohit Kumar Singhal**  
Classroom Course,  
IGP

**26**  
AIR  
**D Ajay**  
Classroom Course,  
Test Series, IGP

**27**  
AIR  
**Abhishek Kumar**  
Classroom Course,  
Test Series, IGP

**28**  
AIR  
**Shruti Bhatia**  
Classroom Course,  
Test Series, IGP

**29**  
AIR  
**G Sameeksha**  
Classroom Course,  
IGP

**30**  
AIR  
**Akshay Kr. Guruji**  
Postal Course,  
Test Series, IGP

**31**  
AIR  
**Kona Karthik**  
Test Series,  
IGP

**32**  
AIR  
**Spandan Sinha**  
Classroom Course,  
Test Series, IGP

**33**  
AIR  
**Rahul Srivastava**  
Test Series,  
IGP

**34**  
AIR  
**Chandrima Kachhwah**  
Classroom Course,  
IGP

**35**  
AIR  
**Duvvuru Rajesh Reddy**  
Test Series,  
IGP

**36**  
AIR  
**Shubhanshu Awasthi**  
Classroom Course,  
IGP

**37**  
AIR  
**Dharmesh Kumar Joshi**  
Classroom Course,  
IGP

**38**  
AIR  
**V. V. Lakshmi Prasanna**  
Interview Guidance  
Program

**39**  
AIR  
**Bhagyashree S Walikar**  
Test Series,  
IGP

**41**  
AIR  
**Sonaji Meghana**  
Test Series,  
IGP

**42**  
AIR  
**Dikshu**  
Classroom Course,  
IGP

**43**  
AIR  
**Nitin Kumar**  
Classroom Course,  
Test Series, IGP

**44**  
AIR  
**Achal Kumar**  
Classroom Course,  
Test Series, IGP

**45**  
AIR  
**Sushil Kumar Suman**  
Test Series,  
IGP

**47**  
AIR  
**Prem Kumar**  
Classroom Course,  
Test Series, IGP

**49**  
AIR  
**Yash Pal**  
Classroom Course,  
IGP

**50**  
AIR  
**V. Someshwar H.**  
Classroom Course,  
Test Series, IGP

**51**  
AIR  
**Rohit Kant Kushwaha**  
Classroom Course,  
Test Series, IGP

**52**  
AIR  
**Sumit Kannojia**  
Test Series,  
IGP

**53**  
AIR  
**Sheladiya Nirali Dhanjibhai**  
Classroom Course,  
IGP

**54**  
AIR  
**Manishankar Meena**  
Classroom Course,  
IGP

**55**  
AIR  
**Harsh Vardhan Singh**  
Classroom Course,  
Test Series, IGP

**56**  
AIR  
**Rajesh**  
Test Series,  
IGP

**57**  
AIR  
**Arvind Bishnoi**  
Classroom Course,  
IGP

**58**  
AIR  
**Saurabh Kashyap**  
Classroom Course,  
IGP

**59**  
AIR  
**Rajat Kumar**  
Classroom Course,  
IGP

**60**  
AIR  
**Kumari Swati**  
Test Series,  
IGP

**61**  
AIR  
**Anshul Bhabha**  
Classroom Course,  
IGP

**62**  
AIR  
**Mayur Ashokrao Charkha**  
Classroom Course,  
IGP

**63**  
AIR  
**Ajeet Kumar Ram**  
Classroom Course,  
Test Series, IGP

**64**  
AIR  
**Para Prabhakar Rao**  
Test Series,  
IGP

**65**  
AIR  
**Sunil Bhat**  
Classroom Course,  
Test Series, IGP

**67**  
AIR  
**Chanumuru Mallikarjuna**  
Classroom Course,  
IGP

**68**  
AIR  
**Ramteke Sumit Vinayak**  
Interview Guidance  
Program

**69**  
AIR  
**Palthiya Ramkumar**  
Test Series,  
IGP

**70**  
AIR  
**Sharda Kumari**  
Classroom Course,  
Test Series, IGP

**71**  
AIR  
**V. Dharmendar Naik**  
Classroom Course,  
Test Series, IGP

**72**  
AIR  
**Abhinesh Meena**  
Classroom Course,  
Test Series, IGP

**73**  
AIR  
**Anish Singh**  
Test Series,  
IGP

**74**  
AIR  
**Kishan Kumar**  
Test Series,  
IGP

**75**  
AIR  
**Harish Kumar**  
Classroom Course,  
IGP

# MADE EASY Classroom Students Top in Engineering Service Exam 2020

## Mechanical Engineering

### Mechanical Engineering

**10** Selections in  
Top 10

**19** Selections in  
Top 20

**36** Selections out of  
38 vacancies

**95%** of Total Selections  
are from MADE EASY



**1**  
AIR

**Salunkhe Charudatta Mohanrao**  
Classroom Course, Test Series,  
Interview Guidance Program



**2**  
AIR

**Kurkute Sanmati Sharadrao**  
Test Series,  
IGP



**3**  
AIR

**Suraj Kumar Shaw**  
Classroom Course,  
Test Series, IGP



**4**  
AIR

**Shubham Bothra**  
Classroom Course,  
IGP



**5**  
AIR

**Kamlesh Parwar**  
Classroom Course,  
Test Series, IGP



**6**  
AIR

**Mohammad Zuhaib**  
Classroom Course,  
IGP



**7**  
AIR

**Prateek Srivastava**  
Classroom Course, IGP  
Postal Package, Test Series



**8**  
AIR

**Vuyyuru Saikrishna Reddy**  
Classroom Course,  
Test Series, IGP



**9**  
AIR

**Ganesh Kumar Adigaur**  
Classroom Course,  
IGP



**10**  
AIR

**Hemabh Trivedi**  
Classroom Course,  
IGP



**11**  
AIR

**Monu Kumar**  
Classroom Course,  
Test Series, IGP



**12**  
AIR

**Shinde Sanket Vasant**  
Classroom Course,  
Test Series, IGP



**13**  
AIR

**Arpit Jain**  
Test Series



**14**  
AIR

**Nimesh Chandra**  
Classroom Course,  
Test Series, IGP



**15**  
AIR

**Chataparthi Surya Teja**  
Classroom Course,  
Test Series, IGP



**16**  
AIR

**Dagdu Ajinkya Radhakisan**  
Classroom Course,  
Test Series, IGP



**17**  
AIR

**Rahul Khandelwal**  
Classroom Course,  
Test Series, IGP



**18**  
AIR

**Manharbhai Katariya**  
Classroom Course,  
IGP



**20**  
AIR

**Nitish Kumar Bhoi**  
Classroom Course,  
Test Series, IGP



**21**  
AIR

**Priyam Patel**  
Classroom Course,  
IGP



**22**  
AIR

**Mohd Saiful**  
Classroom Course,  
Test Series, IGP



**23**  
AIR

**Vikalp Saini**  
Classroom Course,  
Test Series, IGP



**25**  
AIR

**Swapndeeep Chouhan**  
Classroom Course,  
Test Series, IGP



**26**  
AIR

**Jaivishwa Bharath M R**  
Classroom Course,  
Test Series, IGP



**27**  
AIR

**Mayuri Rastogi**  
Classroom Course,  
Test Series, IGP



**28**  
AIR

**Sarpate Akshay Devidas**  
Classroom Course,  
IGP



**29**  
AIR

**Hemant Kumar Meena**  
Classroom Course,  
Test Series, IGP



**30**  
AIR

**Himanshu**  
Classroom Course,  
Test Series, IGP



**31**  
AIR

**Yogesh Kumar**  
Test Series,  
IGP



**32**  
AIR

**Sanidhya Sewra**  
Classroom Course,  
Test Series, IGP



**33**  
AIR

**Surendra Kumar Meena**  
Classroom Course,  
Test Series, IGP



**34**  
AIR

**Prashant Kumar Meena**  
Classroom Course,  
Test Series, IGP



**35**  
AIR

**Rishabh Kumar Meena**  
Classroom Course,  
Test Series, IGP



**36**  
AIR

**Lokraj Meena**  
Classroom Course,  
Test Series, IGP



**37**  
AIR

**Nikam Sunil Madhukar**  
Classroom Course,  
Test Series, IGP



**38**  
AIR

**Shubham Shankar**  
Classroom Course,  
Test Series, IGP

# MADE EASY Classroom Students Top in Engineering Service Exam 2020

# Civil Engineering

**Civil  
Engineering**

**10** Selections in  
Top 10

**20** Selections in  
Top 20

**125** Selections out of  
127 vacancies

**98%** of Total Selections  
are from MADE EASY

**1**  
**AIR**

**Gaurav Kumar Verma**  
Classroom Course,  
Interview Guidance Program

**2**  
AIR

**Prashant Singh**  
Test Series,  
IGP

**3**  
AIR

**Kuldeep**  
Test Series,  
IGP

**4**  
AIR

**Anish Bagga**  
Classroom Course,  
Test Series, IGP

**5**  
AIR

**Pavitra Goyal**  
Test Series,  
IGP

**6**  
AIR

**Gurtej Singh**  
Classroom Course,  
Test Series, IGP

**7**  
AIR

**Vipul Gupta**  
Classroom Course,  
IGP

**8**  
AIR

**Yatin Malhotra**  
Classroom Course,  
IGP

**9**  
AIR

**Arpit Jain**  
Classroom Course,  
IGP

**10**  
AIR

**Amit Sharma**  
Classroom Course,  
IGP

**11**  
AIR

**Ashok Kumar**  
Postal Package,  
IGP

**12**  
AIR

**Nookala Saivikas**  
Classroom Course,  
IGP

**13**  
AIR

**Mrinal Dewangan**  
Postal Package,  
Test Series, IGP

**14**  
AIR

**Kaushik Shekhar**  
Classroom Course,  
IGP

**15**  
AIR

**Satyam Gupta**  
Classroom Course,  
IGP

**16**  
AIR

**Pranav Choudhary**  
Test Series,  
IGP

**17**  
AIR

**Shakti Shekhar**  
Test Series,  
IGP

**18**  
AIR

**Ishant Gehi**  
Classroom Course,  
IGP

**19**  
AIR

**Aditya Upadhyay**  
Classroom Course,  
Test Series, IGP

**20**  
AIR

**Bhavya Parashar**  
Test Series,  
IGP

**21**  
AIR

**Srishti Bafna**  
Classroom Course,  
IGP

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# 1

# CURRENT ECONOMIC ISSUES

## Special Credit Linked Capital Subsidy Scheme (SCLCSS)

- The Union Ministry for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) launched the Special Credit Linked Capital Subsidy Scheme for Service Sector (SCLCSS) at Guwahati.

### Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)

- Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Development (MSMED) Act, 2006 which was notified on October 2, 2006, deals with the definition of MSMEs. The MSMED Act, 2006 defines the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises based on:
  - The investment in plant and machinery for those engaged in manufacturing or production, processing or preservation of goods.
  - The investment in equipment for enterprises engaged in providing or rendering of services.
- According to the recently proposed definition, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) will be classified as:

### Earlier and Revised Definition of MSMEs



#### Existing MSME Classification

Criteria : Investment in Plant & Machinery or Equipment

Classification	Micro	Small	Medium
Manufacturing Enterprises	Investment < ₹ 25 lac	Investment < ₹ 5 cr.	Investment < ₹ 10 cr.
Services Enterprise	Investment < ₹ 10 lac	Investment < ₹ 2 cr.	Investment < ₹ 5 cr.

#### Revised MSME Classification

Composite Criteria : Investment and Annual Turnover

Classification	Micro	Small	Medium
Manufacturing and Services	Investment < ₹ 1 cr. & Turnover < ₹ 5 cr.	Investment < ₹ 10 cr. & Turnover < ₹ 50 cr.	Investment < ₹ 20 cr. & Turnover < ₹ 100 cr.

### SCLCSS

- Special Credit Linked Capital Subsidy Scheme for Service Sector (SCLCSS) aims at promoting entrepreneurship and opportunities for MSMEs in the North-Eastern Region.
- 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 equipment through institutional credit to the SC-ST MSEs without any sector-specific restrictions on technology upgradation.

“ Banks, insurance companies, financial institutions, and listed companies cannot be classified as Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). Any holding company or subsidiary of a company which is not an SME cannot be classified as SME. ”

## RBI to purchase G-Secs under G-Sec Acquisition Programme (G-SAP)

- The Reserve Bank of India will conduct the open market purchase of government securities of 1 lakh crore under the G-sec Acquisition Programme (G-SAP 1.0) in FY22.

### Key Points:

- G-SAP will run alongside RBI's regular operations including Liquidity Adjustment Facility (LAF), OMOs and operation twist, adding that the programme is built into the central bank's liquidity planning framework for 2021-22 as a whole.
- The RBI will purchase the government securities through a multi-security auction using the multiple price method.

### About G-SAP

- The RBI periodically purchases Government bonds from the market through Open Market Operations (OMOs).
- The G-SAP is in a way an OMO. But there is an upfront commitment by the RBI to the markets that it will purchase bonds worth a specific amount.
- The idea is to give comfort to the bond markets.
- In other words, G-SAP is an OMO with a 'distinct character.'
- Its objective is to achieve a stable and orderly evolution of the yield curve along with management of liquidity in the economy.

### About Government Security (G-Sec)

- G-Sec is a tradable instrument issued by the Central Government or the State Governments. It acknowledges the Government's debt obligation.
- It practically carries no risk of default and, hence, are called risk-free gilt-edged instruments.

### Note

Open market operations are the sale and purchase of government securities and treasury bills by RBI or the central bank of the country. The objective of OMO is to regulate the money supply in the economy.

## RBI proposed new norms to regulate Digital Lending

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has proposed new norms and asked the government to frame a new legislation to curb illegal digital lending in the country.
- The proposals come after a panel set up by the regulator found that there are 1,100 loan apps in various app stores, of which 600 are illegal.
- RBI had constituted the working group on digital lending including lending through online platforms and mobile apps under the chairmanship of Jayant Kumar Dash, Executive Director, RBI.



### Significance

- India has a huge growth potential when it comes to the Digital Lending landscape.
- Digital lending is mostly preferred by those who are generally not able to avail any credit through the formal sources of finance, like banks.
- Digital lending is mostly preferred by those who are generally not able to avail any credit through the formal sources of finance, like banks.
- Digital lending is a powerful tool that can be used for financial inclusion.
- With new innovations underway, digital lending offers much better products to the masses at a much faster rate which is even more cost-efficient.
- Online lending has played a pivotal role in evading cumbersome redtapism usually involved while availing loans offline in a traditional setting.

### Note

Digital lending is the process of availing credit online. Its increased popularity amongst new-age lenders can be attributed to expanding smartphone penetration, credit range flexibility, and speedy online transactions.

## Govt. meeting on Regulation of Cryptocurrencies in India

- The PM chaired a meeting on cryptocurrency where the need for its regulation was discussed.
- Cryptocurrency and Regulation of Official Digital Currency Bill, 2021 introduced. Under this, a plan to ban private digital currencies favours RBI backed currency.



- A 3-6 month exit period prior to banning the trading, mining and issuing of cryptos. Finally, Cryptocurrencies, though unregulated, are not illegal in India.

### Key Points:

- Cryptocurrencies make it possible to lend, sell, buy, or borrow without an identity, credit score, or even a bank.
- All records of its creation and when it's sent or received are stored in a sort of big digital book that anyone can access, keeping it honest. It can't (easily) be stolen or seized and can be used anywhere in the world.
- Some coins are used to transfer value (measured in a currency like dollars) cheaper and faster than using credit or conventional means. Meaning the cost to send someone crypto, which can be converted into regular currency, is cheaper than something like a check or wire transfer.
- However crypto is NOT just used for illegal purposes. In fact, due chiefly to its price fluctuation and other reasons it has fallen out of favor on the black market.

### Famous Cryptocurrency:

- **Bitcoin:** Introduced in 2009 Created by "Satoshi Nakamoto" (Real name and identity unknown). It is the world's first successful cryptocurrency.
- **DOGECOIN:** Introduced in 2013 by Jackson Palmer and later Billy Markus. Dogecoin is a digital currency like bitcoin or ethereum.
- **Ethereum:** Launched in 2015, created by Vitalik Buterin.
- **Litecoin:** Introduced in 2011 Created by Charlie Lee. Litecoin is unique from Bitcoin in that it can produce a greater number of coins and its transaction speed is faster.
- **Stellar Lumen (XLM):** Introduced in 2015 Created by Jed McCaleb. Stellar is a decentralized computer network that operates using blockchain technology. On the Stellar network, you can trade its form of currency, which is called XLM.

### Banks and NBFCs entered into Co-lending agreement

- Several banks have recently entered into co-lending 'master agreements' with the registered Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs).
- The Reserve Bank of India allowed the co-lending model in 2020, subject to prior agreement. However, some criticisms of the co-lending model are present.
- Several banks have entered into co-lending master agreements with NBFCs, and more are in the pipeline.
- SBI signed a deal with Adani Capital, a small NBFC of a big corporate house, for co-lending to farmers to help them buy tractors and farm implements.

### About Co-Lending Model (CML)

- Under CLM, banks are permitted to co-lend with all registered NBFCs (including HFCs) based on a prior agreement.
- The co-lending banks will take their share of the individual loans on a back-to-back basis in their books.
- **Lending to the priority sector:** In 2018, the RBI had announced "co-origination of loans" by banks and Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs) for lending to the priority sector.
- **Retain a minimum share:** The RBI has clearly said that NBFCs shall be required to retain a minimum of 20 percent share of the individual loans on their books.
- The lenders have two options to choose to structure their co-lending products on the bank's part:
  - **Pre-disbursal contribution:** to a loan under a mechanism for ex-ante due diligence.
  - **Post disbursal takeover:** Of banks share in the loan on a back-to-back basis.

### Govt. cleared DICGC Bill, 2021

- The Center had passed an amendment to the Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation (DICGC) Act to ensure that account holders can access their insured deposit amount within 90 days of such a liability arising in the event of a bank coming under the moratorium imposed by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).



### Key points:

- **Norms for deposit insurance earlier:** Earlier, out of the amount deposited in the bank, only Rs 50,000 was guaranteed, which was then raised to Rs 1 lakh.
- **Current norms for deposit insurance:** Now, if a bank is weak or is even about to go bankrupt, depositors will get their money of up to Rs five lakhs within 90 days.
  - Within the first 45 days of the bank being put under a moratorium, the DICGC would collect all information relating to deposit accounts. In the next 45 days, it will review the information and repay depositors closer to the 90th day.
- Deposit insurance covers all deposits such as savings, fixed, current, recurring deposits, in all commercial banks, functioning in India.
- Along with Commercial Banks, deposits in the state, central and primary cooperative banks, functioning in states/union territories are also covered.

### About Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation (DICGC)

- It is a specialized division of the Reserve Bank of India which is under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Finance.
- It was established on 15 July 1978 under the Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation Act, 1961 for the purpose of providing insurance of deposits and guaranteeing of credit facilities.

### SEBI proposed Regulatory Framework for Algo Trading

- Recently, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) proposed that all orders emanating from the Application Programming Interface (API) of stockbrokers should be treated as Algorithmic Trading or Algo.



#### Key highlights:

- All orders emanating from an API should be treated as an Algo order and be subject to control by the stockbroker.
- The APIs to carry out Algo trading should be tagged with the unique Algo ID provided by the stock exchange granting approval for the Algo .
- Stockbrokers need to take the approval of all Algos from the exchange.
  - Each Algo strategy, whether used by broker or client, has to be approved by exchange and as is the current practice
  - Each Algo strategy has to be certified by Certified Information Systems Auditor (CISA)/ Diploma in Information System Audit (DISA) auditors.

### About Algo Trading

- It refers to orders generated at superfast speed by the use of advanced mathematical models that involve the automated execution of the trade.
- It automatically monitors live stock prices and executes a trade upon fulfilment of specific criteria. This frees the trader from having to monitor live stock prices and initiate manual order placement.
- It provides profit opportunities for the trader.

### India registered highest-ever FDI inflow

- India has registered the highest ever annual Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) inflow of 81.97 billion dollars in 2020-21.

### Key Points

- FDI inflows in the last seven financial years are over 440 billion dollars, which is nearly 58 per cent of the total FDI inflow in the last 21 financial years.
- The top five countries from where FDI Equity Inflows were received during 2014 to 2021 are Singapore, Mauritius, the USA, Netherlands and Japan.
- The computer software and hardware sector attracted the largest share of FDI inflows, followed by Service, Trading and Telecommunications.

### About Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)

- It refers to the conditions when a company or investor takes ownership and controls operation in a business entity in another country.
- With FDI, foreign companies are directly involved with day-to-day operations in the other country.
  - This means they aren't just bringing money with them, but also knowledge, skills and technology.
- It is an important non-debt monetary source for India's economic development.
  - Economic liberalization started in India in the wake of the 1991 crisis and since then, FDI has steadily increased in the country.

### Public Accounts Committee (PAC) completed 100 years

- The Public Accounts Committee has completed 100 years of its formation.
- The PAC is the oldest parliamentary committee in Indian legislative affairs and has been crucial in upholding the principle of accountability as it exercises oversight of public expenditure.

#### Key points:

- PAC was first set up in 1921 in the wake of the Montague-Chelmsford Reforms.
- The Public Accounts Committee consists of 22 members elected according to the principle of proportional representation by means of single transferable vote:
  - Fifteen members elected by Lok Sabha every year from amongst its members.
  - Seven members of Rajya Sabha elected by that House in like manner are associated with the Committee.
- This system of election ensures that each Party/Group is represented on the Committee in proportion to its respective strength in the two Houses.
- The Chairperson of the Committee is appointed by the Speaker from amongst the members of Lok Sabha elected to the Committee.

- A Minister is not eligible to be elected as a member of the Committee and if a member, after election to the Committee, is appointed as a Minister, she/he ceases to be a member of the Committee from the date of such appointment.
- The term of office of members of the Committee does not exceed one year at a time.
- The Committee is assisted by the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) in the examination of Accounts and Audit Reports.

## RBI to implement Central Bank Digital Currency

- RBI is working out a phased implementation strategy for the introduction of Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC) with little or no disruption.
- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has proposed amendments to the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934, which would enable it to launch a CBDC.

### About Central Bank Digital Currency

- It is a legal tender and a central bank liability in digital form denominated in a sovereign currency and appearing on the central bank's balance sheet.
- It is the same as a fiat currency and is exchangeable one-to-one with the fiat currency. Only its form is different.
- It can be converted or exchanged at par with similarly denominated cash and traditional central bank deposits.
- It can be transacted using wallets backed by the blockchain and is regulated by the central bank.

### Note

Fiat Money is a government-issued currency that is not backed by a commodity such as gold. It gives central banks greater control over the economy because they can control how much money is printed. Most modern paper currencies, such as the US dollar, are fiat currencies.

## Neobanks to grow in India : Survey

- With about 58.4% population underbanked in India, Neobanks have immense potential for growth in tier-II and-III rural segments of the countries as per the "The Evolution of Neobanks in India" Report.
- Neobanks bridge the gap between the services that traditional banks offer and the evolving expectations of customers in the digital age.

### About Neobanks

- A neobank is a kind of digital bank without any branches. Rather than being physically present at a specific location, neobanking is entirely online.
- Neobanks are financial institutions that give customers a cheaper alternative to traditional banks.
- They leverage technology and artificial intelligence to offer personalised services to customers while minimising operating costs.
- In India, these firms don't have a bank licence of their own but rely on bank partners to offer licensed services.
  - That's because the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) doesn't allow banks to be 100% digital yet.
  - The RBI remains unwavering in prioritising banks' physical presence, and has spoken about the need for digital banking service providers to have some physical presence as well.

## RBI kept Policy Rates unchanged

- The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) of the RBI kept the repo rate unchanged at 4 percent, in order to revive & sustain growth.

### Key points:

- The Monetary Policy Committee has also ensured that inflation remains within the target. Reverse repo rate was also kept as earlier at 3.35 per cent.
- Marginal Standing Facility (MSF) rate and bank rate also remain unchanged at 4.25 per cent.
- For the financial year 2021-22, CPI inflation is projected at 5.3 per cent
- As per RBI, food inflation is predicted to remain muted in upcoming months, as a result of record production of food-grains.

### About Monetary Policy Committee (MPC)

- The RBI has a government-constituted Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) which is tasked with framing monetary policy using tools like the repo rate, reverse repo rate, bank rate, cash reserve ratio (CRR).
- It has been instituted by the Central Government of India under Section 45ZB of the RBI Act that was amended in 1934.
- **Functions:** The MPC is entrusted with the responsibility of deciding the different policy rates including MSF, Repo Rate, Reverse Repo Rate, and Liquidity Adjustment Facility.

## El Salvador's to build Bitcoin City



- El Salvador is planning to build an entire city based on the largest cryptocurrency Bitcoin.
- In September 2021, El Salvador became the first country in the world to adopt bitcoin as legal tender.

### Key Points:

- Bitcoin city will be laid out in a circle (like a coin) and there will be a plaza in the city centre that will be host to a huge Bitcoin symbol. There would be residential areas, malls, restaurants and a port in the Bitcoin city.
- The city would be funded with the issuance of a \$1 billion Bitcoin Bond.

### About Bitcoin Bonds

- Bitcoin Bonds represent the start of a reformation of capital markets, built on Bitcoin and layer-2 technologies like the Liquid Network.
- Dividends can be distributed to investors instantly, with built-in cryptography to maintain confidentiality.
- Bonds can be traded 24/7 with other assets like stable coins, using protocols that help eliminate the need for trust.
- Dividends will be paid easily to bondholders using tools deployed on top of the Liquid network.

## Govt. reviews Amended Technology Up-gradation Fund Scheme (ATUFS)

- Recently, the Union Minister of Textiles reviewed the Amended Technology Up-gradation Fund Scheme (ATUFS) at the 5th Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee (IMSC) meeting organized by the Ministry of Textiles.

- The scheme was reviewed to boost the Indian Textile Industry by enabling ease of doing business, bolstering exports & fuelling employment.

### Key Points:

- The Ministry of Textiles had introduced Technology Upgradation Fund Scheme (TUFS) in 1999 as a credit-linked subsidy scheme intended for modernization and technology up-gradation of the Indian textile industry.
- This scheme was approved in 2016 with an outlay of Rs. 17822 crore and implemented through the web-based iTUFS platform.
- The scheme promotes ease of doing business in the country and achieves the vision of generating employment and promoting exports through "Make in India" with "Zero effect and Zero defect" in manufacturing.

## Textile Sector In India

- India's textiles sector is the second-largest employer in the country after agriculture. The domestic textiles and apparel industry contributes 5% to India's GDP, 7% of industry output in value terms, and 12% of the country's export earnings.
- India is the 6th largest exporter of textiles and apparel in the world. India is one of the largest producers of cotton and jute in the world. India is also the 2nd largest producer of silk in the world and 95% of the world's hand-woven fabric comes from India.

## Gujarat International Finance Tec (GIFT) City

- On barren land along the Sabarmati river GIFT City developed as the country's first greenfield integrated city.
- The Gujarat International Finance Tec City (GIFT City) is a Central Business District being built between Ahmedabad and Gandhinagar in Gujarat
- Its main purpose is to provide high quality physical infrastructure (electricity, water, gas, district cooling, roads, telecoms and broadband), so that finance and tech firms can relocate their operations in it
- It will have a SEZ, international education zone, integrated townships, an entertainment zone, hotels, a convention centre, and international techno park, Software Technology Parks of India (STPI) units, shopping malls, stock exchanges etc.
- Gujarat International Finance Tec-City Company Limited (GIFTCL) is responsible for developing and implementing the project. GIFTCL is a joint venture of Gujarat Urban Development Company Limited (GUDCOL) and Infrastructure Leasing & Financial Services (IL&FS).



## India-U.S. signed Equalisation Levy 2020

- Recently, India and USA agreed on a translational approach on Equalisation Levy 2020.

### Key Points:

- India and United States joined 134 other members of the OECD/G20 Inclusive Framework (including Austria, France, Italy, Spain, and the United Kingdom) in reaching agreement on the Statement on a Two-Pillar Solution to Address the Tax Challenges Arising from the Digitalization of the Economy.
  - Pillar One, which is about reallocation of an additional share of profit to the market jurisdictions.
  - Pillar Two, consisting of minimum tax and subject to tax rules.
- The United States and Austria, France, Italy, Spain, and the United Kingdom reached an agreement on a translational approach to existing Unilateral Measures while implementing Pillar 1.
- India and the United States have agreed that the same terms that apply under the October 21 Joint Statement shall apply between the United States and India with respect to India's charge of 2% equalisation levy on e-commerce supply of services and the United States' trade action regarding the said Equalisation Levy.

### About Equalization Levy

- Equalization Levy was introduced in India in 2016, with the intention of taxing the digital transactions i.e. the income accruing to foreign e-commerce companies from India.
- It is aimed at taxing business to business transactions.
- The following services are currently covered under the EL:
  - Online advertisement.
  - Any provision for digital advertising space or facilities/ service for the purpose of online advertisement.

## Government launched RBI's two customer-centric initiatives

Recently, Union Government launched two innovative customer centric initiatives of the Reserve bank of India (RBI). These initiatives are :

1. The RBI Retail Direct Scheme.
2. The Reserve Bank - Integrated Ombudsman Scheme.

These will be a single point of reference for customers to file their complaints, submit the documents, track status, and provide feedback.

### Key points:

- RBI Retail Direct Scheme is aimed at enhancing access to the government securities market for retail investors. This scheme offers a new avenue for directly investing in government securities issued by both Centre and state governments.
- Investors will be able to easily open and maintain their government securities account online with the RBI, free of cost.
- It will make the process of G-sec trading smoother for small investors.
- The scheme will facilitate the smooth completion of the government borrowing programme in 2021-22.

## GSTN blocked scores of Input Tax Credit

- GST Network blocked Rs 14,000 crore worth of input tax credit (ITC) of 66,000 businesses registered under the Goods and Service Tax.
- There could be a possibility of misuse of the provision by unscrupulous businesses by generating fake invoices just to claim tax credit.
- As much as 80% of the total GST liability is being settled by ITC and only 20% is deposited as cash.

### About Input Tax Credit (ITC)

- ITC is the tax that a business pays on a purchase and that it can use to reduce its tax liability when it makes a sale.
- In simple terms, input credit means at the time of paying tax on output, you can reduce the tax you have already paid on inputs and pay the balance amount.
- Input Tax Credit refers to the tax already paid by a person at time of purchase of goods or services and which is available as deduction from tax payable .
- **Exceptions:** A business under composition scheme cannot avail of input tax credit. ITC cannot be claimed for personal use or for goods that are exempt.

## PM Gati Shakti Master plan launched

- Union Government launched “PM Gati Shakti Master Plan” on India’s 75th Independence Day.

### Key Points:

- It will be a Rs. 100 lakh-crore project for developing ‘holistic infrastructure’. It is expected to be the source of employment opportunities for the youth in the future.
- It aims to make a foundation for holistic infrastructure and give an integrated pathway to our economy.
- It has the following objectives:
  - To provide easier interconnectivity and reduce travel time between road, rail, air, and waterways
  - To improve industrial productivity
  - To make local manufacturing globally competitive
  - To facilitate future economic zones
  - To create employment

### Need:

- The push for infrastructure is in line with the government’s efforts to step up capital expenditure in infrastructure to promote economic growth.
- Infrastructure development has the ability to create a multiplier effect with every rupee invested, yielding much higher returns.

## Sovereign Gold Bond to be issued

- The Government of India in consultation with the Reserve Bank of India has decided to issue Sovereign Gold Bonds (SGB).

### Key points:

- Sovereign Gold Bonds was launched in november 2015.
- Its objective is to reduce the demand for physical gold and shift a part of the domestic savings (to purchase gold) into financial savings.
- **Issuance:** The Gold Bonds are issued as Government of India Stock under the Government Securities (GS) Act, 2006. These are issued by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on behalf of the Government of India.
- **Eligibility:** It is restricted for sale to resident individuals, Hindu Undivided Families (HUFs), trusts, universities and charitable institutions.
- **Price:** The price is calculated based on the spot price of gold as provided by the Mumbai-based India Bullion and Jewellers Association (IBJA).
- **Term:** Maturity period is 8 years, with an option to exit the investment after the first five years.
- **Investment Limit:** Gold bonds can be purchased in multiples of one unit.
- **Interest Rate:** A fixed rate of 2.5% per annum is applicable on the scheme, payable semi-annually.

## National Single Window System launched for investors and businesses

- The Union Minister for Commerce & Industry, Textiles, Consumer Affairs & Distribution launched the “National Single Window System” for Investors and Businesses.

### Key Highlights:

- The portal will serve as a one stop-shop for investors for approvals and clearances.
- The National Single Window System (NSWS) will usher in a change from the legacy of running to government offices and will promote the ease of doing business.
- The portal, as of today, hosts approvals across 18 Central Departments and nine States, and another 14 Central Departments and five States has been added by December 2021.
- NSWS will provide end-to-end facilitation and support to investors, facilitate clearances at the Centre and State levels, provide pre-investment advisory to new businesses, and share information related to land banks.
- It seeks to address information asymmetry, duplication of information submitted across platforms and authorities, and inefficient tracking of approvals and registration faced by investors.
- This portal will help in bringing Transparency, Accountability & Responsiveness in the ecosystem. All information will be available on a single dashboard.

## 45th GST Council Meeting held

- Recently, the GST Council’s 45th meeting was held in Lucknow under the chairmanship of the Union Finance Minister. Discussions over bringing petrol & diesel under the GST regime were discussed and several key decisions were taken.
- The GST Council has decided to keep petroleum products and Natural gas out of the GST regime.

### Key Decisions:

- The GST rate on biodiesel, which is supplied to oil marketing companies for blending with diesel, has been reduced from 12 percent to five percent.
- GST rates on Retro Fitment Kits for vehicles, used by persons with special disabilities, have also been reduced to five percent.
- The GST rate on fortified rice kernels for schemes like integrated child development schemes has been recommended to be reduced from 18 percent to five percent.
- For GST Council Meeting 2021 LIVE Updates, click here
- Transport of export goods by vessels and air has been exempt from GST till September 30. This exemption was given as exporters were facing difficulties in getting a refund of ITC (Input Tax Credit) due to technical glitches on the GST portal.

- States charge national permit fees for granting permits to goods carriages. This fee has been exempted from the GST regime.
- Cess to pay back compensation loans taken by Centre and then transferred to states last fiscal and this fiscal will continue till March 2026. Beyond June 2022, the cess will be collected only to repay the loans taken by the states.
- The inverted duty structure on footwear and textiles will be corrected from January 1, 2022.
- On locomotives and certain railway parts, the GST rate has been increased to 18 percent from 12 percent to correct the inverted duty structure.
- GST of 12 percent will be applicable on specific renewable devices.

### Govt. reconstituted Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM)

- Recently, the Government has reconstituted the seven-member Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM) by inducting three new members. It will continue to be chaired by economist Bibek Debroy.

#### About EAC-PM

- EAC-PM is an independent body to advise the government, especially the Prime Minister, on economic and policy-related matters.
- Set up in September 2017 with a term of two years, replacing the erstwhile PMEAC, which was headed by former Reserve Bank of India governor C Rangarajan during the terms of former prime minister Manmohan Singh.
- Function & Mandate: Analysing any issue, economic or otherwise, referred to it by the Prime Minister and advising him thereon.
- Addressing issues of macroeconomic importance and presenting views thereon to the Prime Minister", either on its own or upon reference.

### SBI raised money through AT1 Bonds

- The State Bank of India (SBI), India's largest lender, recently announced that it has raised Rs 4,000 crore through additional Tier-1 (AT1) bonds. These AT1 bonds were raised at a coupon rate of 7.72%.



### Key Highlights

- It is the first such issuance in domestic market after the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) notified new rules.
- SBI has AAA credit rating from local credit agencies while the AT1 offering is rated AA+. This is the highest rating in India for such instruments.
- SBI was also the first lender to raise capital through offshore AT1 bonds in 2016.
- The latest issuance by SBI has encouraged other lenders such as Axis Bank to look after the offshore AT1 bond issue in order to raise about \$1 billion.
- Axis Bank became the second Indian lender in 2021 to tap overseas debt markets to raise funds using AT1 bonds. HDFC Bank also raised \$1 billion, recently.

### EASE 4.0 : Govt. launched forth edition of banking reforms

- The Ministry of Finance recently launched the fourth edition of Public Sector Bank (PSB) Reforms Agenda called 'EASE 4.0' for the financial year 2021-22. It is a simplified, tech-enabled and collaborative banking.
- On the occasion, Finance Minister also launched the annual report for PSB Reforms Agenda EASE 3.0 for the year 2020-21 and also witnessed the awards ceremony to felicitate the best performing banks on EASE 3.0 Banking Reforms Index.

### Key Highlights

- SBI, Bank of Baroda (BoB), and Union Bank of India (UBI) won the awards for best performing banks on the basis of EASE index.
- Indian Bank won the award for best improvement from baseline performance.
- SBI, BoB, UBI, Punjab National Bank and Canara Bank also won the top awards across different themes of PSB Reforms Agenda EASE 3.0.

### Objectives of EASE 4.0

- EASE 4.0 reforms to look after four key initiatives to be adopted by public sector banks:
  - Smart lending backed by analytics.
  - 24x7 banking with resilient technology & cloud-based IT systems.
  - Data enabled agriculture financing.
  - Collaboration with the financial ecosystem.

## Union Govt. to modify provisions of Agriculture Infrastructure Fund

- The Union Government has given its nod to the various modifications in the Central Sector Scheme of Financing Facility under 'Agriculture Infrastructure Fund'.



### Key modifications:

- Eligibility has now been extended to State Agencies/APMCs, National & State Federations of Cooperatives, Federations of Farmers Producers Organizations (FPOs) and Federations of Self Help Groups (SHGs).
- For APMCs, interest subvention for a loan upto Rs. 2 crore will be provided for each project of different infrastructure types e.g. cold storage, sorting, grading and assaying units, silos, et within the same market yard.
- The power has been delegated to the Minister of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare to make necessary changes with regard to addition or deletion of beneficiary.

### About Agriculture Infrastructure Fund

- The Agriculture Infrastructure Fund is a medium - long term debt financing facility for investment in viable projects for post-harvest management infrastructure and community farming assets through interest subvention and credit guarantee.
- The scheme also entails providing credit guarantee coverage under Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises (CGTMSE) for loans up to Rs. 2 Crore. NABARD will steer this initiative in association with the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare.
- Under the scheme, Rs. 1 Lakh Crore will be provided by banks and financial institutions as loans with interest subvention of 3% per annum and credit guarantee coverage under CGTMSE for loans up to Rs. 2 Crores.
- Farmers, Marketing Cooperative Societies, Joint Liability Groups (JLG), Multipurpose Cooperative Societies, Agri-entrepreneurs, Start-ups, and Central/ State agency or Local Body sponsored Public-Private Partnership Projects.

### Note

The Agriculture Infrastructure Fund will be managed and monitored through an online Management Information System (MIS) platform. It will enable all the qualified entities to apply for loan under the Fund.

## RBI composed Financial Inclusion Index

- The Reserve Bank of India has created a composite Financial Inclusion Index (FI-Index) to capture the extent of financial inclusion across the country.
- The Financial Inclusion Index will be used to capture the extent of financial inclusion in India.

### About Financial Inclusion Index

- Financial Inclusion Index has been conceptualised as a comprehensive index comprising the details of banking, insurance, investments, postal and pension sector in consultation with government and sectoral regulators.
- It captures information on different aspects of financial inclusion in a single value in the range of 0 and 100.
- 0 indicates complete financial exclusion while 100 indicates complete financial inclusion.
- It comprises three broad parameters such as Access, Usage, and Quality. Each of these parameters comprises various dimensions that are computed on the basis of different indicators.
- It is responsive to ease of access, availability & usage of services along with quality of services, comprising all 97 indicators.

### Note

FI-Index has been created without any base year. It reflects cumulative efforts of all stakeholders towards financial inclusion.

## SEBI amended rule for perpetual bonds

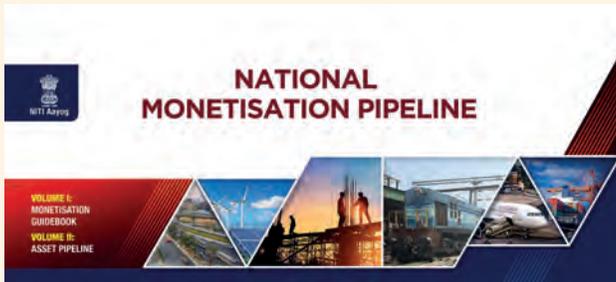
- SEBI amended the 100-year valuation rule for perpetual bonds, in March 2021.
- As per new rules, deemed residual maturity period of Basel-III AT-1 bonds will be 10 years until March 31, 2022. This period will be increased to 20 and 30 years in subsequent six-month period.
- According to new rule, from April 2023, residual maturity of AT-1 bonds will become 100 years from the date of issuance of these bonds.



### AT1 Bond

- AT1 bonds are also called perpetual bonds. They carry no maturity date but are having a call option.
- The issuer of these bonds may call or redeem the bonds in case it is getting money at a cheaper rate, especially when interest rates are decreasing.

## Union Govt. launched National Monetisation Pipeline (NMP)



- The Union Government recently launched the National Monetisation Pipeline (NMP) in an effort to list out the government's infrastructure assets to be sold over the next four-years.

### Key Highlights

- The programme has objective to unlock the value of investments in brownfield public sector assets by tapping institutional and long-term capital, which can thereafter be leveraged for public investments.
- The four-year National Monetisation Pipeline (NMP) will unlock value in brownfield projects by engaging the private sector, transferring to them the rights but not the ownership in projects.
- The components of project are roads, railways and power sector assets which will comprise over 66 per cent of the total estimated value of the assets to be monetised, with the balance coming from sectors including telecom, mining, aviation, ports, natural gas and petroleum product pipelines, warehouses and stadiums.
- Currently, only assets of central government line ministries and CPSEs in infrastructure sectors have been included. Monetization through disinvestment and monetization of non-core assets have not been included in the NMP.

### Significance:

- Asset Monetisation needs to be viewed not just as a funding mechanism, but as an overall paradigm shift in infrastructure operations, augmentation and maintenance considering the private sector's resource efficiencies and its ability to dynamically adapt to the evolving global and economic reality.
- Considering that infrastructure creation is inextricably linked to monetisation, the period for NMP is co-terminus with the balance period under National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP) i.e for FY 2022-2025.
- NMP is indicatively valued at Rs 6.0 lakh crore for 4 years.

## Union Govt. notified RoDTEP Scheme

- The Union Government notified the rates and guidelines for Remission of Duties and Taxes on Exported Products (RoDTEP) export incentive scheme.
- This scheme for zero rating of exports will help in boosting India's exports and competitiveness across the global markets.

### Key features of scheme:

- The RoDTEP Scheme allows exporters to receive refunds on taxes and duties that are not exempted or refunded under any other scheme.
- Under the scheme, exporters receive refunds on the embedded taxes and duties previously non-recoverable.
- The chief aim of the scheme is to boost the export of goods that were poor in volume.
- The scheme basically replaces the Merchandise Export from India Scheme (MEIS).
- The scheme provides for rebates of Central, State and Local duties/taxes/ levies which are not refunded under any other duty remission schemes.
- The RoDTEP scheme can be said to be a combination of the MEIS and the Rebate of State and Central Taxes and Levies (RoSCTL).
- Under this scheme, refund would be claimed as a percentage of the Freight On Board (FOB) value of exports.

## G7 finalized deal on Minimum Global Corporate Tax



- A group of the world's richest nations reached a landmark deal to close cross-border tax loopholes used by some of the world's biggest companies.
- The Group of Seven (G7) would support a minimum global corporation tax rate of at least 15%.

### Key Points

- The deal aims to end what the U.S. Treasury Secretary has called a "30-year race to the bottom on corporate tax rates" as countries compete to lure multinationals.
- Agreement was signed by finance ministers of the United Kingdom, United States, Germany, Canada, France, Italy and Japan.
- It opens a way for levies on multinational companies in countries where they operate rather than just where they are headquartered.

**Minimum Global 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 that enterprises make from their businesses.
- 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.
- Under the new tax system, countries where big firms operate would get 'right to tax' at least 20% of profits.

**Note**

India is likely to benefit from the global minimum 15 percent corporate tax rate deal because, effective domestic tax rate is above this threshold and it would continue to attract investment.

**RBI constituted Sudarshan Sen Committee**

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has set up the Sudarshan Sen Committee to review the working of Asset Reconstruction Companies (ARCs) Comprehensively. It will recommend suitable measures for enabling them to meet the growing requirements



**Sudarshan Sen**  
Executive Director  
Reserve Bank of India

**Key Points:**

- Committee will 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 panel will also review the existing legal and regulatory framework applicable to ARCs and recommend measures to improve efficacy of ARCs.

- It will also review the role of ARCs in the resolution of stressed assets, including under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC), and give suggestions for improving liquidity in and trading of security receipts.
- Besides, it has also been asked to review the business models of ARCs.

**About Asset Reconstruction Company (ARC)**

- ARC is a special type of financial institution that buys the debtors of the bank at a mutually agreed value and attempts to recover the debts or associated securities by itself.
- These are registered under the RBI and regulated under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Securities Interest Act, 2002 (SARFAESI Act, 2002).

**RBI to conduct auction for Special Long Term Repo Operations (SLTRO)**

- The Reserve Bank of India will conduct the first auction for special long-term repo operations (SLTRO) of Rs 10,000 crore for Small Finance Banks (SFBs).
- The SLTRO will be valid for three years. All the Small Finance Banks shall participate in the SLTRO. However, these banks should make sure that the amount borrowed from RBI should be lent only to specific segments such as unorganised sectors and small business units.

**SLTRO for Small Finance Banks:**

- RBI would conduct special three-year long-term repo operations (SLTRO) of Rs. 10,000 crore at repo rate for small finance banks (SFBs).
- Long Term Repo Operation is a tool under which the central bank provides one-year to three-year money to banks at the prevailing repo rate, accepting government securities with matching or higher tenure as the collateral.
- The SFBs would be able to deploy these funds for fresh lending of up to Rs. 10 lakh per borrower.
- This is to provide further support to small business units, micro and small industries, and other unorganised sector entities adversely affected during the current wave of the pandemic.

## PayPal introduced Foreign Inward Remittance Advice (FIRA)

- PayPal has introduced an automated process to obtain the monthly Foreign Inward Remittance Advice (FIRA). It is an automated process to obtain monthly foreign inward remittance advice.
- PayPal merchants will now be able to download their monthly digital FIRA issued by the bank by simply logging into their PayPal account.



### About FIRA

- Foreign Inward Remittance Advice (FIRA) is a document that acts as a proof for all inward remittances and payments received from abroad.
- This is issued by banks in India and is required by exporters of all sizes, individual or a business, such as a limited company, partnership firm, sole proprietorship firm etc.

## RBI issued New Dividend Payout norms for NBFCs

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has issued guidelines that spell out the eligibility criteria for non-banking finance companies (NBFCs) to declare dividends.

### Key Highlights:

- Guidelines will be effective for the declaration of dividend from profit for financial year 2021-2022 and onwards.
- Board of directors will consider the proposals for dividend.
- They will take into account the supervisory findings of the Reserve Bank (National Housing Bank for HFCs) on divergence in classification and provisioning of non-performing assets (NPAs).
- Board will also ensure that the total dividend proposed for the financial year does not exceed ceilings as specified in these guidelines.

### About NBFC

- A Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC) is a company registered under the Companies Act, 1956. It is a company which has principal business of receiving deposits under any scheme or arrangement in one lump sum or in installments by way of contributions or in any other manner
- It engages in business activities of loans and advances, acquisition of shares / stocks/ bonds/ debentures / securities issued by Government or local authority.

## Central Govt. approved MSP for Kharif Crops

- The Central government approved new minimum support price of 14 kharif (summer sown) crops, giving a hike of Rs 72 per quintal to the most popular crop paddy from Rs 1,868 per quintal in 2020-21 to Rs 1,940 per quintal in 2021-22 marketing season.



### Key Points:

- Highest absolute increase in MSP over previous year has been recommended for sesamum, followed by tur and urad.
- MSP on groundnut and niger seed was increased by Rs 275 per quintal and Rs 235 per quintal, respectively.
- Differential remuneration was fixed with the aim of encouraging crop diversification.

### MSP crops:

- **Cereals:** Paddy, wheat, jowar, bajra, barley, maize and ragi.
- **Pulses:** Gram, arhar or tur, urad, moong and lentil.
- **Oilseeds:** Groundnut, mustard, soyabean, toria, sunflower seed, safflower seeds, sesamum, and niger seed,
- Raw cotton, Copra, Raw jute, De-husked coconut, and Sugarcane.

### About Minimum Support Price (MSP)

- MSP is a form of market intervention by the Govt. of India to insure agricultural producers against any sharp fall in farm prices.
- MSP is price fixed by Govt to protect the producer – farmers – against excessive fall in price during bumper production years.
- MSP is announced at the beginning of the sowing season for certain crops on recommendations by the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP) and announced by the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) chaired by the PM of India.
- The major objectives are to support the farmers from distress sales and to procure food grains for public distribution.

## Green Tax to be levied

The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has decided to put additional taxes on old vehicles that are no longer suitable on the road. The action has been taken to minimise pollution. The extra tax is considered as the Green Tax.

### Key Highlights:

- The Green Tax would reduce the level of emissions. That would even make the polluter responsible for emissions.
- Under the Green Tax Rules, travel vehicles older than eight years will be paid a green tax at the time of renewal of the health certificate. They will be taxed at a rate of between 10% and 25% of the road levy.
- Public transit buses such as city buses can pay a smaller green fee.
- Revenue collected from the green tax will be kept in a separate account. The amount will be used for tackling the problem of pollution.

### Green Tax on Vehicles

- The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways announced a green tax on a certain category of vehicles starting from April 1, 2022.
- The government has proposed that a green tax could be levied on personal vehicles at the time of renewal of registration certificate. It will be levied after 15 years equivalent to 10-25% of the road tax of a petrol or diesel vehicle.
- Similar tax would also be levied on transport or commercial vehicles which are older than eight years at the time of renewal of the registration certificate and the fitness certificate.



### Important Points

- Maruti is India's top carmaker and has the largest portfolio of Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) vehicles among all the domestic automakers.
- Under the Green tax norms, the Hybrid vehicles, electric vehicles and those vehicles that run on cleaner alternative

fuels like CNG, ethanol and liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) will be exempted from the green tax. Higher taxes will be implied on the petrol or diesel vehicles.

- The Suzuki Motor Corp. unit has also planned to push its CNG vehicle sales to 200,000 units or more a year by 2022.
- In the financial year 2020, Maruti sold a record 106,443 CNG vehicles. The sales of such vehicles have grown with the average of 15.5% annually.

### Note

Maruti Suzuki India Ltd will gain most from a government proposal to levy a green tax on petrol and diesel vehicles

## India and Bhutan launched Tax Inspectors Without Borders Initiative

- India and Bhutan have recently launched the "Tax Inspectors Without Borders (TIWB)".
- Bhutan launched this programme and chose India as Partner Jurisdiction. India provided the Tax Expert for this programme. This programme will run for about 24 months.
- Under the programme, India in collaboration with UNDP and TIWB Secretariat aims to provide aid to Bhutan in order to strengthen its tax administration.



### About Tax Inspectors Without Borders (TIWB)

- TIWB is a joint initiative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).
- TIWB seeks to provide support to the developing countries to help them strengthen national tax administrations by building audit capacity.
- It complements the efforts of the international community to strengthen cooperation on tax matters & contribute to domestic tax mobilisation efforts.
- TIWB programme aims to strengthen tax administrations among developing countries by transferring technical know-how and skills to their tax auditors and by sharing general audit practices & dissemination of knowledge products with them.

## RBI constituted advisory group for Regulatory Review Authority (RRA) 2.0

- Recently, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has constituted an Advisory Group to assist the second Regulations Review Authority (RRA 2.0).
- It will submit reports periodically to RRA that will provide suggestions and recommendations.



### About RRA 2.0

- It will focus on streamlining regulatory instructions, reducing compliance burden of the regulated entities by simplifying procedures and reducing reporting requirements, wherever possible. It will also obtain feedback from regulated entities.
- Regulated entities include commercial banks, urban co-operative banks, Non-Banking Financial Companies. It will make regulatory instruction more effective.
- Also, it will aid in streamlining the reporting mechanism, obviating paper-based submission of returns wherever possible and revoking necessary instructions.

### Note

In 1999, RBI set up the Regulatory Review Authority to review circulars, regulations, and reporting systems. The authority reviews these parameters based on feedback from banks, public and financial institutions.

## e-RUPI Digital Payment Solution launched

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently launched "e-RUPI Digital Payment Solution" which is an e-voucher-based payment solution.



### Key Highlights:

- e-RUPI is a digital solution which allows cashless payment solutions for COVID-19 vaccination.
- The digital payment solution has been developed with the support of DFS (Department of Financial Services) and NHA (National Health Authority) and is powered by National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI).
- This seamless one-time payment mechanism enables users

to redeem the voucher without a card, digital payments app or internet banking access, at the merchants accepting UPI e-Prepaid Vouchers. The e-RUPI would be shared with the beneficiaries for a specific purpose or activity by organizations via SMS or QR code.

- This contactless e-RUPI is easy, safe and secure as it keeps the details of the beneficiaries completely confidential. The entire transaction process through this voucher is relatively faster and at the same time reliable, as the required amount is already stored in the voucher.
- Platform will be used to deliver services under schemes that are meant to provide drugs & nutritional support under Mother and Child welfare schemes, drugs & diagnostics under schemes such as Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana, fertilizer subsidies and TB eradication programmes.

### Note

e-RUPI was launched in collaboration with the Department of Financial Services, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare and National Health Authority.

## RBI to introduce Legal Entity Identifier System

- The Reserve Bank of India announced the introduction of the Legal Entity Identifier System.

### Key Points:

- The Reserve Bank of India has launched the Legal Entity Identifier scheme for all 50-crore and above payment transactions through NEFT (National Electronic Funds Transfer) and RTGS (Real Time Gross Settlement).
- The scheme is in order to classify legitimate persons involved in financial transactions. The RBI has adopted the system to improve the quality and accuracy of the financial data systems.
- Under the system, the banks have to include information of the remitter and beneficiary.

### About Legal Entity Identifier

- It is a twenty-digit unique number. It is a global identifier for entities participating in financial transactions.
- The validity of Legal Entity Identifiers is one year from the period of registration.
- It is developed by the International Organization for Standardization.



## NFT Marketplace launched

- The WazirX, one of the leading cryptocurrency exchanges launched the country's first marketplace for NFTs.
- The launch will now allow Indian creators to place their digital assets (such as images or videos, music, etc) for auction and earn royalty.

### Key points:

- Non-Fungible Token (NFT) is a cryptographic token that represents something unique, and has an individual characteristic that sets it apart.
- Owning an NFT is like owning a one-of-a-kind work of art or a collectible antique. NFTs are unique tokens or digital assets that generate value because of their uniqueness.
- For example, if two individuals hold a bitcoin each, they can exchange their bitcoins, which are replicas of each other and have the same value.

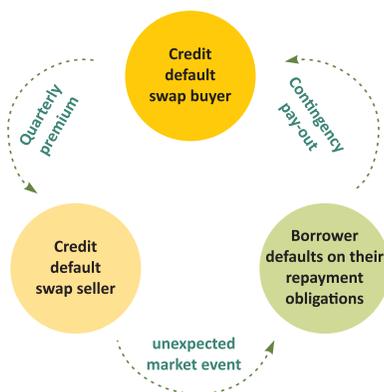
However, NFTs are not interchangeable, as they are more like pieces of art where each and every token is unique in itself. While bitcoins are also digital assets, NFTs are unique digital assets with each token representing a unique value.

## RBI guidelines on Credit Default Swap

- The Reserve Bank of India has revealed the credit default swaps (CDS). It has allowed the retail users to do the transactions in permitted credit derivatives in order to hedge their underlying credit risk.

### Key Highlights

- As per the guidelines, the non-retail users will be allowed to do the transactions in credit derivatives for the purpose of hedging as well as other purposes.
- The person who is resident in India and a non-resident can participate in the market.
- As per the guidelines, the exchanges can offer standardised single-name CDS contracts by specifying guaranteed cash settlement.



- The commercial papers, listed or unlisted rated rupee corporate bonds, unrated bonds issued by the special purpose vehicles, certificates of deposit and non-convertible debentures of maturity up to 1 year are eligible to be a reference or deliverable obligation in the CDS contract.

### About Credit Default Swap (CDS)

- CDS is a derivative or contract that permits the investor to swap or offset his credit risk with another investor.
- It is a financial swap agreement where the seller of CDS will compensate the buyer in case of a debt default. In such an agreement, the seller of CDS insures the buyer against asset defaulting.

### Note

Hedging is a risk management strategy that is employed to offset losses in investments. The losses are offset by taking an opposite position in the defaulted asset. Hedging though reduces the risk associated with the assets but it also reduces the potential profits.

## Union Government has approved asset monetization under InvIT Model

- The Union Government has approved asset monetization of subsidiaries of Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (PGCIL) through infrastructure investment trust model.



### About InvIT Model

- An Infrastructure Investment Trust (InvITs) is a Collective Investment Scheme similar to a mutual fund.
- It enables direct investment of money from individual and institutional investors in infrastructure projects to earn a small portion of the income as return.
- The InvITs are regulated by the SEBI (Infrastructure Investment Trusts) Regulations, 2014.
- InvITs are listed on exchanges just like stocks.

# UNION BUDGET 2021-22



The Union Budget 2021-22 was presented by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman amid the COVID-19 Pandemic on February 1, 2021

## Education

- Legislation to be introduced to setup Higher Education Commission of India as an umbrella body with 4 separate vehicles for standard-setting, accreditation, regulation, and funding
- Central University to come up in Leh, Ladakh.

## Gold

- Capital market watchdog Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) will be the designated regulator for gold exchanges.

## Digital Economy

- Limit of turnover for tax audit increased to Rs. 10 crores from Rs. 5 crores for entities carrying out 95% transactions digitally.

## Banking

- Asset Reconstruction Company Limited and Asset Management Company to be set up.
- Rs. 20,000 crores in 2021-22 to further consolidate the financial capacity of PSBs.

## Company Matters

- Easing compliance requirement of small companies by revising their definition under Companies Act, 2013 by increasing their thresholds for paid up capital from "not exceeding Rs. 50 Lakh" to "not exceeding Rs. 2 Crore" and turnover from "not exceeding Rs. 2 Crore" to "not exceeding Rs. 20 Cr".

## Agriculture

- Agricultural credit target enhanced to Rs. 16.5 lakh crore in 2021-22 – animal husbandry, dairy, and fisheries to be the focus areas.
- 5 major fishing harbours – Kochi, Chennai, Visakhapatnam, Paradip, and Petuaghat to be developed as hubs of economic activity
- State-run Agricultural Produce Marketing Committees (APMCs) can now access the 1 lakh crore Agriculture Infrastructure Fund (AIF).

## Green Energy

- National Hydrogen Mission to be launched to generate hydrogen from green power sources.

## Insurance

- Increase the permissible limit for Foreign Direct Investment for insurance companies to 74% from 49% and allow foreign ownership and control with safeguards

## Labour Welfare

- Late deposit of employee's contribution by the employer not to be allowed as deduction to the employer.

## Start-Ups

- Eligibility for tax holiday claim for start-ups extended by one more year.
- Capital gains exemption for investment in start-ups extended till 31st March, 2022.

## Customs Duty

- Customs Duty on some parts of mobiles increased to 2.5% from 'nil' rate.
- Customs Duty reduced uniformly to 7.5% on semis, flat, and long products of non-alloy, alloy, and stainless steels.

- Customs Duty on steel scrap exempted up to 31st March, 2022.
- Basic Customs Duty (BCD) on caprolactam, nylon chips and nylon fiber & yarn reduced to 5%.
- Tunnel boring machine to now attract a customs duty of 7.5%; and its parts a duty of 2.5%.
- Customs duty on cotton increased from nil to 10% and on raw silk and silk yarn from 10% to 15%.

## R & D

- ₹50,000 crore earmarked over five years for the creation of a National Research Foundation (NRF) - an umbrella body that is expected to fund research across a range of disciplines, from science and technology to humanities.

## Railways

- 1,10,055 crores allocated of which Rs. 1,07,100 crores are for capital expenditure.

## UNION BUDGET 2021-22 (in Paise)

Rupee Comes From



## UNION BUDGET 2021-22

Rupee Goes To



- In 2021-22, the govt. expects its revenue receipts from the Railways, including passenger, goods, other coaching and sundry other heads, to be about ₹2.17 lakh crore as against ₹1.46 lakh crore in 2020-21 (revised estimate).

### Expenditure & Deficit

- Estimates of Rs. 34.83 lakh crore Budget Estimates for expenditure in 2021-2022 including Rs. 5.54 lakh crore as capital expenditure, rest is revenue expenditure.
- The fiscal deficit in Budget Estimates 2021-2022 is estimated to be 6.8% of GDP.

### Tax Disputes

- Time limit for re-opening cases reduced to 3 years from 6 years.
- Serious tax evasion cases, with evidence of concealment of income of Rs. 50 lakh or more in a year, to be re-opened only up to 10 years, with approval of the Principal Chief Commissioner.

### Health

- An outlay of Rs. 64,180 crores over 6 years for PM AatmaNirbhar Swasth Bharat Yojana – a new centrally sponsored scheme to be launched, in addition to NHM (National Health Mission).
- Rs 35,000 cr allocation for COVID vaccination.

### Urban Development

- Jal Jeevan Mission (Urban) will be launched with an aim to provide tap water connections to 2.86 crore households.
- The Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban) 2.0 would be implemented over five years - from 2021 to 2026 - on an outlay of ₹1.41 lakh crore.
- Two new Metro technologies - MetroLite and MetroNeo - would be used in tier-2 cities and the peripheral parts of tier-1 cities to provide connectivity at a lower cost compared to conventional Metro systems.

## 6 PILLARS of the Budget

- 1 Health and Wellbeing
- 2 Reinvigorating Human Capital
- 3 Innovation and R&D
- 4 Physical & Financial Capital, and Infrastructure
- 5 Inclusive Development for Aspirational India
- 6 Minimum Government & Maximum Governance

## Economic Survey 2020-21

- The Union Finance Minister tabled Economic Survey 2020-21 to Lok Sabha.
- The Economic Survey 2021 provided an assessment of the gains achieved by the Indian economy in the last 12 months.

### Key Highlights:

- The survey points out that the real growth rate for the financial year 2021 was -7.7% as per MoSPI, while the real growth rate for the financial year 2022 is estimated to be 11.5% on the basis of the forecasts given by the International Monetary Fund (IMF).
- For the full fiscal, the survey projected a contraction of 7.7 percent while a V-shaped recovery in the next. GDP growth will be expanding by 11 per cent in the 2021-22 fiscal.
- As per the survey, there was de-growth for the first time.
- It highlights that the Indian economy is technically in a recession as it has witnessed a contraction in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for the last two consecutive quarters.
- The Survey also provided a detailed analysis of India's V-shaped economic recovery after it was affected due to corona pandemic. It highlights that mega vaccination drives support the V-shaped recovery.
- As per the survey, the Agriculture sector has remained the silver lining in the growth trajectory even during the pandemic however, contact-based services such as manufacturing and construction faced sharp decline due to the corona pandemic.
- It highlights how the Healthcare sector has taken centre stage in the economy where the government took part actively in shaping and structuring the healthcare market in the country.

### ECONOMIC SURVEY

- It is the annual document published by the Ministry of Finance. The paper is submitted to Parliament by the Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance, shortly before the Union budget.
- The first Economic Survey was launched in 1950-51. It was presented as part of the budget of the Union. Since 1964, the survey has been separated from the Union budget.
- The document is prepared under the guidance of the Chief Economic Adviser of India. During the budget session, this document is presented to both the Houses of the Parliament. The document is non-binding in nature.

# Important Terms used in ECONOMY

## Unemployment and its types

Unemployment occurs when a person who is actively searching for employment and is unable to find work.

- **Disguised Unemployment:** It is a phenomenon wherein more people are employed than actually needed. It is primarily traced in the agricultural and the unorganised sectors of India.
- **Seasonal Unemployment:** It is an unemployment that occurs during certain seasons of the year. Agricultural labourers in India rarely have work throughout the year.
- **Structural Unemployment:** It is a category of unemployment arising from the mismatch between the jobs available in the market and the skills of the available workers in the market.
- **Cyclical Unemployment:** It is result of the business cycle, where unemployment rises during recessions and declines with economic growth. Cyclical unemployment figures in India are negligible. It is a phenomenon that is mostly found in capitalist economies.
- **Technological Unemployment:** It is loss of jobs due to changes in technology. In 2016, World Bank data predicted that the proportion of jobs threatened by automation in India is 69% year-on-year.
- **Frictional Unemployment:** The Frictional Unemployment also called as Search Unemployment, refers to the time lag between the jobs when an individual is searching for a new job or is switching between the jobs.
- **Vulnerable Employment:** This means, people working informally, without proper job contracts and thus sans any legal protection. These persons are deemed 'unemployed' since records of their work are never maintained.
- **Unemployment Trap:** It is a situation when unemployment benefits discourage the unemployed to go to work. People find the opportunity cost of going to work too high when one can simply enjoy the benefits by doing nothing.

## Capital Receipts

- All those receipts of the government which either creates liability or reduces financial asset are capital receipts.

**Examples:** Market borrowings by the government from the public, Borrowings from the RBI, Borrowings from commercial banks or financial institutions through the sale of T-BILLS, loans received from foreign governments or international financial institutions, post office savings, post office saving certificates and PSU's Disinvestment.

## Revenue Receipts

- These are receipts of the government incomes which cannot be reclaimed back by the citizens from the government.

## Capital Expenditure

- All those expenditures of the government which either result in the creation of physical/financial assets or reduction in financial liabilities. Examples: Purchase of land, machinery, building and equipment's; investment in shares; loans and advances by the central government to state governments and UTs.

## Revenue Expenditure

- The expenditure incurred by the government that neither creates any physical/financial asset nor reduces the liability of the government.

## Perfect Competition

- Pure or perfect competition is a theoretical market structure in which the following criteria are met:
- All firms sell an identical product (the product is a "commodity" or "homogeneous").
- All firms are price takers (they cannot influence the market price of their product).
- Market share has no influence on prices.
- Buyers have complete or "perfect" information—in the past, present and future—about the product being sold and the prices charged by each firm.
- Resources for such a labor are perfectly mobile.
- Firms can enter or exit the market without cost.

## Primary Deficit

- The borrowing requirement of the government includes interest obligations on accumulated debt. The goal of measuring primary deficit is to focus on present fiscal imbalances.

## Important Terms used in Economy

**Fiscal Policy**

- Fiscal policy means the use of taxation and public expenditure by the government for stabilization or growth of the economy. Some of the major instruments of fiscal policy are as follows: Budget, Taxation, Public Expenditure, public revenue, Public Debt, and Fiscal Deficit in the economy.

**Privatization**

- The transfer of ownership, property or business from the government to the private sector is termed privatization. The government ceases to be the owner of the entity or business.

**Fiscal Deficit**

- A fiscal deficit is a shortfall in a government's income compared with its spending. A fiscal deficit is calculated as a percentage of gross domestic product (GDP), or simply as total dollars spent in excess of income.

**Trade War**

- Trade war is a subset of Trade Protectionism. It is a conflict between two or more nations regarding trade tariff imposition on each other's goods.

**Current Account Deficit**

- It means the value of imports of goods/services/investment incomes is greater than the value of exports. It is sometimes informally referred to as a trade deficit.

**Most Favoured Nation (MFN) Status**

- Most Favoured Nation is a treatment accorded to a trade partner to ensure non-discriminatory trade between two countries vis-a-vis other trade partners.

**Endowment Fund**

- It is an investment fund established by a foundation (universities, nonprofit organisations, churches and hospitals etc.) that makes consistent withdrawals from invested capital. It means that endowment funds are basically investment portfolios where initial money is provided by donations to a foundation.

**Market Capitalisation (m-cap)**

- Market Capitalisation is calculated by multiplying total number of company's outstanding shares by the current market price of one share. The market-cap figure of listed companies changes daily with stock price movement.

**External Commercial Borrowing (ECB)**

- ECB is an instrument used in India to facilitate Indian companies to raise money outside the country in foreign currency. It may be commercial loans which can be in form of bank loans, bonds, securitised instruments, buyers' and supplier's credit availed from non-resident lenders with minimum average maturity of 3 years.
- It should be noted that ECB is not Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). In case of FDI, foreign money is only used to finance equity capital. But in case of ECB, foreign money is used to finance any kind of funding other than equity.

**Fair and Remunerative Price**

- It is the minimum price at which rate sugarcane is to be purchased by sugar mills from farmers. FRP is fixed by Union government on basis of recommendations of Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACPC), an attached office of Union Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare.

**Capital Dredging**

- Capital dredging was carried out to maintain an assured draft in navigation channel. Maintenance dredging will be carried out as and when required

**Exchange Traded Derivatives (ETD)**

- ETD are traded via central exchange with publicly visible prices i.e. on a centralised exchange while Over the Counter (OTC) derivatives are for companies that are not listed on a formal exchange and traded between two parties (bilateral negotiation) without going through an exchange or any other intermediaries.

**Angel Tax**

- Angel Tax issue resolved- start-ups and investors filing requisite declarations and also providing information in their returns are not to be subjected to any kind of scrutiny in respect of valuations of share premiums.

**Securities Transaction Tax (STT)**

- STT is restricted only to difference between settlement and strike price in case of exercise of options. STT (a direct tax) is levied on every sale and purchase of securities that are listed on recognised stock exchanges in India.

## Important Terms used in Economy

**Multilateral Convention**

- The Multilateral Convention (MLI) is an outcome of OECD or G20 Project to tackle Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (called as BEPS Project). BEPS means tax planning strategies which exploit mismatches and gaps in tax rules so as to artificially shift profits to a low or no-tax location where there is little/no economic activity, which further results in little or no overall corporate tax being paid.

**Pre-Paid Payment Instrument (PPIs)**

- PPIs are instruments which come with a preloaded value and in even with pre-defined purpose of payment. PPIs facilitates financial services, inter-personal remittance transactions (like sending money to friend or a family member), purchase of goods and services (G&S), etc., against amount stored on such instruments.

**Currency Chest**

- Currency chest is the place where the currency is stored. These chests act as the distributives of RBI cash and enable RBI to take back soiled notes and mutilated notes from the public.

**Ways and Means Advances (WMA)**

- Ways and Means Advances is the temporary loan facility provided by the RBI to the centre and state governments. The WMA scheme was introduced in 1997 to meet any temporary mismatches in the receipts and payments of the government.
- The WMA needs to be vacated after 90 days. The interest rate for WMA is currently charged at the Repo Rate. The limits for WMA are decided by the RBI and in consultation with the Government of India.

**White Label ATMs**

- Automated Teller Machines (ATMs) set up, owned and operated by non-bank entities are called White Label ATMs. These White Label ATMs provide banking services to the customers of banks on the basis of the cards (debit/credit/prepaid) issued by banks.

**Gratuity**

- Gratuity is the monetary benefit provided by the employer to his/her employee for the services rendered by him during

the period of employment. A minimum of five years of service with an organisation is mandatory for availing the benefit of gratuity.

**Foreign Portfolio Investment (FPI)**

- FPI consists of securities and other financial assets passively held by foreign investors. FPI does not provide the investor with direct ownership of financial assets. In India, FPIs are allowed to invest in various debt market instruments such as government bonds, treasury bills, state development loans (SDLs) and corporate bonds, but with certain restrictions and limits. FPI is part of countries capital account and is listed on its balance of payments (BOP).

**Foreign Exchange Reserves**

- Foreign Exchange Reserves are the reserve assets held by a central bank in foreign currencies. They are used to back liabilities on their own issued currency as well as to influence monetary policy. These reserves act as a buffer during the challenging times to the economy.
- The components of India's FOREX Reserves which is expressed in terms of US dollars include foreign currency assets (FCAs), Gold Reserves, Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) and RBI's Reserve position with International Monetary Fund (IMF). FCAs constitute the largest component of Indian Forex.

**Prompt Corrective Action (PCA) Framework**

- Prompt Corrective Action (PCA) framework has been issued by the RBI to maintain the sound financial health of banks. The RBI will initiate certain structured and discretionary actions for the bank under the PCA when the Banks breach any of the three key regulatory trigger points:
- Capital to risk-weighted assets ratio
- Net non-performing assets
- Return on assets.

**Standard Deduction**

- Standard Deduction refers to deduction allowed as per the Income Tax irrespective of the expenses met or the investment made by the individual. An individual is not required to disclose any investment proofs or expense bills for this purpose, the Standard Deduction is allowed at a standard rate.

## Important Terms used in Economy

**Authorised Capital**

- Authorised Capital refers to the maximum amount of capital for which shares can be issued by a company. The Authorised capital would be mentioned in the Memorandum of Association of the Company and can be increased at any time in future.

**Currency Swap Agreements**

- A Currency swap agreement is a foreign exchange agreement between two parties to exchange a given amount of one currency for another and, after a specified period of time, to give back the original amounts swapped.

**Public Credit Registry**

- Public Credit Registry is a digital registry of authenticated granular credit information and will work as a financial information infrastructure providing access to various stakeholders and enrich the existing credit information ecosystem. It would be mandatory for reporting for all material events for each loan, notwithstanding any threshold in the loan amount or type of borrower to the Public Credit Registry.

**Electoral Bond**

- An Electoral Bond is just like a promissory note that will be payable to bearer on demand and free of interest. It can be purchased by a citizen of India or anybody incorporated in India.

**Commodity Market**

- It is physical or virtual marketplace for buying, selling and trading raw or primary products. Thus, it is market that trades in primary economic sector rather than manufactured products.

**Net Demand and Time Liabilities (NDTL)**

- NDTL shows the difference between the sum of demand and time liabilities (deposits) of a bank (with the public or the other bank) and the deposits in the form of assets held by the other bank.

**Priority Sector Lending**

- It is an important role given by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to the banks for providing a specified portion of the bank lending to few specific sectors.

**Priority Sectors**

- It refers to those sectors of the economy which may not get timely and adequate credit.

**Basel III Norms**

- It is an international regulatory accord that introduced a set of reforms designed to improve the regulation, supervision and risk management within the banking sectors.

**Plan and Non-Plan Expenditure**

- Plan expenditure, also known as development expenditure, is used on government programmes and flagship schemes, whereas non-Plan expenditure involves spending on defence, subsidies and transfer to states and the large share of government spending comes from none other than non-Plan expenditure. The Plan expenditure allocation estimates are determined by the Planning Commission whereas in the case of non-Plan expenditure, the finance ministry determines them without consultation with the Commission.

**Deficit Financing**

- The term 'deficit financing' is used to denote the direct addition to gross national expenditure through budget deficits, whether the deficits are on revenue or on capital account.

**Behavioural Economics**

- Behavioural economics majorly depends upon emphasising the beneficial social norm and understanding their drivers; changing the default option and understanding the inertia of people to change and; repeated reinforcements to sustain changed behaviour.

**Fiscal Rectitude**

- An honest and honourable handling of a government's finances (tax revenues, for instance) by those hired or elected to do that job.

**Gender Budgeting**

- Gender Budgeting is concerned with gender-sensitive formulation of legislation, policies, plans, programmes and schemes; allocation and collection of resources; implementation and execution; monitoring, review, audit and impact assessment of programmes and schemes; and follow-up corrective action to address gender disparities.

## Important Terms used in Economy

**Asset Turnover Ratio**

- Asset turnover ratio is the ratio between the value of a company's sales or revenues and the value of its assets. It is an indicator of the efficiency with which a company is deploying its assets to produce the revenue.

**Capital Adequacy Ratio (CAR)**

- CAR is the ratio of a bank's capital in relation to its risk weighted assets and current liabilities. It is decided by central banks and bank regulators to prevent commercial banks from taking excess leverage and becoming insolvent in the process.

**Contagion**

- In economics and finance, a contagion can be explained as a situation where a shock in a particular economy or region spreads out and affects others by way of, say, price movements.

**Liquidity Trap**

- Liquidity trap is a situation when expansionary monetary policy (increase in money supply) does not increase the interest rate, income and hence does not stimulate economic growth.

**Non Performing Assets**

- A non performing asset (NPA) is a loan or advance for which the principal or interest payment remained overdue for a period of 90 days.
- Banks are required to classify NPAs further into Substandard, Doubtful and Loss assets.

**Profitability Index**

- Profitability index is a financial tool which tells us whether an investment should be accepted or rejected. It uses the time value concept of money and is calculated by the following formula.

**Venture Capital**

- Start up companies with a potential to grow need a certain amount of investment. Wealthy investors like to invest their capital in such businesses with a long-term growth perspective. This capital is known as venture capital and the investors are called venture capitalists.

**Regressive Tax**

- Under this system of taxation, the tax rate diminishes as the taxable amount increases. In other words, there is an inverse relationship between the tax rate and taxable income. The rate of taxation decreases as the income of taxpayers increases.

**Special Drawing Rights**

- This is a kind of reserve of foreign exchange assets comprising leading currencies globally and created by the International Monetary Fund in the year 1969.
- Before its creation, the international community had to face several restrictions in increasing world trade and the level of financial development as gold and US dollars, which were the only means of trade, were in limited quantities. In order to address the issue, SDR was created by the IMF.

**Proportional Tax**

- Proportional tax is the taxing mechanism in which the taxing authority charges the same rate of tax from each taxpayer, irrespective of income. This means that lower class, or middle class, or upper class people pay the same amount of tax. Since the tax is charged at a flat rate for everyone, whether earning higher income or lower income, it is also called flat tax.

**Derivatives**

- A derivative is a contract between two parties which derives its value/price from an underlying asset. The most common types of derivatives are futures, options, forwards and swaps.

**Hedge Fund**

- Hedge fund is a private investment partnership and funds pool that uses varied and complex proprietary strategies and invests or trades in complex products, including listed and unlisted derivatives.

**Phillips Curve**

- The inverse relationship between unemployment rate and inflation when graphically charted is called the Phillips curve.

**Laffer Curve**

- The Laffer Curve describes the relationship between tax rates and total tax revenue, with an optimal tax rate that maximizes total government tax revenue.

## Important Terms used in Economy

**Dividend**

- Dividend refers to a reward, cash or otherwise, that a company gives to its shareholders. Dividends can be issued in various forms, such as cash payment, stocks or any other form. A company's dividend is decided by its board of directors and it requires the shareholders' approval. However, it is not obligatory for a company to pay dividend. Dividend is usually a part of the profit that the company shares with its shareholders.

**Appropriation Bill**

- Appropriation Bill gives power to the government to withdraw funds from the Consolidated Fund of India for meeting the expenditure during the financial year.

**Securities Transaction Tax**

- STT is a kind of turnover tax where the investor has to pay a small tax on the total consideration paid or received in a share transaction. STT was introduced in the Budget of 2004 and implemented in Oct 2004. The objective behind the levy is to mitigate tax evasion as the same is taxed at source. Stocks, futures, option, mutual funds and exchange traded funds come under the ambit of STT.

**Subvention**

- Subvention refers to a grant of money in aid or support, mostly by the government. The term finds a mention in almost every Budget.

**Treasury Bills**

- These are government bonds or debt securities with maturity of less than a year. T- bills are issued to meet short-term mismatches in receipts and expenditure. Bonds of longer maturity are called dated securities.

**Credit Rating**

- Credit rating is an analysis of the credit risks associated with a financial instrument or a financial entity. It is a rating given to a particular entity based on the credentials and the extent to which the financial statements of the entity are sound, in terms of borrowing and lending that has been done in the past.

**Kuznets Curve**

- It is a curve used to demonstrate the hypothesis that

economic growth initially leads to greater inequality, followed later by the reduction of inequality.

**Balance Sheet**

- Balance Sheet is the financial statement of a company which includes assets, liabilities, equity capital, total debt, etc. at a point in time. Balance sheet includes assets on one side, and liabilities on the other. For the balance sheet to reflect the true picture, both heads (liabilities & assets) should tally (Assets = Liabilities + Equity).

**Debt Consolidation**

- Debt consolidation means combining more than one debt obligation into a new loan with a favourable term structure such as lower interest rate structure, tenure, etc. Here, the amount received from the new loan is used to pay off other debts.

**Freight Village**

- A freight village is a defined area within which all activities relating to transport, logistics and the distribution of goods, both for national and international transit, are carried out by various operators.

**Infrastructure Investment Trusts (InvITs)**

- These are mutual fund like institutions that enable investments into the infrastructure sector by pooling small sums of money from multitude of individual investors for directly investing in infrastructure so as to return a portion of the income to unit holders of InvITs, who pooled in the money. InvITs are regulated by Securities and Exchange Board of India

**Countervailing Duty (CVD)**

- Countervailing Duty (CVD) is an additional import duty imposed on imported products (by the importing country) when such products enjoy benefits like export subsidies and tax concessions in the country of their origin.

**Safeguard Duty**

- Safeguard Duty is duty payable on import of goods which is already being manufactured in India but cost of which is high compared to import price. It is imposed by Central Government on goods so that the Indian manufacturers do not suffer due to import of cheaper goods from outside. It helps in creating a level playing field for Indian manufacturers and importers.

## Important Terms used in Economy

**Dumping Duty**

- It is said to occur when the goods are exported by a country to another country at a price lower than its normal value. This is an unfair trade practice which can have a distortive effect on international trade.

**Anti-dumping Duty**

- Anti-dumping Duty is a protectionist tariff that a domestic government imposes on foreign imports that it believes are priced below fair market value. Dumping is a process where a company exports a product at a price lower than the price it normally charges in its own home market.

**Shadow banking**

- Shadow Banking is that part of the financial system where credit intermediation involving entities and activities remains outside the regular banking system.

**Masala Bonds**

- Masala bonds are rupee-denominated debt securities issued outside India by Indian companies. The bonds are directly pegged to the Indian currency. So, investors directly take the currency risk or exchange rate risks.

**World Trade Organization (WTO) subsidies**

- In WTO terminology, domestic subsidies in agriculture are identified by "Boxes" namely Green Box, Amber Box & Blue Box.
- Green Box - In simple terms, subsidies that not distort trade or at most cause minimal distortion are in this box. Usually these subsidies are not directed at specific products.
- Amber Box - The subsidies that distort the international trade by making products of a particular country cheaper in the international market as compared to same or similar product from another country is slotted under this box.
- Blue Box - These are basically Amber Box subsidies but they tend to limit the production. Countries argue that Blue box subsidies are crucial for ushering in agricultural reforms.

**General Anti Avoidance Rule (GAAR)**

- GAAR is a set of rules or a framework which helps the revenue authorities decides whether a particular transaction has commercial substance or not. If it does not have

commercial substance and is not a genuine transaction, then what should be the tax liability associated with it.

**External Commercial Borrowings (ECB)**

- External Commercial Borrowings (ECB) is the financial instrument used to borrow money from the foreign sources of financing to invest in the commercial activities of the domestic country. Simply, borrowing money from the non-resident lenders and investing it in the commercial activities of India is called as external commercial borrowings.

**Withholding Tax**

- A withholding tax is an amount that an employer withholds from employees' wages and pays directly to the government. The amount withheld is a credit against the income taxes the employee must pay during the year. It also is a tax levied on income (interest and dividends) from securities owned by a non-resident as well as other income paid to non-residents of a country.

**Minimum Alternate Tax (MAT)**

- MAT is a tax to facilitate the taxation of 'zero tax companies' i.e., those companies which show zero or negligible income to avoid tax. Under MAT, such companies are made liable to pay to the government, by deeming a certain percentage of their book profit as taxable income.

**Crowdfunding**

- Crowdfunding is the use of small amounts of capital from a large number of individuals to finance a new business venture. Crowdfunding makes use of the easy accessibility of vast networks of people through social media and crowdfunding websites to bring investors and entrepreneurs together, and has the potential to increase entrepreneurship by expanding the pool of investors from whom funds can be raised beyond the traditional circle of owners, relatives and venture capitalists.

**Bank Rate**

- Bank rate is the rate charged by the Reserve Bank of India for lending funds to commercial banks. It influences lending rates of commercial banks. Higher bank rate will translate to higher lending rates by the banks. In order to curb liquidity, the central bank can resort to raising the bank rate and vice versa.

## Important Terms used in Economy

**Gross Domestic Product**

- GDP is the final value of the goods and services produced within the geographic boundaries of a country during a specified period of time, normally a year. GDP growth rate is an important indicator of the economic performance of a country.

**Gross National Product**

- Gross National Product (GNP) is Gross Domestic Product (GDP) plus net factor income from abroad. It measures the monetary value of all the finished goods and services produced by the country's factors of production irrespective of their location. It includes taxes but does not include subsidies.

**Wholesale Price Index**

- Wholesale Price Index (WPI) represents the price of goods at a wholesale stage i.e. goods that are sold in bulk and traded between organizations instead of consumers. WPI is often used as a measure of inflation.

**Inflation**

- Inflation is the percentage change in the value of the Wholesale Price Index (WPI) on a year-on-year basis. It effectively measures the change in the prices of a basket of goods and services in a year. It occurs due to an imbalance between demand and supply of money, changes in production and distribution cost or increase in taxes on products. When economy experiences inflation the price level of goods and services rises and the value of currency reduces.

**Liquidity**

- Liquidity means how quickly one can get his cash in hand. In simpler terms, liquidity is to get your money whenever you need it. It might be emergency savings account or the cash lying with you that you can access in case of any unforeseen happening or any financial setback.

**Monetary Policy**

- Monetary policy is the macroeconomic policy laid down by the Reserve Bank of India. It involves management of money supply and interest rate and it is the demand side economic policy used by the government of a country to achieve

macroeconomic objectives like inflation, consumption, growth and liquidity.

**Purchasing Power Parity**

- Purchasing Power Parity aims to determine the adjustments needed to be made in the exchange rates of two currencies to make them at par with the purchasing power of each other. It is the expenditure on a similar commodity must be same in both currencies when accounted for exchange rate. It is used worldwide to compare the income levels in different countries.

**Repo Rate**

- Repo rate is the rate at which the Reserve Bank of India lends money to commercial banks in the event of any shortfall of funds. For RBI point of view it is called as short term lending and from banks point of view it is short term borrowing.

**Statutory Liquidity Ratio (SLR)**

- Statutory Liquidity Ratio (SLR) is the ratio of total deposits of a commercial bank which it has to keep with itself in the form of liquid assets. Liquid assets may consist of cash in hand, gold, reserves with RBI, excess reserves, government securities and other encumbered securities, etc.
- SLR is amount that banks are required to maintain as stipulated proportion of their net demand and time liabilities (NDTL) in form of liquid assets such as cash, gold treasury bills, unencumbered securities and dated securities etc.

**Sovereign Risk**

- Any risk arising on chances of a government failing to make debt repayments or not honouring a loan agreement is a sovereign risk.

**Service Tax**

- Service tax is a tax levied by the government on service providers on certain service transactions, but is actually borne by the customers.

**Reverse Repo Rate**

- Reverse Repo Rate is the rate at which the Reserve Bank of India borrows money from commercial banks within the country. It is a monetary policy instrument which can be used to control the money supply in the country. An increase in Reverse Repo Rate means that commercial banks will get more incentives to park their funds with the RBI, thereby decreasing the supply of money in the market.

## Important Terms used in Economy

**Recession**

- Recession is a slowdown or a massive contraction in economic activities. A significant fall in spending generally leads to a recession.

**Marginal Standing Facility**

- Marginal standing facility is a window for banks to borrow from the Reserve Bank of India in an emergency situation when inter-bank liquidity dries up completely.
- MSF is very short term borrowing scheme for scheduled banks and is rate at which scheduled banks borrow funds overnight from RBI against government securities.

**Exchange Rate**

- Exchange rate is the price of one currency in terms of another currency. Exchange rates can be either fixed or floating. Fixed exchange rates are decided by central banks of a country whereas floating exchange rates are decided by the mechanism of market demand and supply.

**Deflation**

- When the overall price level decreases so that inflation rate becomes negative, it is called deflation. It is the opposite of the inflation.

**Balance of Payment**

- According to the RBI, balance of payment is a statistical statement that shows the transaction in goods, services and income between an economy and the rest of the world; changes of ownership and other changes in that economy's monetary gold, special drawing rights (SDRs), and financial claims on and liabilities to the rest of the world, and Unrequited transfers.

**Base Rate**

- Base rate is the minimum rate set by the Reserve Bank of India below which banks are not allowed to lend to its customers. It is decided in order to enhance transparency in the credit market and ensure that banks pass on the lower cost of fund to their customers. Loan pricing will be done by adding base rate and a suitable spread depending on the credit risk premium.

**Cash Reserve Ratio**

- Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR) is a specified minimum fraction of the total deposits of customers, which commercial banks have to hold as reserves either in cash or as deposits with the central bank.

**Depreciation**

- The monetary value of an asset decreases over time due to use, wear and tear or obsolescence. This loss is measured as depreciation.

**Equated Monthly Installment**

- EMI or equated monthly installment, as the name suggests, is one part of the equally divided monthly outgoes to clear off an outstanding loan within a stipulated time frame.

**Microeconomics**

- Microeconomics is the study of individuals, households and firms' behaviour in decision making and allocation of resources. It generally applies to markets of goods and services and deals with individual and economic issues.

**Ponzi scheme**

- A Ponzi scheme is an investment plan in which the operator or the operating company pays returns to investors from the new capital coming in from new investors instead off the profits of the business. The investors get attracted to these schemes because of the unusual high rate of return offered within shorter time spans compared to other conventional investment options.

**Demat Account**

- The way in which a bank keeps money in a deposit account, the depository company converts share certificates into electronics form and keeps them in a Demat Account.

**Vostro Account**

- When a foreign bank is opened in India with Indian currency, it is known as Vostro account. eg. Standard Chartered Bank in India.

Recently Released

## Reports & Indices

### ADR Report on Political Fundings

- Over 55% of the donations received by regional parties in FY 2019-20 came from “unknown” sources, the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) said in a report.

#### Key Highlights:

- Huge share from “unknown” sources: Electoral bonds accounted for nearly 95% of the donations from “unknown” sources.
- The report noted that donations received by national parties from “unknown” sources added up to 70.98% of their income.
- Parties from the south topped the list: Parties in the south such as TRS, TDP, YSR Congress Party, DMK and JD(S) topped the list of regional parties with the highest incomes from “unknown” sources.
- Share from “known” donors: The donations received by regional parties from “known” donors is 22.98% of their total income.

#### About Electoral Bonds

- Electoral Bond is a financial instrument for making donations to political parties.
- It is an initiative of the Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance.
- Electoral Bond is in the nature of a Promissory Note and an interest free banking instrument.
- A citizen of India or a body incorporated in India will be eligible to purchase the bond.
- Electoral bonds would be issued/purchased for any value, in multiples of 1,000, from the specified branches of the State Bank of India (SBI).

### RBI's Annual Report, 2021

- Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has published its annual report and highlights “asset quality of banks and their preparedness. According to report, it requires close monitoring for higher provisioning for upcoming quarters.

#### Key Highlights:

- Gross NPA ratio of banks decreased from 8.2% in March 2020 to 6.8% in December 2020.
- Provision Coverage Ratio (PCR) of banks improved from 66.6% in March 2020 to 75.5 % by December 2020.
- Capital to risk-weighted assets ratio (CRAR) of banks increased to 15.9% by December 2020, in March it was 14.8%.
- Gross NPA ratio for non-banking financial institutions (NBFCs) increased from 6.8% in March to 5.7% in December 2020.
- Capital adequacy ratio of NBFCs increased from 24.8% in December 2020 from 23.7% in March.

- Waiver of compound interest on all loan accounts opted for moratorium during March-August 2020 would put stress on financial health of banks.

### Global Financial Stability Report 2021

- The International Monetary Fund (IMF)'s report on Global Financial Stability has warned that the digital currencies, besides providing new opportunities, poses significant financial security challenges.
- In its report, the IMF notes that the rapidly growing crypto ecosystem presents new opportunities to the world.

#### Challenges:

- According to the IMF, rapid growth and increasing adoption of crypto assets pose financial stability challenges.
- Such decentralised currencies could also lead to instability as they are extremely volatile. They are much more volatile than the equities or commodities or exchange rates.
- Its transaction costs are fairly expensive as compared to digital money.

#### About Cryptocurrencies

Cryptocurrencies are digital or virtual currencies where encryption techniques are used for regulating the generation of units and verifying the transfer of funds. Such systems are operating independently of any central bank.

### UNCTAD Digital Economy Report, 2021

- The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) published its “UNCTAD Digital Economy Report 2021.

#### Key highlights:

- The Report mentions that the Philippines is one among six countries that allows free flow of data across borders. Free flow of data is required to boost the digital economy.
- Other five countries allowing free-flow of data across borders include- Canada, Australia, Mexico, Singapore and the United States. These countries use a “light-touch approach” for data flow.
- The “restrictive” or “guarded” approach for cross-border data flows is followed by countries like India, China, Indonesia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Rwanda, Russian Federation, Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Vietnam.

#### Note

Light-touch approach is mostly favoured by countries having strong regulatory environments and sufficient regulatory resources in order to monitor compliance of domestic laws.

## Kasturirangan Committee on Western Ghats

- The Kasturirangan Commission has sought to balance the two concerns of development and environment protection.
- Karnataka's Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai recently said that declaring Western Ghats as an Ecologically Sensitive Zone would adversely affect the livelihood of people in the region.
- The experts called the state's opposition disastrous for the ecologically fragile Western Ghats

### Recommendations of Kasturirangan Committee

- The Kasturirangan report seeks to bring just 37% of the Western Ghats under the Ecologically Sensitive Area (ESA) zones — down from the 64% suggested by the Gadgil report.
- It has recommended prohibition on development activities in a 60,000 sq. km ecologically sensitive area spread over Gujarat, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Goa, Kerala and Tamil Nadu.
- The report recommended a blanket ban on mining, quarrying, setting up of red category industries and thermal power projects.
- It also stated that the impact of infrastructural projects on the forest and wildlife should be studied before permission is given for these activities.
- It also stated that the UNESCO Heritage tag is an opportunity to build global and domestic recognition of the enormous natural wealth that exists in the Western Ghats.

### NOTE

A committee headed by ecologist Madhav Gadgil also known as the "Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel (WGEEP) in 2011 recommended that all of the Western Ghats should be declared as the Ecological Sensitive Areas (ESA) with only limited development allowed in graded zones.

The panel had classified the Western Ghats into Ecologically Sensitive Zones (ESZ) 1, 2 and 3 of which ESZ-1 is high priority almost all development activities (mining, thermal power plants etc.) were restricted in it.



### Significance of Western Ghats

- The Western Ghats cover a total area of 1,64,280 sq km across six states: Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa, Kerala, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.
- They form the major watershed in peninsular India, affecting rainfall patterns across the country.
- They also neutralise an estimated 4 million tonnes of carbon every year – about 10% of the emissions neutralised by all of India's forests.

## Effect of Stubble Burning on PM 2.5 : A Study



- SAFAR (System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting And Research) revealed recent data regarding pollution in Delhi.
- According to this, the average contribution of stubble burning to Delhi's PM2.5 level in November was 14.6%.
- PM 2.5 that are emitted from various sources and are linked to negative health effects such as cardiovascular disease, respiratory illness and premature mortality.
- The contribution of stubble burning in neighbouring States to the daily levels of PM2.5 – a chief pollutant – in Delhi was as high as 48% on November 7.
- The highest contribution of stubble burning to PM2.5 in Delhi for a day was 58% in 2018, 43% in 2019, and 46% in 2020.

### Alternatives to Stubble Burning

- **Turbo Happy Seeder (THS) machine:** One such method is using a Turbo Happy Seeder (THS) machine, which can uproot the stubble and also sow seeds in the area cleared.
- **Pusa bio-decomposer:** It is developed by the scientists at the Indian Agricultural Research Institute, which turns crop residue into manure in 15-20 days by accelerating the decomposition process.
- **In-situ treatment of stubble:** The government is currently giving equipment to farmers to mix the stubble back into the soil so that they do not have to burn it.
- **Ex-situ treatment:** Under this, some companies have started collecting stubble for their use, but we need more action on this front.

#### About Stubble Burning

- Stubble burning is the practice of intentionally setting fire to the straw stubble that remains after grains, such as rice and wheat, have been harvested.
- The origin of stubble burning can be traced to the advent of the Green Revolution and mechanised harvesting, which utilised the combined harvesting technique.

### Bio-decomposer to tackle stubble burning

- The Delhi government will start spraying bio-decomposer for free in 4,000 acres of paddy fields in Delhi to tackle stubble burning.
- Bio-decomposer is a solution, which, if sprayed in fields, decomposes straw and stubble into manure.
- A bio-decomposer capsule, developed by Pusa Institute, is made into a solution through a week-long process and then sprayed on stubble and straw left behind on fields after harvesting.



### Global Methane Pledge launched at COP26

- The Global Methane Pledge was launched at the COP26 climate conference in Glasgow, the U.K. So far, over 90 countries have signed this pledge, which is an effort led jointly by the United States and the European Union.



#### Key Points:

- The pledge was first announced in September by the US and EU. It is not a structured agreement.
- It aims to reduce the global methane emissions across the globe and to cut down methane emissions by up to 30 per cent from 2020 levels by the year 2030.
- If implemented globally, this would minimise global warming by 0.2 degrees Celsius by the 2040s, compared to projected temperature rises.
- The planet is presently around 1.2 degrees Celsius hotter than it was before the Industrial Revolution.
- As of now, India, the third-largest source of methane emissions, is not a signatory.
- Independent International Methane Emissions Observatory launched for Methane monitoring at COP26.

#### About Methane

- Methane is the second-most abundant greenhouse gas in the atmosphere, after carbon dioxide. It is the simplest hydrocarbon, consisting of one carbon atom and four hydrogen atoms (CH<sub>4</sub>).
- It is a colourless, odourless, and highly flammable gas.
- Approximately 40% of methane emitted is from natural sources and about 60% comes from human-influenced sources. Human sources of methane are responsible for 60 per cent of global methane emissions.
- Natural sources include decay of plant material in wetlands, the seepage of gas from underground deposits or the digestion of food by cattle.

### About Conference of Parties (COP)

- The COP is the apex decision making authority that comes under the UNFCCC which was formed in 1994. The UNFCCC has the aim of stabilising Greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere.
- The UNFCCC has 198 parties. The Presidency of the COP normally rotates among the five United Nations regional groups.

### India targets net-zero carbon emissions by 2070

- India pledged to achieve net-zero emissions by 2070 at COP26.
- India is the third-largest emitter of carbon emissions annually but the sixth-largest when historical emissions are considered, and when accounting for the size of its population it is among the lowest per capita emitters.
- India will reach net-zero carbon emission by 2070. In contrast to India's run-up to the COP where it had strongly resisted demands by developed countries to take on net-zero targets.



#### Note

Net zero emissions refer to achieving an overall balance between greenhouse gas emissions produced and greenhouse gas emissions removed from the atmosphere, through natural means or by using the still nascent carbon capture technology.

### India joined High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People



- India has joined the High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People, a group of more than 70 countries encouraging the adoption of the global goal to protect 30x30.

#### Key facts:

- The High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People was initiated at the "One Planet Summit" in Paris. The coalition

aims to promote an international agreement to protect at least 30 % of the world's land and ocean by 2030 (30x30 target).

- The 30x30 target is a global target that aims to halt the accelerating loss of species and protect vital ecosystems that are the source of our economic security.
- HAC is co-chaired by Costa Rica and France, and by the United Kingdom as Ocean co-chair.
- **Members:** At present, the group has more than 70 countries encouraging the adoption of the global goal to protect 30x30. The members of HAC currently include a mix of countries in the global north and south. These include European, Latin American, Africa and Asia countries are among the members.
- India is the first BRICS country to join the HAC.

#### Note

The HAC coalition aims to promote an international agreement in order to protect at least 30 percent of the world's land and ocean by 2030.

### Fourth Assembly of the International Solar Alliance (ISA) held virtually

- Recently, the fourth general assembly of the International Solar Alliance (ISA) was held virtually. This virtual meeting was presided by the Union Minister for Power, New and Renewable Energy (GoI) and the President of the ISA Assembly.



#### Key Points:

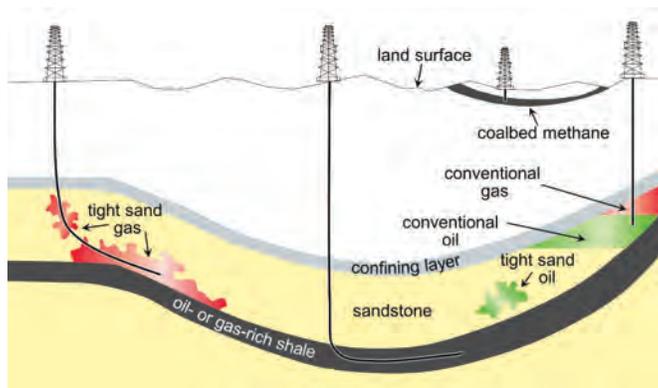
- 108 countries participated in the ISA Assembly, including 34 observer & prospective countries and 74 Member Countries.
- It was also participated by 23 Partner Organizations and 33 Special Invitee Organisations.
- During the meeting countries discussed how MSME clusters can replace diesel gensets with hydrogen.
- Discussion was focused on how ISA's waste management programme will be significant for the growing volume of waste & toxic materials, high cost of waste treatment and lack of waste specific legislation.
- They also discussed an update on One Sun One World One Grid (OSOWOG) initiative. This concept of a single global grid for solar was proposed at the First Assembly of the ISA in 2018.
- **2 New Programmes Launched:**
  - Management of Solar PV panels & battery usage waste & Solar Hydrogen programme.

- Hydrogen initiative aimed at enabling the use of solar electricity to produce hydrogen at a more affordable rate than what is available currently (USD 5 per KG), by bringing it down to USD 2 per KG.

### Note

The ISA also announced a partnership with Bloomberg Philanthropies in order to mobilize \$1 trillion in global investments for solar energy among the member countries of ISA.

## Shale exploration to be started in Barmer, Rajasthan



- Cairn Oil & Gas has announced that it is partnering US-based Halliburton to start shale exploration in the Lower Barmer Hill formation, Western Rajasthan.
- The company is looking to increase the recoverable reserves at its offshore assets by 10 times via enhanced use of technology, in partnership with Halliburton.

### Shale Gas:

- Shales are fine-grained sedimentary rocks formed of organic-rich mud at the bottom of ancient seas.
- Subsequent sedimentation and the resultant heat and pressure transformed the mud into shale and also produced natural gas from the organic matter contained in it.
- Over long spans of geologic time, some of the gas migrated to adjacent sandstones and was trapped in them, forming conventional gas accumulations.

### Note

Shale Basins of preliminary interest identified by Indian geologists are the Cambay Basin in Gujarat, the Assam-Arakan basin in northeast India, and the Gondwana Basin.

## Movement against Biological Invasion (MABI) launched

- A biologist from the Agharkar Research Institute (Pune) has started an initiative called MABI (Movement against Biological Invasion).
- MABI is a green movement aimed at systematically charting and rooting out Invasive Alien Species. It aims to promote the conservation of native flora in the face of this mushrooming challenge.

### About Invasive Alien Species

- An alien species is a species introduced outside its natural past or present distribution; if this species becomes problematic, it is termed an invasive alien species.
- The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) defines it as "an alien species whose introduction and spread threaten ecosystems, habitats, or species with socio-cultural, economic and environmental harm and harm to human health".
- These are such a problem that Aichi Biodiversity Target 9 and one clause of UN Sustainable Development Goal 15 – Life on Land specifically address the issue.

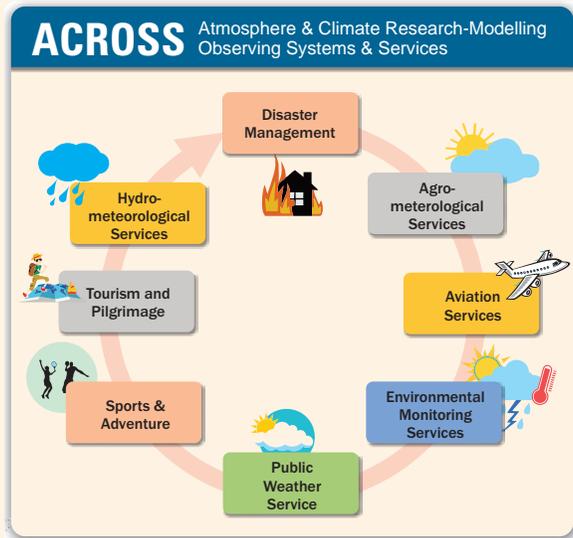
## Earth's Black Box being built in Australia

- A black box is being built in Australia that will record the Earth's warming weather patterns.
- It will be constructed in Tasmania, an Australian island state off the south coast. Tasmania was chosen for its relative geopolitical and environmental safety.
- It is a 33-foot-long box made of 3-inch-thick steel and is expected to be completed in 2022.
- The data will be stored on a giant, automated, solar-powered hard drive with a capacity to collect information for about 50 years.
- The purpose of the device is to provide an unbiased account of the events that lead to the demise of the planet, hold accountability for future generations, and inspire urgent action
- It will operate much like a plane's flight recorder, which records an aircraft's final moments before crashing.



## Union Cabinet approved ACROSS Scheme

- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs approved the continuation of the umbrella scheme 'Atmosphere & Climate Research-Modelling Observing Systems & Services (ACROSS)' for the next five years at an estimated cost of Rs 2,135 crore.

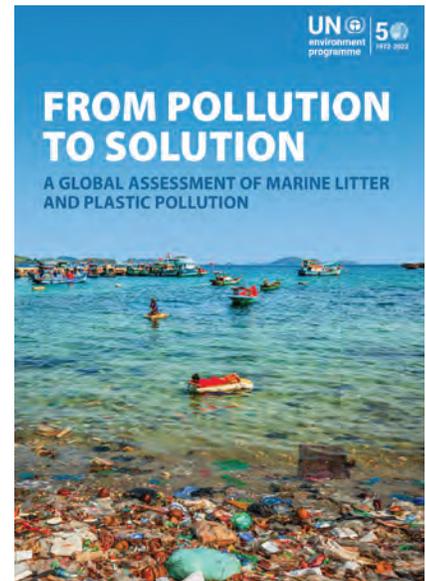


### Key points:

- The scheme pertains to the ministry's atmospheric science programmes and addresses different aspects of weather and climate services.
- Each of these aspects is incorporated as eight sub-schemes under the umbrella scheme "ACROSS" and is implemented in an integrated manner through the four agencies.
- Eight sub-schemes under ACROSS:**
  - Financial support will be provided to implement eight sub-schemes under ACROSS throughout the next finance cycle from 2021-26.
  - The India Meteorological Department (IMD) will be vastly contributing in five sub-schemes, namely: commissioning of polarimetric doppler weather radars in the country, atmospheric observations network, study of monsoon and clouds, weather and climate services and upgradation of forecasting services in the next five years.

## UNEP's "From Pollution to Solution" Report

- Recently, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has released a comprehensive assessment named 'From Pollution to Solution: a global assessment of marine litter and plastic pollution'.



### Key Findings

- The amount of plastics in the oceans has been estimated to be around 75-199 million tonnes at present. Without meaningful action, emissions of plastic waste into aquatic ecosystems are projected to nearly triple by 2040.
- The report talks about the extreme pressures being exerted on the planet due to plastic pollution and the need for urgent action to offset it.
- Plastics labelled as biodegradable may take hundreds of years to degrade in the oceans; litter poses similar risks to individuals, biodiversity and ecosystem functioning.
- The main sources of marine litter and plastic pollution are land-based. Approximately 7,000 million of the estimated 9,200 million tonnes of cumulative plastic production between 1950 and 2017 became plastic waste.
- Plastic can also alter global carbon cycling through its effect on plankton and primary production in marine, freshwater and terrestrial systems.

### Plastic Waste In India:

- Plastic waste contributes about 5-6 per cent of total solid waste generated in India. India consumes about 13 million tonnes of plastic and recycles only about 4 million tonnes.

## WHO: Revised Air Quality norms

- The World Health Organisation (WHO) has announced a tight revision in its air quality guidelines (AQG). This is the first revision in the global air quality by WHO since 2005.
- In the new guidelines, WHO has lowered the acceptable exposure levels to key pollutants, including ozone, nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide, carbon monoxide and particulate matter (PM).



### Key Highlights:

- The guidelines recommend new air quality levels to protect the health of populations, by reducing levels of key air pollutants, some of which also contribute to climate change.
- By striving to achieve these guideline levels, countries will be both protecting health as well as mitigating global climate change.
- WHO move sets the stage for eventual shifts in policy in the government towards evolving newer stricter standards.
- WHO's new guidelines recommend air quality levels for 6 pollutants, where evidence has advanced the most on health effects from exposure. 6 classical pollutants include particulate matter (PM 2.5 and 10), ozone (O<sub>3</sub>), nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) sulfur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>) and carbon monoxide (CO).

### Impact on India

- The move does not have an immediate effect in India as the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) do not meet the WHO's existing standards.
- The government has a dedicated National Clean Air Programme that aims for a 20% to 30% reduction in particulate matter concentrations by 2024 in 122 cities, keeping 2017 as the base year

## India ratified Kigali Amendment to Montreal Protocol

- The Union Cabinet ratified the Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer for phase down of Hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs).

### Key Points

- It comes close on the heels of similar decisions by the United States and China, the world's largest producers and consumers of HFCs.
- India now requires to reduce its HFCs usage by 80% by 2047. China and the US have to achieve the same in 2045 and 2034.
- Under the ratification, hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) will be phased down early which in turn will make the Indian industry globally competitive across the climate-friendly cooling products.
- Ratification provided a big opportunity to India to be on course for the early phase down of HFCs by means of domestic innovation.

### About Montreal Protocol (1989)

- It is an international treaty that regulates the production and consumption of nearly 100 man-made chemicals referred to as ozone depleting substances (ODS).
- The ODS, when released to the atmosphere, damages the 'stratospheric ozone layer' that protects the earth against the harmful levels of UV radiation from the sun.
- It mandated the complete phase-out of chlorofluorocarbons or CFCs and other ODS.

### Note

Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol is an international agreement that seeks to gradually reduce consumption and production of hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs). This is a legally binding agreement that has been designed to create rights and obligations in international law.

## Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) to be revised

- Recently there are discussions going at Government level to revise the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) to accommodate predictions.

Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP)		
Category	Ambient Particulate Matter (PM) Concentration	Measures
Moderate to Poor	PM 2.5 between 61-120 mg/m <sup>3</sup> PM10 between 101-350 mg/m <sup>3</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enforce pollution control in thermal power plants</li> <li>Mechanized sweeping on roads</li> <li>Ban on firecrackers</li> <li>Stop garbage burning</li> </ul>
Very Poor	PM 2.5 between 121-250 mg/m <sup>3</sup> PM 10 between 351-430 mg/m <sup>3</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stop use of diesel generator sets</li> <li>Increase bus and metro services and increasing frequency of metro service</li> <li>Stop use of coal/firewood in hotels and open eateries</li> </ul>
Severe	PM 2.5 more than 250 mg/m <sup>3</sup> PM 10 more than 430 mg/m <sup>3</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase frequency of mechanized sweeping of road and sprinkling of water on roads</li> <li>Close brick kilns, Hot Mix plants, Stone Crushers</li> <li>Shut down Badarpur power plant</li> <li>Introduce concessional rates to encourage off-peak travel in public transport</li> </ul>
Severe + or Emergency	PM 2.5 of or more than 300 mg/m <sup>3</sup> PM 10 of or 500 mg/m <sup>3</sup> <b>(Persist for 48 hours or more)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stop entry of diesel trucks into Delhi (except essential commodities)</li> <li>Stop construction activities</li> <li>Introduce odd and even scheme, Shutting of schools</li> </ul>

### About Graded Response Action Plan

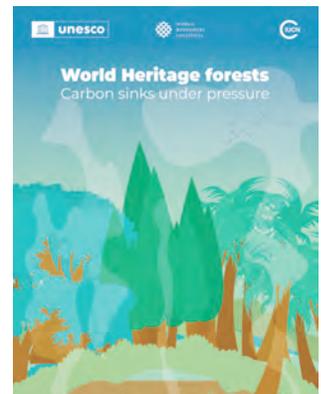
- GRAP is a set of measures to be taken to reduce Air Pollution depending on the current level of pollution.
- It was notified by the Union Environment Ministry in 2017 to fight air pollution, based on the SC directions.
- GRAP works only as an emergency measure. As such, the plan does not include action by various state governments to be taken throughout the year to tackle industrial, vehicular and combustion emissions.
- The plan is incremental in nature — therefore, when the air quality moves from 'Poor' to 'Very Poor', the measures listed under both sections have to be followed.

## "World Heritage Forests : Carbon sinks under pressure" report launched

- UNESCO, World Resources Institute (WRI) and International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) released World Heritage forests: Carbon sinks under pressure.
- It provides the first global scientific assessment of greenhouse gas emissions and sequestration by forests in UNESCO World Heritage sites.

### Key findings:

- The overall network of 257 forests in World Heritage sites, played a vital role in mitigating climate change, by absorbing 190 million tons of CO<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere every year. That's roughly half of the United Kingdom's annual CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from fossil fuels.



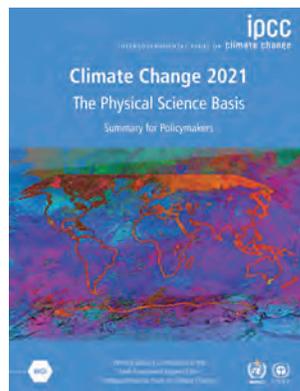
- The combined area of 69 million hectares is roughly twice the size of Germany, are biodiversity-rich ecosystems. In addition to absorbing CO<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere, they also store substantial amounts of carbon.
- The majority of the World Heritage forest carbon is stored in tropical sites. Forests contribute to the global climate system by both emitting and absorbing carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) from the atmosphere.
- Over the past 20 years, World Heritage sites lost 3.5 million hectares of forest (an area larger than Belgium) and forests in 10 World Heritage sites emitted more carbon than they absorbed.
- India's Sundarbans National Park is among five sites that have the highest blue carbon stocks globally.

### Note

- A World Heritage site is classified as a natural or man-made area or a structure that is of international importance, and a space which requires special protection.
- These sites are officially recognised by the UN and the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation, also known as UNESCO.

## "Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis" Report released

- The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) recently published its report titled "Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis".
- Global mean sea level (GMSL) increased by 0.2m between 1901 and 2018. Average rate of sea level rise was 1.3 mm/year in between 1901-1971 and increased to 3.7 mm/year in the year 2006-2018.



### Key Points:

- The IPCC report discussed five different shared socio-economic pathways for the future with different levels of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.
  - **Very low and low GHG emissions:** Here, emissions decline to net zero around the middle of the century. Beyond this, emissions are net negative.

- **Intermediate GHG emissions:** Emissions are double the current level by 2100.
- **High and very high emissions:** Here, emissions are double the current levels by 2050.
- In the intermediate scenario, Average warming is likely to exceed 2°C near mid-century.
- Average global temperature is currently 1.09°C higher than pre-industrial levels while the CO<sub>2</sub> concentration in the atmosphere is 410 ppm as compared to 285 ppm in 1850.

## Green High-Speed Rail Rating System launched

- Indian Green Building Council (IGBC) in association with the National High-Speed Rail Corporation Ltd (NHSRCL) has launched the world's first exclusive Green rating system for High-Speed Rail.



### Key Points:

- This first of its kind green rating system is formulated for the upcoming 508.17 km long Mumbai-Ahmedabad bullet train corridor which is the country's first high-speed rail project.
- In the first place, it is important to understand more about the Green Railway Stations rating system.
- Green Railway Stations rating system is the first of its kind holistic rating in India to address environmental sustainability in Indian railway stations.
- The objective of the rating is to facilitate the adoption of green concepts, reduce the adverse environmental impacts due to station operation & maintenance, and enhance the overall commuter experience at the station.
- Green Railway Stations rating system is designed primarily for existing Indian railway stations. It will help the station management to understand their present position with respect to the 'green performance' of the station and the measures that need to be taken to enhance the performance on a continual basis.

### About Green Building Council (GBC)

- GBC is a national non-profit, non-government organization which is part of a global network recognized by the World Green Building Council. Its goal is to promote the transformation of a sustainable built environment.

## UT of Ladakh adopted State Animal and Bird

- The UT of Ladakh recently adopted two endangered species Snow Leopard and Black-necked Crane as its State animal and State bird respectively. Ladakh adopted these species two years after it was created as a separate Union Territory (UT) from the erstwhile State of Jammu & Kashmir (J&K).

### Snow Leopard

- Snow leopard, scientifically known as *Panthera uncia*, is a felid of genus *Panthera* and is native to the mountain ranges in Central and South Asia.
- It has been listed as Vulnerable on the IUCN Red List as its global population is lesser than 10,000 mature individuals. It is expected to decline by 10% by 2040. Poaching and habitat destruction are the biggest threat to them.
- Snow leopards are found in the northern Himalayan Mountain range (two distinct areas: Ladakh and Spiti).

- Protection status :**
  - IUCN Red List :** Threatened
  - CITES :** Appendix-I
  - Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 :** Schedule-I

### Black-Necked Crane

- Black-necked Crane, scientifically known as *Grus nigricollis*, is a medium-sized crane found in Asia. It breeds on the Tibetan Plateau and remote parts of India and Bhutan. It is an endangered species.
- The crane is 139 cm long with a wingspan of 235 cm and weighs of 5.5 kg. It is whitish-grey in colour along with a black head, red crown patch, white patch to the rear of eye, black upper neck and legs.
- It is respected in Buddhist traditions and is culturally protected in much of its range.
- In India, Black-necked crane are only found in Ladakh region.
- It was the State bird of J&K before it was split into two UTs in 2019.
- Protection status :**
  - IUCN Red List :** Near Threatened
  - CITES :** Appendix-I
  - Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 :** Schedule-I



“ *The black-necked crane is the only alpine member of the crane species.* ”



“ *Snow leopards live at high altitudes, usually at elevations of 3,000-4,500m.* ”

## India's First Smog Tower inaugurated



- The Chief Minister of Delhi inaugurated a 'smog tower' in Connaught Place and assured that similar towers would be built across the city, if results of the current pilot project are satisfactory.

### Key Points:

- Smog towers are structures that are designed as large-scale air purifiers in order to reduce air pollution particles.

- The smog tower is a 24 metre-high structure fitted with fans and air filters. This is to solve the problem of Air Pollution in Delhi.
- It will draw in polluted air from the top and release filtered air near the ground through fans fitted on the sides. The tower has 40 big fans and 5,000 filters to clean the air.
- These are electrostatic air filters that can filter out microparticles, including those that constitute smoke, household dust and pollen, according to the project description. A Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) system has been installed in the tower to collect data and monitor its functioning.
- This tower has been established as a pilot project and detailed studies will be conducted on its performance. IIT-Delhi and IIT-Bombay will analyse data and submit a report on the effectiveness of the tower.

### Note

Central government will build a 25-metre-tall smog tower at Anand Vihar. It is likely to become operational by August 31.

## Four new Indian wetlands added to Ramsar list



- Four more wetlands from India get recognition from the Ramsar Secretariat as Ramsar sites.

### Key Points:

- These Four sites that have been included are:
  - Thol from Gujarat
  - Wadhvana from Gujarat
  - Sultanpur from Haryana
  - Bhindawas from Haryana
- These sites are home to endangered Egyptian Vulture, Sociable Lapwing, Saker Falcon, and near threatened Dalmatian Pelican.
- With the latest addition, the number of Ramsar sites in India have reached 46. These 46 sites cover a surface area of 1,083,322 hectares.

### Bhindawas Wildlife Sanctuary:

- It is the largest wetland in Haryana. This human-made freshwater wetland comprises more than 250 bird species. The bird species use the sanctuary throughout the year for resting and roosting. It also supports more than ten globally threatened species such as Steppe Eagle, endangered Egyptian Vulture, Black-bellied Tern and Pallas's Fish Eagle.

### Sultanpur National Park:

- This Park from Haryana provides support to more than 220 species of resident, winter migratory and local migratory waterbirds.

### Thol Lake Wildlife Sanctuary:

- It lies on the Central Asian Flyway in Gujarat. It supports more than 320 bird species and more than 30 threatened waterbird species like critically endangered white-rumped vulture, Sociable Lapwing, Common Pochard etc.

### Wadhvana Wetland:

- It is an internationally important wetland situated in Gujarat. It is famous for its birdlife because it provides wintering ground

to migratory waterbirds, migrating on Central Asian Flyway. Some of the species include endangered Pallas's fish-Eagle, vulnerable Common Pochard, and near-threatened Dalmatian Pelican.

### About Ramsar Convention

- The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (better known as the Ramsar Convention) is an international agreement promoting the conservation and wise use of wetlands.
- It is the only global treaty to focus on a single ecosystem.
- The convention was adopted in the Iranian city of Ramsar in 1971 and came into force in 1975.
- Traditionally viewed as a wasteland or breeding ground of disease, wetlands actually provide fresh water and food and serve as nature's shock absorber.



## Govt. amended Thermal Power Plants Emission Standards

- The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change recently amended the rules of thermal power plants emission standards.



### Key highlights:

- The new law has extended the deadline for nuclear power plants within ten kilometers of the National Capital Region and in cities with a population of more than ten lakh to meet with the new pollution standards by the end of 2022.
- The CPCB intends to form a task force (Central Pollution Control Board). Based on their venue, the task force would divide thermal power plants into three groups.
- The deadline for "Non-Attainment Cities" thermal power plants to meet emission standards has been extended until December 31, 2023.
- The coal fired power plants in the rest of the areas have to comply with the new standards by December 2024.

### Note

Sulfur Dioxide, Nitrogen Oxide, Carbon Monoxide, Ozone, Suspended Particulate Matter, non-methane hydrocarbons, and lead are among the contaminants emitted from a nuclear power plant. Sulphur Dioxide, on the other hand, is the most significant pollutant emitted from a thermal power plant.

## Earth Overshoot Day 2021 observed

- Earth Overshoot Day 2021 was observed on July 29, almost a month earlier than the year before. It was pushed forward because emissions are on the rise and biodiversity loss is speeding up.
- The date is announced annually by the Global Footprint Network, the global organisation calling for urgent climate action and sustainable consumption.



### About Earth Overshoot Day

- Each year, Earth Overshoot Day marks the date when we have used all the biological resources that the Earth can renew during the entire year.
- This means humanity has again used up all biological resources that our planet regenerates during the entire year by 29th July, 2021.
- The concept of Earth Overshoot Day was first conceived by Andrew Simms of the UK think tank New Economics Foundation, which partnered with Global Footprint Network in 2006 to launch the first global Earth Overshoot Day campaign.
- Earth Overshoot Day is computed by dividing the planet's bio capacity (the amount of ecological resources Earth is able to generate that year), by humanity's Ecological Footprint (humanity's demand for that year), and multiplying by 365, the number of days in a year.

### Do You Know?

Ecological Footprint is a metric that comprehensively compares human demand on nature against nature's capacity to regenerate.

## India received Global Conservation Assured/ Tiger Standards (CA/TS)

- Recently, India's 14 Tiger Reserves have received the Global Conservation Assured | Tiger Standards (CA/TS) accreditation.

### INDIA'S 14 TIGER RESERVES (CA/TS)

Location	State
1. Orang 2. Manas 3. Kaziranga	Assam
4. Panna 5. Satpura 6. Satpura	Madhya Pradesh
7. Pench	Maharashtra
8. Valmiki	Bihar
9. Dudhwa	Uttar Pradesh
10. Sunderbans	West Bengal
11. Parambikulam	Kerala
12. Bandipur	Karnataka
13. Annamalai 14. Mudumalai	Tamil Nadu

### About Global Conservation Assured | Tiger Standards (CA/TS) accreditation

- CAITS is a conservation tool which is accepted globally. This tool sets best standards and practices to manage the tiger population of the world and encourages their assessments for benchmarking of progress.
- It is being implemented in around 125 sites in seven tiger range countries. India has the highest number of 94 sites, out of which assessment of 20 tiger reserves were completed this year.
- Currently, India has 51 tiger reserves which are spread across 18 states.



## State of India's Environment Report 2021 released



- The State of India's Environment Report 2021 revealed that India's rank has slipped two places from last year to rank 117th on the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted as a part of the 2030 agenda by 193 United Nations Member States in 2015. The index compares how countries implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

### Key Points

- This year, Finland was ranked highest in the index. A Nordic country has ranked at the top of the SDG Index for the first time.
- Finland has topped even when COVID-19 has slowed down the sustainable development process across the world.
- As per the Government, Finland has topped the index based on its achievements with respect to the goals related to poverty reduction, health, education, energy, water, peace, reduction of inequality and rule of law.

### About SDGs Index

- The NITI Aayog launched its index in 2018 to monitor the country's progress on the goals through data-driven assessment, and foster a competitive spirit among the States and Union Territories in achieving them.
- NITI Aayog has the twin mandate to oversee the adoption and monitoring of the SDGs in the country, and also promote competitive and cooperative federalism among States and UTs.
- The index represents the articulation of the comprehensive nature of the Global Goals under the 2030 Agenda while being attuned to the national priorities.

### Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)

- UN member states adopted 17 SDGs. Some of the important SDGs include:
  - SDG 1- No Poverty
  - SDG 2- Zero Hunger
  - SDG 3- Good health & well-being
  - SDG 4- Quality Education

- SDG 5- Gender Equality
- SDG 6- Clean Water & Sanitation
- SDG 9- Industry, Innovation & Infrastructure
- SDG 10- Reduced Inequalities
- SDG 13- Climate Action etc

## MoEFCC notified Plastic Waste Management Amendment Rules, 2021



- The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) has notified the Plastic Waste Management Amendment Rules, 2021, prohibiting identified single use plastic (SUP) items by 2022.

### Key highlights:

- Pollution due to single use plastic items has become an important environmental challenge confronting all countries.
- The manufacture, import, stocking, distribution, sale and use of following single-use plastic, including polystyrene and expanded polystyrene, commodities shall be prohibited with effect from the 1st July, 2022:
  - earbuds with plastic sticks, plastic sticks for balloons, plastic flags, candy sticks, ice-cream sticks, polystyrene [thermocool] for decoration.
  - plates, cups, glasses, cutlery such as forks, spoons, knives, straw, trays, wrapping or packaging films around sweet boxes, invitation cards and cigarette packets, plastic or PVC banners less than 100 micron, stirrers
- The thickness of plastic carry bags has been increased from fifty microns to seventy-five microns and to one hundred and twenty microns with effect from the 31st December, 2022.



**Single-use plastic** is a form of plastic that is disposable, which is only used once and then has to be thrown away or recycled like water bottles, straw, cups etc.

## Six Heritage Sites added to India's UNESCO World Heritage sites Tentative List



- Six Indian sites, including the temples of Kanchipuram in Tamil Nadu, the Ganga ghats in Varanasi, and the Satpura Tiger Reserve in Madhya Pradesh, have been added to the tentative list of UNESCO's world heritage sites.

### Key Points:

- **The six sites are namely:**
  - Satpura Tiger Reserve
  - Iconic riverfront of the historic city of Varanasi
  - Megalithic site of Hire Benkal
  - Maratha Military Architecture in Maharashtra
  - Bhedaghat-Lametaghat in Narmada Valley- Jabalpur
  - Temples of Kanchipuram.
- With this, the total number of sites in the UNESCO World Heritage Sites Tentative list has increased to 48.

### About World Heritage site

- A World Heritage site is classified as a natural or man-made area or a structure that is of international importance, and a space which requires special protection.
- These sites are officially recognised by the UN and the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation, also known as UNESCO.
- UNESCO believes that the sites classified as World Heritage are important for humanity, and they hold cultural and physical significance.

## ICAR developed Harit Dhara

- Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) has developed an anti-methanogenic feed supplement 'Harit Dhara' (HD), which can cut down cattle methane emissions by 17-20% and can also result in higher milk production.
- This supplement can cut down cattle methane emissions by 17-20% and can also result in higher milk production.



### Benefits:

- It decreases the population of protozoa microbes in the rumen, responsible for hydrogen production and making it available to the archaea (structure similar to bacteria) for reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> to methane.

### About Harit Dhara

- Harit Dhara is prepared using condensed and hydrolysable tannin-rich plant-based sources abundantly available in the country.
- It changes the composition of the volatile fatty acids that are the end-products of rumen fermentation (along with hydrogen and CO<sub>2</sub>).
- It roughly costs Rs 6/kg and it is to be fed only to animals aged above three months having fully functional rumen.
- When given to bovines and sheep, it not only cuts down their methane emissions by 17-20%.
- It also results in higher milk production and body weight gain.
- It has been made from tannin-rich plant-based sources. Tropical plants containing tannins, bitter and astringent chemical compounds, are known to suppress or remove protozoa from the rumen.

## Ladakh to get India's first Geothermal Power Project

- India's first geothermal power plant will be set up in the Puga, a village in eastern Ladakh.
- This decision was made because the Puga village was established by the scientists as a hotspot of geothermal energy.

### Key Highlights:

- The geothermal scheme is known as the Geothermal Field Production Project.
- It is to be commissioned by the end of 2022.
- The first phase of the project would result in the generation of one Megawatt (MW) of electricity. The pilot project will be initiated by the NGOC-OEC in the first phase.
- ONGC-OEC will explore within the depth of 500 metres.

### Note

In the Puga Village, scientists have discovered a potential of more than 100 MW of geothermal energies. It lies in the south-eastern part of Ladakh. The village is a part of the Himalayan geothermal belt.

## WMO Report: Climate Indicators and Sustainable Development

- The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) recently released a report titled 'Climate Indicators and Sustainable Development: Demonstrating the Interconnections'.

### Key Highlights:

- The WMO studied seven climate indicators — CO<sub>2</sub> concentration, temperature, ocean acidification and heat, sea ice extent, glacier melt and sea-level rise. It found that rising CO<sub>2</sub> concentration due to human activities was a key driver of global climate change.
- CO<sub>2</sub> concentration drives global climate change and is indirectly responsible for risks related to several climate indicators. Thus reducing carbon emissions is the most effective and necessary climate-related action to achieve SDGs.
- Its release coincides with the United Nations General Assembly annual session and the opening in September 2021 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Action Zone, which is dedicated to accelerating action on the SDGs.

### Objective of WMO report:

- WMO published its report with the aim of demonstrating the connections between global climate and SDGs. This goes far beyond the SDG 13 for climate action.
- Report also champions the need for greater international collaboration, which is required to achieve the SDGs. It also seeks to limit global warming to less than 2 °C or even 1.5 °C by the end of the current century.



## US rejoined Paris Climate Deal

- The United States has officially re-joined the Paris climate accord. With the rejoining of the US, the world leaders expect that now the country will prove its seriousness as it was mostly absent for four years.



### Key Highlights:

- The countries are also waiting for the announcement on the US's goal to cut emissions of heat-trapping gases by 2030.
- The President of the US, Joe Biden, had signed the executive order to reverse the withdrawal ordered by former President, Donald Trump.

### About Paris Climate Agreement

- It is an agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). This agreement was signed in 2016 and deals with climate change mitigation, adaptation, and finance.
- This agreement was negotiated by the representatives of 196 states. It was signed at the 21st Conference of the Parties of the UNFCCC in Paris, France.
- The agreement was later adopted by consensus in December 2015. Currently, 190 members of the UNFCCC are parties under the agreement. Countries like Turkey, Iran, and Iraq are not parties to it.

## World Sustainable Development Summit 2021 held



- The 2021 World Summit on Sustainable Development held by video conferencing. The theme of the summit was- 'Redefining Our Common Future: Safe and Secure Environment for All'.

### Key Highlights

- The year marks the 20th edition of the summit. This summit was coordinated by the Energy and Resources Institute's (TERI).
- The summit was held with the goal of putting together a wide spectrum of nations, scholars, corporate leaders, climate scientists, civil society and youth to combat climate change.
- The summit was organised with the aim to bring together a wide number of governments, academicians, business leaders, climate scientists, civil society and youth to fight against climate change.

- The summit held discussions on topics ranging from Climate finance, circular economy, Energy & industry transition, adaptation & resilience, nature-based solutions, clean oceans and air pollution.
- The key partners of the summit were the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, the Ministry of Environment, Forests & Climate Change and the Ministry of Earth Sciences.

### About World Sustainable Development Summit (WSDS)

- It is the annual flagship programme coordinated by the Energy and Resources Institute (TERI). The summit is planned with the goal of offering long-term options for the good of the global community.
- It aims to gain from assembling diverse parties on a common forum to facilitate a constructive action to resolve the problems of the future of mankind.



### Great Green Wall : Funding approved for the Sahel and Sahara Project



- The Great Green Wall for the Sahel and Sahara Project recently secured USD 14 billion in funding at the latest World Biodiversity Summit.
- The money will be used to regenerate depleted property, improve resilience, build green jobs and conserve biodiversity.

#### Key Points:

- The goal of the Great Green Wall initiative is to change the lives of 100 million Africans by developing 8,000 kilometres

long and 15 kilometres wide mosaic of trees, vegetation, grasslands and plants.

- The Great Green Wall is an African project which aims to sequester 250 million tonnes of carbon and create ten million green jobs. It will support the African communities to grow fertile land and increase economic opportunities for the youngest population.

#### Note

The countries that are selected as intervention zones for the Great Green Wall initiative are Chad, Burkina Faso, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Mali, Niger, Mauritania, Nigeria, Sudan, Senegal, Djibouti.

### Lonar Lake and Sur Sarovar Lake added into Ramsar list



- The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has recently announced the addition of Lonar Lake in Maharashtra and Sur Sarovar Lake in Uttar Pradesh to the Ramsar sites.
- Lake Lonar is the only crater lake in the country. Sur Sarovar Lake is also called Keetham Lake.

#### About Lonar Lake

- It was created by an asteroid impact during the Pleistocene Period. The crater is situated within the Deccan Traps of the Deccan Plateau. It has 160 birds, 12 species of mammals and 46 reptiles. Two small streams, Penganga and Purna, flow into Lonar Lake.

#### About Keetham Lake or Sur Sarovar Lake

- More than 106 species of migratory birds are found in the lake of Sur Sarovar. The water of the lake is taken from the Agra Canal. The canal originates from the Okhla reservoir on the Yamuna River in Delhi.

## Indian beaches recommended for Blue Flag label

- Eight beaches of the country have been recommended for the 'Blue Flag' international eco-label.
- The Environment Ministry also announced India's own eco-label 'Beach Environment and Aesthetics Management Services' (BEAMS) under its Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) project.
- The eight beaches that have been recommended Under the BEAMS includes- Shivrajpur in Gujarat, Ghoghla in Daman and Diu, Kasarkod and Padubidri in Karnataka, Kappad in Kerala, Rushikonda in Andhra Pradesh, Golden in Odisha and Radhanagar in Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

### Blue Flag certification:

- The Blue Flag Certification is awarded by a Denmark based non-profit organization called the Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE).
- For the Blue Flag certificate, beaches need to certify certain criteria related to environmental, educational, access and safety. There are 33 criteria in total.

### Beach Environment & Aesthetic Management System

- The BEAMS which is also referred as the Beach Management Services has been started under the integrated coastal zone management project of India.
- It has been started to plan sustainable tourism and healthy coastal management in India by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC).
- BEAMS will work to reduce pollutants on the beaches. The main objective of BEAMS programme is to promote sustainable development in coastal regions of India. It also strives to achieve high international standards in four categories.

## Solar Hamam

- **Context:** 'Solar Hamam' takes care of heating in cold Himalayan regions especially in the villages of Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand.
- The Solar Hamam had won the "Himachal Pradesh State Innovation Award for 2016-17".



### Key features of Solar Hamam:

- The Solar Hamam provides an anti-freezing outlet. It provides 15-18 liters of boiling hot water, within the first solar illumination of 30-35 minutes, at a maximum temperature of 90°C in the morning.
- It aimed at providing clean energy solutions to households across mountainous regions. It seeks to conserve forests, free women from collecting fuel wood and mitigate carbon emission.
- **Significance:** In the higher Himalayan region, 50% of fuelwood is consumed for the purpose of heating and is one of the major reasons for forest degradation and also the main cause of drudgery of women.

## Nagaland's Hornbill Festival

- **Context:** Hornbill Festival 2021 of Nagaland kicked off recently, after a gap of one year following the outbreak of COVID-19.



### Hornbill Festival

- This festival usually takes place between the 1st and the 10th of December every year in Kohima. The festival gets its name from the Indian Hornbill.
- The Hornbill is a common bird among the folklores and tribes of Nagaland and can be commonly seen prancing around in the forests of Nagaland.
- Hornbill Festival is held at Naga Heritage Village, Kisama which is about 12 km from Kohima.
- The aim of the festival is to revive and protect the rich culture of Nagaland and display its extravaganza and traditions.

### Great hornbill

- It is also known as the concave-casqued hornbill, great Indian hornbill or great pied hornbill is one of the larger members of the hornbill family.
- It is found in the Indian subcontinent and Southeast Asia.

## Kashi Vishwanath Corridor inaugurated

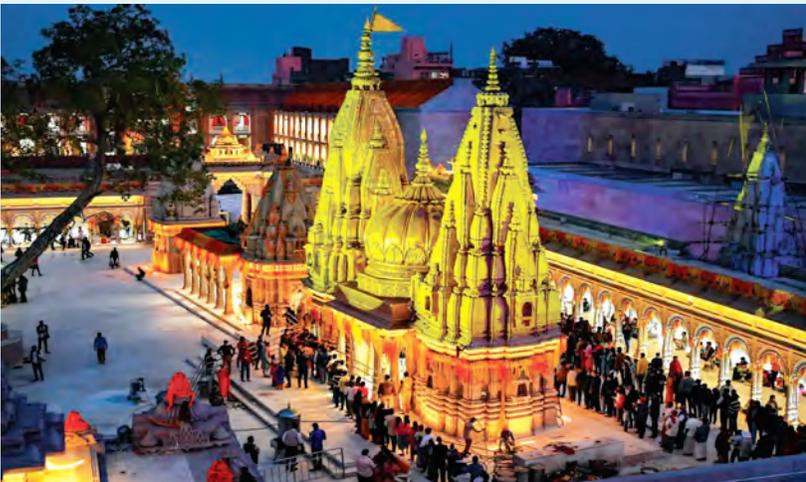
- Recently, the Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Kashi Vishwanath Corridor connecting the ancient Kashi Vishwanath Temple in Varanasi to the ghats of the Ganga.

### Key Points:

- It is a 400-meter long corridor that will facilitate the pilgrims and devotees of Lord Vishwanath, who had to encounter congested streets and surroundings with poor upkeep, when they practised the age-old custom of taking a dip in the holy river, collecting Gangajal and offering it at the temple.
- It will provide easy access for the disabled and old age people with the provision of ramps, escalators, and other modern facilities.

### Kashi Vishwanath Temple

- It is situated on the West bank of river Ganga which follows Uttar Vahini or north direction in Varanasi. The temple is regarded as 7th amongst 12 Jyotirlingas.
- The main deity is known by the name Vishvanatha or Vishveshvara meaning Ruler of The Universe.
- The Temple was renovated in its present form in 1780 by Maharani Ahilyabai Holkar of Indore and Maharaja Ranjit Singh donated gold for temple shikhara in 1835.
- It is constructed following the Nagara style of temple architecture, mostly prevalent in northern India.



## Union Cabinet raised Minimum Age of Marriage for Women

- The Union Cabinet took the decision to raise the legal age of marriage for women from 18 to 21 years.
- At present, the legal age of marriage for girls is 18 and the legal age of marriage for men is 21 years.



### Jaya Jaitly committee and its recommendations:

- 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, IMR, MMR and other social indices.
- The committee was to look at the feasibility of increasing the age of marriage and its implication on women and child health, as well as how to increase access to education for women.
- Recommendations Made:**
  - Age of marriage to be increased:** The committee has recommended the age of marriage be increased to 21 years, on the basis of feedback they received from young adults from 16 universities across the country.
  - Increasing access to schools and colleges for girls:** The committee also asked the government to look into increasing access to schools and colleges for girls, including their transportation to these institutes from far-flung areas.
  - Sex education:** Skill and business training has also been recommended, as has sex education in schools.
  - An awareness campaign:** Undertaken on a massive scale on the increase in age of marriage, and to encourage social acceptance of the new legislation, which they have said would be far more effective than coercive measures.

## Uniform Civil Code in news

- Recently, the Allahabad High Court has called upon the Central government to forthwith initiate the process of Uniform Civil Code implementation.
- The court directed the Centre to consider the constitution of a committee or commission for implementing the mandate of Article 44, as directed by the Supreme Court.

### About Uniform Civil Code (UCC)

- The Uniform Civil Code (UCC) calls for the formulation of one law for India, which would be applicable to all religious communities in matters such as marriage, divorce, inheritance and adoption.
- It dates back to colonial India when the British government submitted its report in 1835 stressing the need for uniformity in the codification of Indian law relating to crimes, evidence, and contracts, specifically recommending that personal laws of Hindus and Muslims be kept outside such codification.
- An increase in legislation dealing with personal issues at the far end of British rule forced the government to form the B N Rau Committee to codify Hindu law in 1941.

### Constitutional Provisions:

- **Article 44:** The "State shall endeavour to provide for its citizens a uniform civil code (UCC) throughout the territory of India."
- **Article 37:** The "state shall endeavour by suitable legislation", while the phrase "by suitable legislation" is absent in Article 44.

## Union Govt. to establish National Interlinking of Rivers Authority (NIRA)

- Recently, the Centre has set in motion the process of creating the National Interlinking of Rivers Authority (NIRA).

### About NIRA

- National Interlinking of Rivers Authority (NIRA) is an independent autonomous body for planning, investigation, financing and the implementation of river interlinking projects in the country.
- It will replace the existing National Water Development Agency (NWDA) and will function as an umbrella body for all river linking projects.
- It is to be headed by a Government of India Secretary-rank officer.

## Benefits of River Interlinking

- Most parts of the country are monsoon dependent and the quantum of rain varies widely across different regions.
- This interlinking of river projects can help India in increasing the connectivity by creating more inland waterways, therefore, cater to the logistic deficiency.
- It will ensure that scarcity of water does not become an inhibitor to development in the country.
- The Indian Rivers Inter-link aims to link India's rivers with a network of reservoirs and canals and so reduce persistent floods in some parts and water shortages in other parts of India.

## NITI Aayog launched Geospatial Energy Map of India



- Recently, NITI Aayog launched a comprehensive Geographic Information System (GIS)-based Geospatial Energy Map of India.
- This platform has been launched with the aim of integrating energy data scattered across several organizations. It will present consolidated data in a visually appealing graphical manner.

### 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.
- GIS mapping of energy assets will be helpful in ensuring real-time and integrated planning of the energy sector in India, considering its interdependence and large geographical distribution.

### About Geographical Information System (GIS)

- GIS is an interactive system that aids in analysis, building inter-relation, visualization, comparison and interpretation.
- It is a graphic aided spatial analysis tool. It helps in the management of Spatio-temporal information by embedding multiple levels of data sets into maps.

### Supreme Court constituted Pegasus Panel

- The Supreme Court has set up a panel to investigate allegations of potential surveillance of mobile phones using the Pegasus spyware.
- Under the case, the Union Government is alleged to have used spyware for surveillance on private citizens.
- The government's inaction to file a detailed response to the allegations made by the petitioners.
- The court has set seven terms of reference for the committee, which are essential facts that need to be ascertained to decide the issue.
- These range from determining who procured Pegasus and whether the petitioners in the case were indeed targeted by the use of the software.

### About Pegasus Software:

- Pegasus was developed by the Israeli firm NSO Group that was set up in 2010.
- Pegasus infect phones through what is called spear-phishing. Spear phishing is a fraudulent practices of sending emails ostensibly from a known or trusted sender.
- Pegasus attack capabilities have become more advanced and can be achieved through so-called "Zero-click" attacks, which do not require any interaction from the phone's owner in order to succeed.

### Govt. modified NPR applications

- The latest form of the National Population Register (NPR) appears to have retained contentious questions such as "mother tongue, place of birth of father and mother and last place of residence" according to a document compiled by a committee under the Registrar General of India.



### Key points:

- The new questions were part of a trial exercise involving 30 lakh respondents in September 2019.
- The NPR schedule to be used in Census 2021 is given in Annexure X. According to the Annexure: "National Population Register 2020", the respondent will have to specify the "name of State and district" if the place of birth of father and mother is in India and mention the country's name if not born here.

### About National Population Register (NPR)

- It is a Register of usual residents of the country.
- It is being prepared at the local (Village/sub-Town), sub-District, District, State and National level under provisions of the Citizenship Act 1955 and the Citizenship (Registration of Citizens and Issue of National Identity Cards) Rules, 2003.
- NPR was first done in 2010 and was later updated in 2015 when it was linked with Aadhar. It is mandatory for every usual resident of India to register in the NPR.
- A usual resident is defined for the purposes of NPR as a person who has resided in a local area for the past 6 months or more or a person who intends to reside in that area for the next 6 months or more.

### 'SonChiraiya' to market products of SHGs

- The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) recently launched a brand and logo called 'SonChiraiya'.
- It was launched to market the products of urban self-help groups (SHGs).



### Key Highlights:

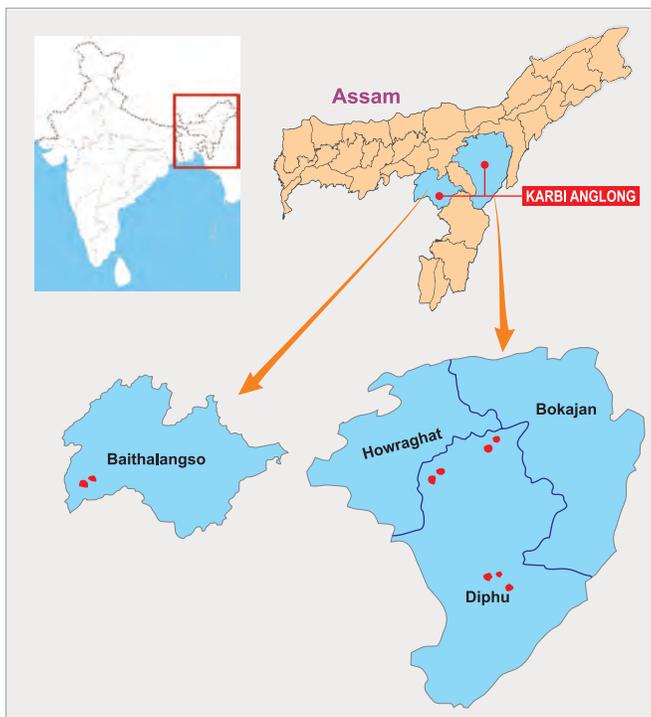
- DAY-NULM, under the aegis of MoHUA, has focussed on equipping the urban poor women with adequate skills and opportunities, and to enable them to promote sustainable micro enterprises.
- It mobilises women from urban poor households into SHGs and their federations to create a support system for these women.
- Many of these SHGs are engaged in livelihood activities, producing goods such as handicrafts, textiles, toys, eatables and so on.
- This initiative (SonChiraiya) will certainly prove as a step towards increased visibility and global access for the products made by urban SHG women.

## Karbi Anglong Peace Accord signed

- A tripartite agreement among five insurgent groups of Assam, the Centre and the State government was recently signed to end years of violence in the Karbi Anglong region.

### Highlights of the Agreement:

- Under the Karbi Anglong peace accord, more than 1,000 armed cadres have abjured violence and joined the mainstream. The agreement provides for their rehabilitation.
- The Union Government will make available a special development package of ₹1,000 crore over the next five years, for the Assam government to undertake specific projects for the development of Karbi areas.
- The Assam government will set up a Karbi Welfare Council for focused development of Karbi people living outside the 'Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council' (KAAC) area.
- The Consolidated Fund of the State will be augmented to supplement the resources of KAAC.
- The present settlement proposes will give more legislative, executive, administrative and financial powers to KAAC.



### Background

- The core demand of the Karbi outfits was the formation of a separate state.
- In November 2011, the organisation decided to lay down its arms and sign a tripartite memorandum of settlement with the Centre and the Assam government, settling for enhanced autonomy and special packages for the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC).

- The Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC) is an autonomous district council, which is protected under the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution.

### Significance of Karbi Anglong Accord:

- The Karbi Anglong Agreement is important as an insurgency by Karbi has had a long history in Assam, which has been marked by killings, ethnic violence, abductions and taxation since the late 1980s.
- The agreement hopes to bring an end to this violence and establish peace in the state.
- Around 1000 Karbi militants had surrendered before the Assam government in February 2021.

### About Karbi

- Originally, Karbis are one of Northeast India's tribal groups, largely inhabiting the Karbi Anglong and Dima Hasao (formerly North Cachar) hills districts.
- A major ethnic community of Assam— Karbis are dotted by many factions, and marked by ethnic violence, killings, abductions, taxation since the late 1980s.

## National Mission on Edible Oil - Oil Palm (NMEO-OP) announced

- The Union Govt. has announced this new national initiative on palm oil production to help increase farm incomes. The scheme involves investment of over Rs 11,000 crore.
- The scheme aims to achieve self-reliance in edible oil, Harness domestic edible oil prices that are dictated by expensive palm oil imports and to raise the domestic production of palm oil by three times to 11 lakh MT by 2025-26.



### Key features:

- The special emphasis of the scheme will be in India's north-eastern states and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands due to the conducive weather conditions in the regions.
- Under the scheme, oil palm farmers will be provided financial assistance and will get remuneration under a price and viability formula.
- It is expected to incentivise production of palm oil to reduce dependence on imports and help farmers cash in on the huge market.
- India is the largest consumer of vegetable oil in the world. Of this, palm oil imports are almost 60% of its total vegetable oil imports.

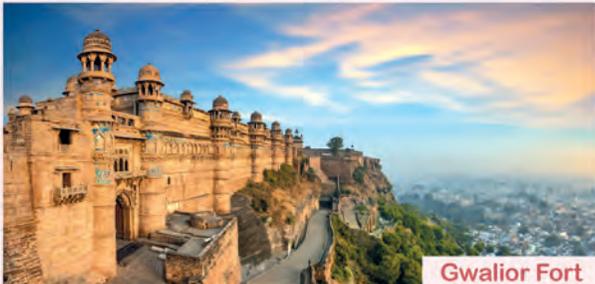
- In 2016-2017, the total domestic consumption of palm oil by India was 9.3 million MT, with 98.97 percent of it imported from Malaysia and Indonesia.

### Note

Palm Oil is currently the world's most consumed vegetable oil. It is used extensively in the production of detergents, plastics, cosmetics, and biofuels.

Top consumers of the commodity are India, China, and the European Union (EU).

## Gwalior and Orchha selected for UNESCO's Historic Urban Landscape project



Gwalior Fort



Orchha Chatri

- UNESCO has selected Gwalior and Orchha cities of Madhya Pradesh under its "Historic Urban Landscape Project".

### Key Highlights

- UNESCO's Historic Urban Landscape project for the cities of Orchha and Gwalior was launched through video conferencing by Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh Shivraj Singh Chouhan.
- Six cities of South Asia, including Indian cities of Varanasi and Ajmer are already involved in this project. Gwalior and Orchha have been included as the 7th and 8th cities of South Asia.
- UNESCO will prepare the management and development of these cities.

- This project will help in boosting the tourism of the state of Madhya Pradesh. Along with this additional employment opportunities will be created.

### About The 'Historic Urban Landscape' Approach

- It was adopted in 2011 at UNESCO's General Conference.
- UNESCO defines HUL approach as an integrated approach towards managing heritage resources found within dynamic and evolving environments.
- HUL acknowledges the interconnections within a city, which occur between the built and natural environments, the tangible and intangible values, as well as within the cultural and social practices of a community.



## SC issued notice on Section 66A of the IT Act

- The Supreme Court has issued a notice to the Centre on the use of Section 66A of the IT Act that was scrapped several years ago and said that it is shocking that the judgment striking down the law has not been implemented even now.

### Key Points:

- Section 66A defines the punishment for sending "offensive" messages through a computer or any other communication device like a mobile phone or a tablet. A conviction can fetch a maximum of three years in jail and a fine.
- It had prescribed three years' imprisonment if a social media message caused "annoyance" or was found "grossly offensive".
- The court, in the Shreya Singhal judgment authored by Justice Rohinton F. Nariman in March 2015, had concluded that the provision was vague and worded arbitrarily.

### Concerns:

- The SC had noted that Section 66A arbitrarily, excessively and disproportionately invades the right of free speech, under article 19(1) (a) of the Constitution, and upsets the balance between such right and the reasonable restrictions that may be imposed on such right and the definition of offences under the provision was open-ended and undefined.
- The court also said that the provision used expressions "completely open-ended and undefined" and every expression used was "nebulous" in meaning.

## Unified Health Interface to be rolled out

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently chaired a high-level meeting and reviewed the progress of National Digital Health Mission (NDHM). It was highlighted that a Unified Health Interface (UHI) will be rolled out soon.



### Key highlights of NDHM:

- NDHM is a complete digital health ecosystem having four key features — health ID, Digi Doctor, personal health records and health facility registry.
- Later, it will also include e-pharmacy & telemedicine services. It will be implemented by the National Health Authority (NHA) under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. App version as well as website version of NDHM platform will be available.
- Digi Doctor:** It will allow doctors to enrol and their details, as per their consent, will be made available. Doctors will also be assigned a digital signature for free for writing prescriptions.
- Unique Health ID:** This ID will be a repository of all health-related information of citizens. Various healthcare providers including hospitals, laboratories, online pharmacies, telemedicine firms etc will participate in the health ID system.

## Seniorcare Ageing Growth Engine (SAGE) Project launched

- The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has launched the SAGE (Seniorcare Aging Growth Engine) initiative and SAGE portal for elderly persons.

### Key points:

- The SAGE will be a “one-stop access” of elderly care products and services by credible start-ups.
- The start-ups will be selected on the basis of innovative products and services.
- Their products should be able to provide across sectors such as health, housing, care centers, apart from technological access linked to finances, food and wealth management, and legal guidance.
- The start-ups who have applied will be selected by an independent screening committee of experts.



- A fund of upto Rs.1 crore as one-time equity will be granted to each selected start-up.
- This scheme was required in the light of increasing share of elders.
- As per a survey, the share of elders with respect to total population in percentage terms is expected to increase from 7.5 per cent in 2001 to about 12.5 per cent by 2026.

## ‘AI For All’ Initiative launched

- Intel has collaborated with the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) and the Ministry of Education to announce the launch of the ‘AI For All’ initiative. This initiative has been launched with the aim of creating a basic understanding of Artificial Intelligence (AI) for everyone in the country



### Key Points

- NITI Aayog's 'National Strategy for AI' focuses on leveraging AI for inclusive growth and also to develop AI solutions for the various societal needs.
- The National Education Policy 2020 of India also emphasizes in preparing the students of the country for an AI driven economy.
- India is striving to build a digital-ready foundation so that it can be used by a broader section of the population and will also help them to understand about how AI can impact their lives in a positive manner.

### About AI For All programme

- Intel's AI For All is a 4-hour, learning programme. It can be accessed by all and is as much applicable to a student as to a stay-at-home parent or a professional in any field and even a senior citizen of the country.
- The programme aims to introduce Artificial Intelligence, its usage and function, to 1 million citizens in the first year of the program.
- This 4-hour program is divided into two sections:** AI Appreciation (2.5 hours) and AI Awareness (1.5 hours).
  - AI Awareness:** The segment on AI Awareness provides an elementary understanding of AI, misconceptions about AI and the potential of application of AI.
  - AI Appreciation:** The AI Appreciation segment will help the learners understand the domains of AI as well as the impact it has across the various industries.
- This program is available in 11 vernacular languages. The content has also been made compatible with various talkback applications so that it can also be accessed by visually impaired people.

## LokpalOnline : Digital Platform launched

- Recently, Lokpal of India inaugurated a Digital Platform for the Management of Complaints called 'LokpalOnline'.

### Key Points:

- It is an end-to-end digital solution for the management of complaints against public servants filed under the Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013.
- It is a web-based facility, which will quicken the disposal of complaints in an accountable, transparent and efficient manner with benefits to all stakeholders.
- It provides a Dashboard for every Complainant, enabling him to view the status of his Complaints during its lifecycle.
- The Portal, hosted on NIC Cloud, has been developed on an Open Source Technology.
- Its security audit has been done by an agency empanelled by the CERT-In (Indian Computer Emergency Response Team), Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.

### About Lokpal

- It is the first institution of its kind in independent India, established under the Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act 2013 to inquire and investigate allegations of corruption against public functionaries who fall within the scope and ambit of the above Act.
- The Lokpal of India is committed to addressing the concerns and aspirations of the citizens of India for clean governance.
- It shall make all efforts within its jurisdiction to serve the public interest and shall endeavor to use the powers vested in it to eradicate corruption in public life.
- In March 2019, Justice Pinaki Chandra Ghose was appointed as India's first Lokpal and as a body, it is still growing and progressing.

## Kolkata Durga Puja inscribed as Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity



- The Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage has inscribed 'Durga Puja in Kolkata' on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

### Key Points:

- In total, 14 Intangible Cultural Heritage elements from the country have now been inscribed on UNESCO's Representative List.
- Earlier, UNESCO announced the Harappan city of Dholavira in Gujarat as India's 40th world heritage site.
- The Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity has 492 elements currently.

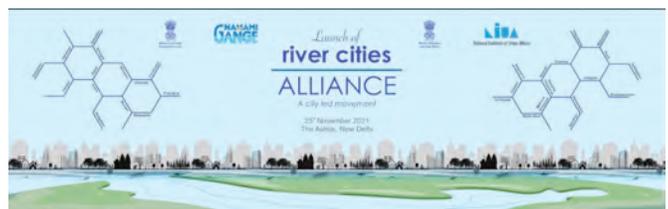
### About Durga Puja

- It is a five-day festival that begins on the fifth night of the nine-day Navratri festival and ends on the tenth day, which is Dashami.
- During this time, people collectively worship and invoke Goddess Durga, who is regarded as the feminine energy of the cosmos, also known as 'Shakti'.

### Note

**Intangible Cultural Heritage elements from India:** Buddhist Chanting, Kalbelia, Chhau Dance, Koodiyattam (Kerala), Kumbh Mela, Mudiyyett (Kerala), Nawruz, Ramlila, Ramman (Uttarakhand), Sankirtana (Manipur), Traditional Brass & Copper Craft (Punjab), Vedic Chanting and Yoga.

## Union Govt. launched River Cities Alliance



- Recently, the Union Minister for Jal Shakti launched the River Cities Alliance.

### Key Points:

- It is a dedicated platform for river cities in India to ideate, discuss and exchange information for the sustainable management of urban rivers.
- This first of its kind of 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.

- The Alliance will focus on three broad themes- Networking, Capacity Building and Technical Support.
- **Secretariat:** It will be set up at the National Institute for Urban Affairs (NIUA), with NMCG's support.
- **Participating cities:** 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.

## 22<sup>nd</sup> Law Commission to be appointed

- Recently, the Government informed the Supreme Court that the appointment of Chairperson and Members of the 22nd Law Commission of India is under consideration.
- The Law Commission of India is a non-statutory body constituted by the Government of India from time to time.
- The Commission was originally constituted in 1955 and is reconstituted every three years. The tenure of the twenty-first Law Commission of India was up to 31st August 2018.

### About 22nd Law Commission

- The 22nd Law Commission was constituted by the Government on February 21, 2020, for a period of three years from the date of publication of the Order of Constitution in the Official Gazette.
- **It will consist of:**
  - A full-time Chairperson;
  - Four full-time Members (including Member-Secretary) Secretary, Department of Legal Affairs as ex-officio Member; Secretary, Legislative Department as ex officio Member.
  - and not more than five part-time Members.
- **Functions:**
  - The Law Commission shall, on a reference made to it by the Central Government or suo-motu, undertake research in law and review of existing laws in India for making reforms therein and enacting new legislations.
  - It shall also undertake studies and research for bringing reforms in the justice delivery systems for elimination of delay in procedures, speedy disposal of cases, reduction in the cost of litigation etc.
  - Before finalizing its recommendations, the Commission will consult the nodal Ministry/ Department (s) and such other stakeholders as the Commission may deem necessary for the purpose.

## Saryu Canal National Project inaugurated

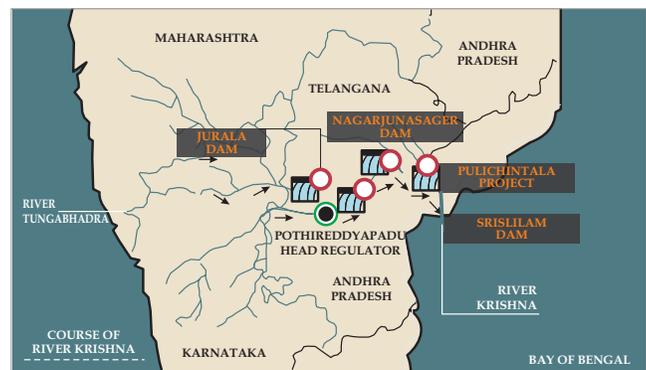
- Recently, the Prime Minister of India inaugurated the Saryu Canal National Project in the Balrampur district of Uttar Pradesh.



### About Saryu Canal National Project

- The work on the Saryu Canal National Project began in 1978.
- It is in line with the Government's commitment to complete long-pending projects and also harness water resources for the benefit of farmers and to further Ease of Living.
- The project has been completed at a cost of around 10 thousand crore rupees, of which around 50 per cent of funds were made available in the last four years.
- The project involves the interlinking of five rivers – Ghagra, Saryu, Rapti, Banganga and Rohin.
- The Project starts from the Saryu Barrage at Bahraich. The main canal is 318 km long and many sub canals with a length of over 66 hundred kilometers have been linked to it.

## Krishna River Water Dispute in news



- Recently, Telangana and Andhra Pradesh were informed regarding information forthcoming from Karnataka for the past 14 years about how much Krishna river water it has diverted.

- Karnataka has argued that the dispute raised by Andhra Pradesh and Telangana was between them and did not concern it.
- It also states that a lot of water is going to waste —“flowing down into the ocean” and there is a need to harness it for irrigation and to replenish dry regions.

### Constitutional Provisions:

- Article 262 of the Constitution deals with the adjudication of water disputes. The provisions in this regard are:
- Article 262 (1) Parliament may, by law, provide for the adjudication of any dispute or complaint with respect to the use, distribution or control of the waters of, or in, any inter-State river or river valley.

### Krishna River

- The Krishna is an east-flowing river.
- Originates at Mahabaleshwar in Maharashtra and merges with the Bay of Bengal
- Flows through Maharashtra, Karnataka, Telangana and Andhra Pradesh.
- The principal tributaries joining Krishna are the Ghataprabha, the Malaprabha, the Bhima, the Tungabhadra and the Musi.

### Union Government to Repeal Farmer’s Law



- The Central Government repealed three contentious farm laws passed last year.
- The Prime Minister said that the process of repealing the laws which are currently stayed by the Supreme Court will take place in the upcoming Winter Session of Parliament.
- Repealing a law is one of the ways to nullify a law. A law is reversed when Parliament thinks there is no longer a need for the law to exist. Legislation can also have a “sunset” clause, a particular date after which they cease to exist.

### Three farm bill enacted by the government in 2020

1. **Essential Commodities (Amendment) Bill, 2020:** It aims to provide the government with the tool to regulate agriculture commodities.

2. **Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Bill, 2020:** It aims to provide a legal contract for farmers to enter into written contracts with companies and produce for them.
3. **Farmers’ Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Bill 2020:** It aims to break the monopoly of government-regulated mandis and provide farmers and traders freedom of choice of sale and purchase of Agri-produce.

### Objections raised by Farmers:

- Many of their protections are excluded from the current rules. Local farmers worry that they actually do not have enough bargaining power to get the kind of offers they deserve for a good quality of life as they agree to market their product to larger firms.
- Even the current regulation would not make written contracts mandatory. So, in the event of any breach of their terms, it can be very difficult for a farmer to claim that he or she has been aggrieved, leaving them no redress.
- The new rules do not guarantee any minimum price for any product, and farmers worry that the existing MSP will be abolished at some point.

### Minimum Support Price

- The MSP is focused on the recommendations of the Commission on Agricultural Costs and Prices. The Commission suggests prices for an on-site evaluation of the constraints faced by farmers in the sale of their produce. The Govt. of India shall set the price on the basis of the recommendations and circulate it to the Governments of the State and to the various other ministries concerned.
- The Food Corporation of India is the nodal agency to undertake procurement of crops.
- The Swaminathan Committee set up in 2004 has a major role when it comes to the Minimum Support Price System in India.



### Note

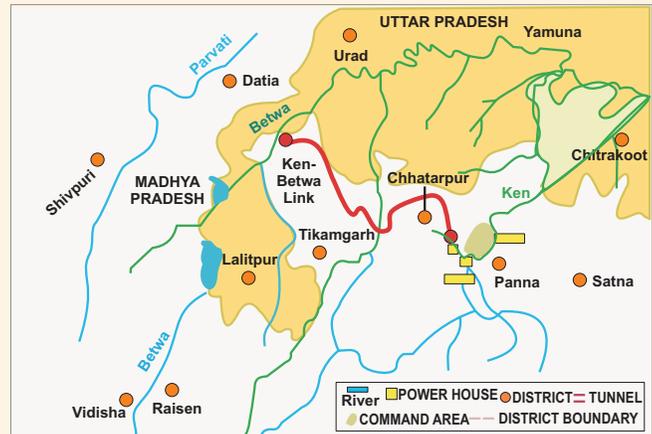
Article 245 of the Constitution gives Parliament the power to make laws for the whole or any part of India, and state legislatures the power to make laws for the state. Parliament draws its power to repeal a law from the same provision.

## Union Cabinet approved Ken-Betwa River Linking Project

- The Union Cabinet approved the funding and implementation of Ken-Betwa inter-linking of rivers project. The project has a deadline of eight years.

### Key points:

- After coming to power in 1999, the then-prime minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, set up a task force to accelerate the project.
- Aim of the project:** Transferring of water from the Ken River to the Betwa River through the construction of Daudhan dam and a canal linking the two rivers, the Lower Orr Project, Kotha Barrage and the Bina Complex Multipurpose Project.
- Ken-Betwa Link Project Authority (KBLPA):** A Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) called Ken-Betwa Link Project Authority (KBLPA) will be set up to implement the project.
- 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.



### Significance

- Benefit to the water-starved Bundelkhand region:** The project will be of immense benefit to the water-starved Bundelkhand region, spread across the states of MP and UP.
- 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.

### National Interlinking of Rivers Authority (NIRA)

- The Ministry of Jal Shakti is likely to announce this.
- It will restructure the National Water Development Agency (NWDA), with powers envisaged.
- NIRA is to function as an autonomous body.

## Andhra Pradesh passed a bill to repeal Three Capitals Act

- The Andhra Pradesh government passed a Bill to repeal two laws that were cleared to set up three different state capitals.

### Key Points:

- On July 31 the state government notified the AP Decentralisation and Inclusive Development of All Regions Act, 2020, and the AP Capital Region Development Authority (Repeal) Act, 2020.
- The government had earlier hinted A.P. could have three capitals:
  - Executive capital in Visakhapatnam.
  - Legislative capital in Amaravati.
  - Judiciary capital in Kurnool.



### Note

- Maharashtra has two capitals– Mumbai and Nagpur (which holds the winter session of the state assembly).
- Himachal Pradesh has capitals at Shimla and Dharamshala (winter).
- The former state of Jammu & Kashmir had Srinagar and Jammu (winter) as capitals.

### 39th PRAGATI Meeting held

- Recently, the Prime Minister of India chaired the 39th PRAGATI meeting. The Prime Minister also reviewed Poshan Abhiyaan.

#### Key highlights:

- Nine agenda items were taken for review including eight projects and one scheme. Among the eight projects are:
  - Three projects were from the Ministry of Railways.
  - Two projects each were from the Ministry of Road Transport & Highways and Ministry of Power.
  - One project was from the Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas.
- These eight projects are concerned to seven states viz., Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra and West Bengal.

#### About PRAGATI

- PRAGATI is an Information and Communications Technology (ICT) based multimodal platform aimed at addressing the 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.
- **Launched in 2015:** Designed by the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) team with the help of the National Informatics Center (NIC).
- This platform will fulfil three objectives: Grievance Redressal, Programme Implementation and Project Monitoring.

### PM Modi inaugurated Purvanchal Expressway

- The 341-km Purvanchal Expressway at Karwal Kheri in Sultanpur district, inaugurated by the Prime Minister is one of the biggest completed infrastructure projects by the Uttar Pradesh government.



#### Key Points:

- The infrastructure project, which is one of the biggest completed by the Uttar Pradesh government and cost an estimated Rs 22,496 crore, has been billed as the "carrier of development" to the underdeveloped Purvanchal region.

- The expressway starts from Chandsarai village in the district of Lucknow located on the Lucknow-Sultanpur road and ends at Haidaria village on National Highway 31 in Ghazipur district.
- The government has developed land banks along the expressway and the Uttar Pradesh Expressways Industrial Development Authority has been authorised to develop industrial hubs along the highway.

### A.P. High Court raised voice for Special Category Status (SCS)

- The Andhra Pradesh High Court questioned the Centre for not granting Special Category Status (SCS) to Andhra Pradesh.

#### About Special Category Status (SCS)

- Special Category Status (SCS) is a classification given by the Centre to assist in the development of those states that face geographical and socio-economic disadvantages.
- This classification was done on the recommendations of the Fifth Finance Commission in 1969.
- Parameters are based on the Gadgil formula. The parameters were:
  - Hilly Terrain.
  - Low Population Density And/Or Sizeable Share of Tribal Population.
  - Strategic Location along Borders With Neighbouring Countries.
  - Economic and Infrastructure Backwardness.
  - Non-viable Nature of State finances.
- As per the information provided by the NITI Aayog, 11 states namely, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, Tripura and Uttarakhand were granted special category status.

#### Benefits

- The Centre pays 90% of the funds required in a centrally-sponsored scheme to special category status states as against 60% or 75% in case of other states, while the remaining funds are provided by the state governments.
- Unspent money does not lapse and is carried forward.
- 30 percent of the Centre's gross budget also goes to special category states.

## UNWTO : Indian village selected as Tourism Village

- Recently, 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 was given on the occasion of the 24th session of the UNWTO General Assembly on 2nd December 2021 in Madrid, Spain.



### 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.
- Aim: To support villages to enhance their rural tourism potential through training and access to opportunities for improvement.
- The Ministry of Tourism recommended three villages for the UNWTO Best Tourism Village entry from India.

### Note

- 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.

## Ordinances promulgated for terms of CBI and ED chiefs

- The President promulgated two ordinances that would allow the Centre to extend the tenures of the directors of the Central Bureau of Investigation and the Enforcement Directorate from two years to up to five years.



### Key Points:

- The chiefs of the Central agencies currently have fixed two-year tenure, but can now be given three annual extensions.
- **Amendments:** While the change in tenure of the CBI Director was affected by amending the Delhi Special Police

Establishment Act, 1946, the change to the tenure of the ED Director was brought in by amending the Central Vigilance Commission Act, 2003.

- It provided further that no such extension shall be granted after the completion of a period of five years in total, including the period mentioned in the initial appointment.

### About Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI)

- It is the main investigation agency of the central government for cases relating to corruption and major criminal probes.
- It has its origin in the Special Police Establishment set up in 1941 to probe bribery and corruption during World War II.
- CBI was set up by a resolution of the Ministry of Home Affairs in 1963 after the Santhanam committee recommendation.
- The superintendence of CBI rests with CVC in corruption cases and with the Department of personnel and training in other matters.
- Presently it acts as an attached office under DOPT.

### Note

The Directorate of Enforcement (ED) is a law enforcement agency and economic intelligence agency responsible for enforcing economic laws and fighting economic crime in India. It is part of the Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance.

## Govt. launched Star College Mentorship Programme

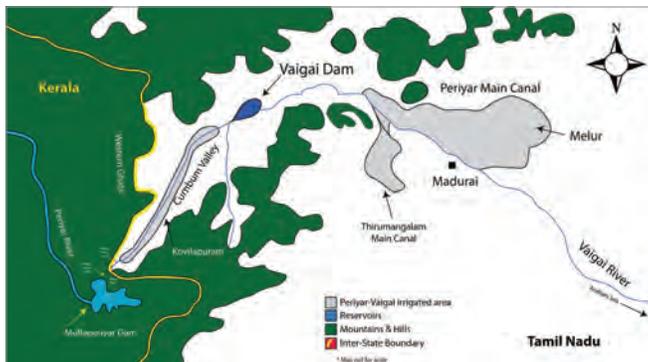
- Union Ministry of State (Independent Charge) Science and Technology launched the first-ever mentorship programme called the 'DBT-Star College Mentorship Programme' for young innovators to mark the 75th year of India's Independence.
- It will help young scientists and students to innovate and find solutions to future challenges through peer learning & hand-holding.

### Key Points:

- It was the first-ever Mentorship Programme for Young Innovators to mark the 75th Year of India's Independence.
- This is a pan India Scheme that envisages Star College in every district of the country supported by the Department of Biotechnology

- It is in line with the Prime Minister's Independence Day address wherein he emphasized that the roadmap for the next 25 years will be
- The plan envisages handholds at colleges particularly in the rural areas or lesser endowed areas. It will also conduct outreach activities with government schools.
- The Star Status Colleges will help in strengthening UG Science Courses throughout the country by mentoring the newer colleges.
- The programme will help towards the concept of networking and outreach.

### Kerala explores options to develop new dam at Mullaperiyar



- The Kerala government made a strong pitch in the Supreme Court to decommission the 126-year-old deteriorated Mullaperiyar dam operated by Tamil Nadu and built a new one.
- The SC ordered the Mullaperiyar Dam Supervisory Committee to issue directions on issues concerning the dam's safety.
- Kerala has urged the Supervisory Committee to reconsider the peak value of the upper rule level of 142 feet.
- Kerala's affidavit coincides with a red alert issued in Chennai following torrential rains. The Chennai rains came on the heels of several days of downpour in Kerala.

#### Mullaperiyar Dam

- The Mullaperiyar is a 126-year-old dam.
- It is located on the confluence of the Mullayar and Periyar rivers in Kerala's Idukki district.
- The dam intends to divert the waters of the west-flowing river Periyar eastward to the arid rain shadow regions of Tamil Nadu.

- The dam stands at the height of 53.66 metres and 365.85 metres in length.

### GI Tag for Karuppur kalamkari paintings and Kallakurichi wood carvings



- Karuppur Kalamkari Paintings and Kallakuruchi wood carvings have received the Geographical Indication (GI) Tag.

#### Key Highlights:

- Kallakuruchi wood carvings are done using pens, palm stems, date trees, brushes made of bamboo sticks and coconut tree stems.
- This certificate was issued the Geographical Indications Registry on the basis of an application filed by Tamil Nadu Handicrafts Development Corporation (Poompuhar).

#### About Kalamkari

- The Karuppur Kalamkari Paintings are done in Thanjavur region. These are traditional dye-painted figurative and patterned clothes.
- They are made for temples like ceiling cloth, cylindrical hangings, umbrella covers and chariot covers.
- Thanjavur tradition of Kalamkari had canopies, umbrella covers, thombai (cylindrical hangings), and 'thoranams' (door hangings) comprising of motifs of yazhi, peacock, swan, flowers, and images of deities.
- Artisans from Sikkalnaikkanpettai near Kumbakonam have been practising this traditional art form for many generations.

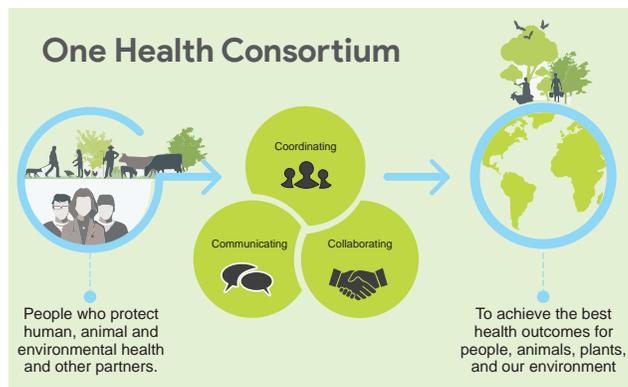


#### Kallakurichi Wood Carvings

- These carvings are done for designs and ornaments. These are indigenous to Madurai region

## Govt launched 'One Health Consortium'

- The Department of Biotechnology launched a 'One Health' consortium. It envisages carrying out surveillance of important bacterial, viral and parasitic infections of zoonotic (diseases that can spread between animals and humans) as well as transboundary pathogens in India, including the North-eastern part of the country.



### Key Points:

- One Health Consortium has been empowered to carry out surveillance of important viral, bacterial, & parasitic infections of zoonotic and transboundary pathogens in India.
- This project will also look into use of existing diagnostic tests and development of additional methodologies to conduct surveillance and understand the spread of emerging diseases.
- One Health Consortium comprises 27 organisations, led by DBT-National Institute of Animal Biotechnology, Hyderabad.
- It is one of the biggest health programmes that the Indian government has launched in post-Covid times. It comprises AIIMS Delhi, AIIMS Jodhpur, GADVASU Ludhiana, IVRI Bareilly, TANUVAS Chennai, Assam agricultural & veterinary university, MAFSU Nagpur, ICAR and ICMR centres & wildlife agencies.

## Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Prerna Sthal inaugurated



- Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Prerna Sthal was inaugurated on October 15, 2021 at Naval Science & Technological Laboratory (NSTL), Visakhapatnam.

### Key Highlights

- On the same occasion NSTL products Varunastra, Torpedo Advanced Light (TAL), and Mareech decoy are displayed.
- The Naval Science and Technology Laboratory (NSTL) is the main naval research laboratory that is part of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).
- Visakhapatnam is the location. The primary mission of NSTL is to conduct research and development on underwater weapons and systems.
- It is handled by the DRDO's Directorate of Naval Research and Development. Dr. Y. Sreenivas Rao is the current director of NSTL.

### Note

NSTL is the premier naval research laboratory working under the Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO). It is located in Visakhapatnam. The main function of NSTL is the research & development of underwater weapons & associated systems.

## RDSO : India's First Standard Developing Organization



- Indian Railways' Research Design & Standards Organization (RDSO) has recently become the nation's first institution to be declared as Standard Developing Organization (SDO) under the mission called "One Nation One Standard" by the Bureau of Indian Standards.

### Key Highlights

- The idea of One Nation One Standard Mission was first conceived in 2019, it was envisioned on the line of one nation, one ration card scheme in order to ensure quality products in the country.
- To attain the One Nation One Standard vision of the Government of India, BIS launched a scheme which provides for Recognition of SDO. The recognition is valid for 3 years and will require renewal after completion of the validity period.
- BIS launched the 'National Standards Body' scheme to attain the government's vision of "One Nation One Standard".
- The National Standards Body Scheme also provides for "Recognition of SDO".

### RDSO

RDSO in Lucknow, is the sole Research and Design Wing of the Railway Ministry. It is India's leading standard formulating body that undertakes standardization work for the railway sector.

## Jallianwala Bagh Complex inaugurated

**Context:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently virtually inaugurated the renovated Jallianwala Bagh complex in Amritsar, Punjab.

### Key Highlights about renovation project

- A 28-minute Sound and Light show re-enacting the events of April 13, 1919, will be shown every evening. A Salvation Ground has been built for visitors to sit in silence to honour the martyrs.
- Four new galleries have been created through adaptive re-use of underutilised buildings in the complex. The galleries depict the history of Punjab, history of the freedom movement, and the Gadhara movement.
- It also has a sculpture of Guru Nanak Dev, Sikh warrior Banda Singh Bahadur, and a statue of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.
- Several new sculptures of martyrs have come up.

### Controversy regarding the latest revamp

- The Jallianwala Bagh has undergone several repairs and touch-ups over the years. But the narrow passage leading to the Bagh, had remained untouched for almost 100 years. While many other things changed, the thin entrance made of Nanakshahi bricks through which Dyer's soldiers marched into the Bagh, continued to evoke the horrors of that day. In July 2020, it was rebuilt into a gallery with murals, leaving no trace of the old passage.
- The famous 'Shahidi Kuwa' or Martyrs Well, into which people jumped to escape the hail of bullets, is now enclosed in a glass shield — the decision has been criticised since it is perceived to restrict the view.

### Jallianwala Bagh Massacre:

- On April 13, 1919, a Baisakhi day, the local residents in Amritsar decided to hold a meeting that day to discuss and protest against the confinement of Satya Pal and Saifuddin Kitchlew, the two leaders who were fighting for Independence, and implementation of the Rowlatt Act, which armed the British government with powers to detain any person without trial. The crowd had a mix of men, women and children.
- They all gathered in a park called the Jallianwala Bagh, walled on all sides but for a few small gates, against the orders of the British. While the meeting was on and remained peaceful, the then Brigadier-General Reginald Edward Harry Dyer, who was wanting to teach the public assembled a lesson, ordered 90 soldiers to open fire on the crowd. As per local sources, thousands were killed while many tried in vain to scale the walls to escape. Many jumped into the well located inside the park.



## Recent recognized UNESCO World Heritage Sites in India

### DHOLAVIRA IVC Site

- Recently, Dholavira the Harappan city which is located in the Kutch district of Gujarat has been named in the UNESCO's World Heritage list.
- Dholavira is the first Indus Valley Civilisation site in India that has been included in the list.
- The decision to induct this site in the coveted list was taken at the 44th UNESCO World Heritage Committee session held in Fuzhou, China.
- After Rani ki Vav, the walled city area of Ahmedabad and Champaner, Dholavira becomes the fourth site from Gujarat to be added to this list by UNESCO. Dholavira is one of South Asia's most well-preserved urban settlements.

### Key points:

- Dholavira is located on the Khadir Island in Kutch district of Gujarat. It was discovered in the year 1968 and is spread over 22 hectares. It is Indus Valley Civilisation's fifth largest archaeological site.
- It was discovered in 1968 by archaeologist Jagat Pati Joshi. Dholavira dates back to approximately 3000 BC and it is believed that the city was occupied till 1500 BC.
- Its name is taken from the Dholavira village located on the Indo-Pakistan border. Locally this site is known as Kotda Timba (the fort mound).



- Dholavira is one of the most remarkable and well-preserved urban settlements in South Asia.
- After Mohen-jo-Daro, Ganweriwala and Harappa in Pakistan and Rakhigarhi in Haryana of India, Dholavira is the fifth largest metropolis of Indus Valley Civilization (IVC).] The walled city consists of a fortified Castle with attached fortified Bailey and Ceremonial Ground, and a fortified Middle Town and a Lower Town. A series of reservoirs are found to the east and south of the Citadel.
- The site contains ruins of an ancient IVC/Harappan city. It comprises two parts: a walled city and a cemetery to the west of the city.

### Unique Features of Dholavira

- Artifacts that were found here include terracotta pottery, beads, gold and copper ornaments, seals, fish hooks, animal figurines, tools, urns, and some imported vessels. Remains of a copper smelter indicate they knew metallurgy.
- It was also a hub of manufacturing jewellery made of shells and semi-precious stones, like agate and used to export timber.
- 10 large stone inscriptions, carved in Indus Valley script, perhaps the world's earliest sign board.
- Unlike graves at other IVC sites, no mortal remains of humans have been discovered at Dholavira.
- It has cascading series of water reservoirs.
- An outer fortification, two multi-purpose grounds, one of which was used for festivities and other as a marketplace, and nine gates with unique designs have also been found.
- Multi-layered defensive mechanisms, extensive use of stone in construction and special burial structures have been excavated.

## RUDRESWARA TEMPLE

- Rudreswara Temple, (also known as the Ramappa Temple) situated in at Mulugu district, Telangana has been inscribed on recent UNESCO's World Heritage list.
- This decision was taken at the 44th session of UNESCO's World Heritage Committee.
- Ramappa temple was proposed by the government of India as its nomination for UNESCO World Heritage tag.

### Key points:

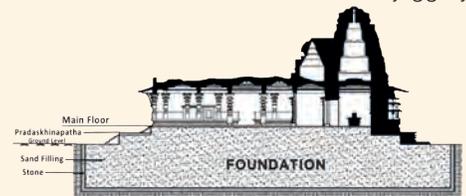
- The Rudreswara temple was constructed in 1213 AD during the reign of the Kakatiya Empire by Recherla Rudra, a general of Kakatiya king Ganapati Deva. It is also known as the Ramappa temple, after the sculptor who executed the work in the temple for 40 years.
- The presiding deity here is Ramalingeswara Swamy.
- The distinct style of Kakatiyas for the gateways to temple complexes, unique only to this region, confirm the highly evolved proportions of aesthetics in temple and town gateways in South India.
- An inscription dates the temple to 1135 Samvat-Saka on the eight-day of Magha (12th January, 1214).
- 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 Kakatiya sculptors.



- The foundation is built with the "sandbox technique", the flooring is granite and the pillars are basalt.
- The lower part of the temple is red sandstone while the white gopuram is built with light bricks that reportedly float on water.

### Sandbox Technique

- The technique involved filling the pit - dug up for laying the foundation - with a mixture of sand-lime, jaggery



(for binding) and karakkaya (black myrobalan fruit) before the buildings were constructed on these sandboxes.

- The sandbox in the foundation acts as a cushion in case of earthquakes. Most of the vibrations caused by earthquakes lose their strength while passing through the sand by the time they reach the actual foundation of the building.

**UNESCO:** The World Heritage Committee is composed of



representatives of 21 States Parties to the World Heritage Convention which meet annually. The Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage is an international agreement that was adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO in 1972. It basically defines the kind of natural or cultural sites which can be considered for inscription on the World Heritage List.

## “Gati Shakti” infrastructure plan announced

- Prime Minister of India announced the launch of ‘PM Gati Shakti Master Plan on India’s 75th Independence Day.

### Key Highlights:

- It is a 100 lakh crore national infrastructure master plan for developing holistic infrastructure and give an integrated pathway to the Indian economy
- It will build upon the National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP).
- Multimodal connectivity of various economic hubs with roads, ports and airports will be part of the Gati Shakti masterplan, which will provide manufacturers faster access to domestic and international markets.
- It will ensure that various economic hubs are able to better utilise the investments in the sector being done by the government and private players.

### About National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP)

- National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP) is a first-of-its-kind initiative to provide world-class infrastructure across the country and improve the quality of life for all citizens.
- It will improve project preparation, attract investments (both domestic & foreign) into infrastructure, and will be crucial for attaining the target of becoming a \$5 trillion economy by FY 2025.

## Multiple projects launched in Somnath



- Prime Minister Modi recently inaugurated and laid the foundation stone of multiple projects in Somnath, Gujarat, via video conferencing.
- The projects inaugurated by PM Modi in Gujarat’s Somnath included Somnath Exhibition Center, Somnath Promenade, reconstructed temple precinct of Old (Juna) Somnath. He will also lay the foundation stone of Shree Parvati Temple. It comprises construction of a temple in Sompura Salats Style, development of Garbha Griha and a Nritya Mandap.

## Somnath Temple:

- Somnath temple is situated in Veraval (Somnath City), Saurashtra on the western coast of Gujarat. This temple is believed to be the first of twelve Jyotirlinga shrines of Shiva.
- The temple is an important pilgrimage and tourist spot of Gujarat. It has been reconstructed multiple times in the past following repeated destruction by Muslim invaders and rulers. Temple in its present form was reconstructed in Chalukya style of Hindu temple architecture.
- Its construction was completed in May 1951. Its construction was started on the orders of Home Minister of India Vallabhbhai Patel. Current chairman of Somnath Mandir trust is Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

## KVIC launched Project BOLD

- Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) recently launched Project BOLD to form the tribal village Nichla Mandwa in Udaipur, Rajasthan.



### Key Points:

- 5000 saplings of special bamboo species – Bambusa Tulda and Bambusa Polymorpha specially brought from Assam – have been planted in vacant arid Gram Panchayat land.
- BOLD stands for Bamboo Oasis on Lands in Drought. The initiative has been launched as part of KVIC’s “Khadi Bamboo Festival” to celebrate 75 years of independence “Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav”.
- Its objective is to create bamboo-based green patches in arid and semi-arid land zones, To reduce desertification and provide livelihood and multi-disciplinary rural industry support.

## KVIC

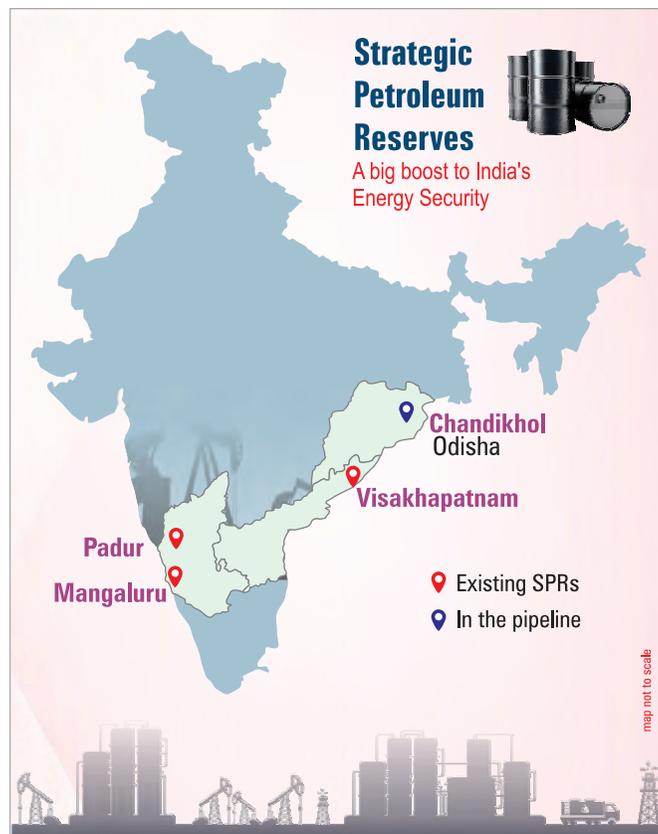
- Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) is a statutory body established under the Khadi and Village Industries Commission Act, 1956.
- The KVIC is charged with the planning, promotion, organisation and implementation of programmes for the development of Khadi and other village industries in the rural areas in coordination with other agencies engaged in rural development wherever necessary.
- It functions under the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises.



कामये दुःखतमानाम् ।  
प्राणिनाम् अर्तिनाशनम् ॥

## New projects approved under Strategic Oil Reserves programme

- In accordance with the Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR) programme, the government approved the establishment of two additional commercial and strategic underground storage facilities at Chandikhol (4 MMT) and Padur (2.5 MMT) in PPP model.



### Key Highlights:

- In the first phase of the SPR programme, the government, through its special tool India Strategic Petroleum Reserve Limited (ISPRL), established oil storage facilities with a total capacity of 5.33 million metric tons (MMT) in 3 locations. All the three storage facilities in Visakhapatnam (1.33 MMT), Mangaluru (1.5 MMT) and Padur (2.5 MMT) are filled with crude oil.
- The petroleum reserves which were established in the first phase are of strategic importance, and the crude oil stored in these reserves will be used in the scenario of oil shortage.

### India's Plan on Strategic Petroleum Reserve:

- Indian Strategic Petroleum Reserves Ltd, has constructed three strategic petroleum reserves in huge underground

rock caverns at Visakhapatnam on the East Coast, and at Mangalore and Padur on the West Coast.

- These facilities, with a total capacity of 5.33 million tonnes, can meet about 10 days of India's crude oil requirements.
- The new facilities approved recently can provide additional supply for about 12 days.

### About Strategic Petroleum Reserves

- Strategic petroleum reserves are essentially huge stockpiles of crude oil to keep the wheels of the country running in crunch situations.
- This is because the government has to stay prepared with emergency stores of crude oil to tide over severe supply shocks of this critical fuel.
- Many major global oil consumers such as the US, China and Japan have built massive strategic reserves of oil over the years, and India too embarked on the path in the last decade.

## 'COVID Teeka Sang Surakshit Van, Dhan aur Uddyam' Campaign launched



- The Minister of Tribal Affairs launched the nationwide campaign "COVID Teeka Sang Surakshit Van, Dhan aur Uddyam" to accelerate the pace of COVID vaccination among tribals in India.

### About The campaign

- It is a nationwide campaign to accelerate the pace of COVID vaccination among tribals in India.
- It has been launched by TRIFED under the Ministry of Tribals for 10.5 crore tribal community people across the country.
- It is being launched in partnership with UNICEF and WHO.
- Its objective is that the tribal communities should not only remain safe and healthy during the pandemic but should also be able to continue their livelihood activities.

### Three key J's of campaign:

- **Jeevan (Life):** Every life and livelihood is precious and vaccination is key to life.
- **Jeevika (Livelihood):** Vaccination will help in continuing Van Dhan Vikas Kendra and livelihood activities without any fear of contracting the disease. It will also save hospitalization and other opportunity costs.
- **Jaagrookta (Awareness):** Simplification of registration process for vaccination, place, accessibility to different people and age groups, including women & elderly population.

### Section 142 of Social Security Code notified

- Section 142 of the Social Security Code, 2020 has been notified by the Ministry of Labour & Employment covering the applicability of Aadhaar.
- The notification of section will enable the Ministry of Labour and Employment to collect Aadhaar details for the database of beneficiaries under various social security schemes.
- The National Informatics Centre is creating a National Database for unorganised workers. The portal aims to collect data of migrant workers as well.

#### About Social Security Code

- The Social Security Code was introduced in 2019. The main objectives of the code was to club the existing laws. It introduced universal social security for unorganised workers and also health and insurance benefits for gig workers.
- It merged eight existing laws. This included Maternity Benefit Act, 1961, Employment Provident Funds and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952, Employees State Insurance Act, 1948, Compensation Act, 1923.

### Draft Drone Rules, 2021 released

#### Preparing for Flight

##### Commercial operations

allowed from December, 2021

**Must operate within** user's line of sight

**Operations beyond line of sight** may be allowed later

##### Drones to be registered

- **Operators need remote pilot licences**
- **No pilot licence required for nano-drones**



- The Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) has released 'The Drone Rules, 2021' for public consultation. The Drone Rules, 2021 will replace the UAS Rules 2021.

#### Key Highlights:

- As per new rules, there will be minimal human interface on the digital sky platform and most permissions will be self-generated.
- It will also notify safety features such as 'No Permission – No Take-off' (NPNT), real-time tracking beacon, geo-fencing etc. in future.
- Under the rules, import of drones & drone components will be regulated by the Directorate General of Foreign Trade.
- All drone training and testing will be carried out by an authorised drone school.
- The Directorate General of Civil Aviation will prescribe training requirements, look after drone schools and provide pilot licences online.

#### Three zones in airspace map

- The entire airspace of India has been segregated into three zones for drone operations and are published in the digital sky platform. The three different zones include:
  - **Green zone:** This zone means the airspace from the ground up to a vertical distance of 400 feet (120 metre) above ground level (AGL) that has not been designated as a red zone or yellow zone in the airspace map for drone operations.
  - **Yellow zone:** It is the controlled airspace where drone operations are restricted and shall require permission from the concerned air traffic control authority.
  - **Red zone:** It is the airspace where drone operations shall be permitted only under exceptional circumstances by the Central Government.

### MHA constituted Committee for reform in Criminal Law

- A national level group for criminal law reform has been established by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).
- The committee would gather information for its report to the government by meeting with experts and collecting information online.

#### Previous committees:

- **Madhav Menon Committee:** It submitted its report in 2007, suggesting various recommendations on reforms in the Criminal Justice System of India (CJSI).
- **Malimath Committee Report:** It submitted its report in 2003 on the Criminal Justice System of India (CJSI).

## Union Government launched Secured Logistics Documents Exchange (SLDE)



- The Union Government has launched the Secured Logistics Document Exchange (SLDE) which aims to digital transformation which can be done in the logistics sector of the country to achieve the targets of improving the country's ranking in Logistics Performance Index.

### Key Highlights

- The initiative has been launched to reduce logistics cost, improve logistics efficiency and sustainability and promote multi-modality in a big way.
- These digital initiatives have been launched by the government to fill the gaps where no action has been taken either by the government or the private players of the country.
- More than 75 participants from the Banks, Central Ministries, IT companies, industry bodies, international organizations and the logistics sector stakeholders were present during the launch event.
- Besides, a Green House Gases (GHG) emissions calculator has also be launched.

### GHG Emissions Calculator

- It is a user-friendly tool that provides for comparing and calculating GHG emissions across different modes.
- This calculator allows for a comparison which will be made commodity wise of GHG emissions, total cost of transportation, including the environmental cost, between movement by rail and road.

### SLDE platform

- SLDE platform for the digital exchange of logistics related documents and a Calculator for GHG emissions have been developed.
- The SLDE platform will look to replace the present manual process of exchange, generation and compliance of the related logistics documents with a secure, digitized and a seamless document exchange system.

- This will enable the storage, generation, and interchange of logistics-related documents digitally using Blockchain and Aadhaar based security protocols for data authentication and security.
- It will also help in lowering shipping cost and reducing carbon footprint.

## PM launched Vidyanjali Portal

- PM Narendra Modi recently launched Vidyanjali Portal and several other initiatives in the education sector. Initiatives were launched while inaugurating the conclave of 'Shikshak Parv'.
- Vidyanjali portal was launched to enable community or volunteers to contribute by connecting with the government and government-aided schools of their choice directly.



### Key Points:

- Vidyanjali is an initiative taken by the Ministry of Education, Government of India with the aim to strengthen Schools through community and private sector involvement in schools across the country.
- This initiative would connect schools with varied volunteers from the Indian Diaspora namely, young professionals, school alumni, in service and retired teachers / Government officials / professionals and many others.
- Vidyanjali has two verticals "Participate in school Service / Activity" and "Assets / Material / Equipment" in which volunteers can support and strengthen the government and government aided schools.
- Vidyanjali 2.0 is an amalgamation of the words Vidya meaning "correct knowledge" or "clarity" and Anjali meaning "an offering with both hands" in Sanskrit language.
- Vidyanjali 2.0 portal will facilitate donations, contributions from Corporate Social Responsibility funds, and volunteering, all aimed at developing and improving schools.

## Jan Shikshan Sansthan (JSS) connected tribal areas

- The Jan Shikshan Sansthan (JSS) has brought high-speed internet to some of the remotest tribal hamlets in Kerala. It has been done with the use of long-distance Wi-Fi.



### About Jan Shikshan Sansthan

- The Scheme of Jan Shikshan Sansthan (JSS) was formerly known as Shramik Vidyapeeth. It has been implemented through a network of NGOs in the country since 1967.
- It is an initiative for skill development in rural areas.

### Key objectives of JSS:

- To improve the occupational skills and technical knowledge of persons having level of education upto 8th standard and other school dropouts beyond 8th standard.
- To create a pool of master trainers working across the department/agencies of skill development through training/ orientation programmes.
- To widen the range of knowledge and understanding of social, economic and political systems and create awareness about the environment.
- To promote self-employment and facilitate financial support including loans for the target groups through linkage with credit and consortium membership.

### About Long-distance Wi-Fi

- Long-distance Wi-Fi works on 5GHz frequency. Using this technology, high-speed internet could be provided even up to 100 km without any transmission loss.
- Servers have been setup in such a way to help a minimum of 250 users use the Net concurrently.

## Swachh Survekshan Grameen 2021 launched

- The Ministry of Jal Shakti launched Swachh Survekshan Grameen under the Swachh Bharat Mission Phase- 2.



### Key Highlights:

- Swachh Survekshan Gramin 2021 is organized by the Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation (DDWS), Ministry of Jal Shakti under Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen) Phase -II.
- Its aim is to support the acceleration of Open Defecation Free(ODF) plus interventions and increase momentum for improving ODF Sustainability as well as Solid and Liquid Waste Management (SLWM) activities across the villages in the country.

- An expert agency has been hired to conduct the Survekshan 2021. As part of the exercise, Villages, Districts and States would be ranked using key parameters.

### Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen) Phase-II:

- SBM (G) Phase-II was approved in February 2020 by the Ministry of Jal Shakti and will be implemented from 2020-21 to 2024-25 with total outlay of Rs. 1,40,881 crores.
- It emphasizes the sustainability of achievements under phase I and to provide adequate facilities for Solid/Liquid & plastic Waste Management (SLWM) in rural India.

## National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) 2021 released

- The Ministry of Education released the sixth edition of the India Rankings 2021 instituted by the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF).



### Key Points

- NIRF India Ranking 2021 has been announced for eleven categories, namely, Overall, University, Management, Pharmacy, College, Architecture, Engineering, Medical, ARIIA (Atal Ranking of Institutions on Innovation Achievements), Law and Research Institutions.
- The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras was ranked the best higher education institution in the country for the third year in a row.
- The Indian Institute of Science (IISc) in Bengaluru ranked second, followed by IIT-Bombay, IIT-Delhi, IIT-Kanpur, IIT-Kharagpur, IIT-Roorkee and IIT-Guwahati. Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) and Banaras Hindu University (BHU).
- **Ranking of Universities:** IISc was ranked one, followed by JNU, BHU, Calcutta University, Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham in Coimbatore, Jamia Millia Islamia in New Delhi.
- **Ranking of Engineering Institutions:** IIT-Madras remained number one, followed by IIT-Delhi, IIT-Bombay, IIT-Kanpur, IIT-Kharagpur, IIT-Roorkee, IIT-Guwahati, IIT-Hyderabad.
- **Ranking of Management Institutions:** Indian Institute of Management (IIM)-Ahmedabad was ranked one, followed by IIM-Bangalore, IIM-Calcutta, IIM-Kozhikode, IIT-Delhi, IIM-Indore.
- Miranda House, Delhi topped the list in college category.
- Jamia Hamdard, New Delhi was ranked at first position in Pharmacy category.
- In Medical Category, All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) Delhi was ranked at first position.

## Central Vista redevelopment project started

- The Supreme Court of India allowed Central Vista redevelopment project whose foundation stone was laid by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Under this a new Parliament building will be constructed along with other buildings. A new residential complex, will be the house of the Prime Minister and the Vice President besides several new office buildings including the North and South Block buildings.
- It will cover a 3-km stretch from Rashtrapati Bhavan to India Gate in Lutyens' Delhi.
- The new complex is likely to have a triangular shape and would be complete by 2022.
- Tata Projects Limited won the bid to construct the new parliament building at a cost of Rs 861.90 crore.

### Need of new project:

- The present Parliament building is 85-year-old and suffers from inadequacy of space to house members and their staff.
- It suffers from structural issues and the building needs to be protected because of its heritage, it is a major attraction for the tourists who visit the country.

### Major concerns:

- **Lack of transparency:** In the 're-development' of the Central Vista, the entire matter has been formed in secrecy and opacity.
  - Several key approvals for the proposed Parliament building have been pushed during the lockdown which led to allegations of a lack of transparency.
- **Environment clearance:** Many opposition and environmentalists point out concerns related to lack of studies to ascertain the need for the project and its impact on the environment, traffic and pollution.
- **Financial burden:** The ambitious project, costing Rs 20,000 crore and It came when the country is in the midst of battling the COVID-19 pandemic and is staring at a serious economic crisis.
- **Change in heritage status:** Central Vista has been accorded the highest Grade 1 heritage status by the Unified Building Bye-Laws of Delhi.

### Note

The Central Government decided in May 2015 to withdraw India's nomination to attain a World Heritage City tag for Delhi's Imperial Capital Cities from UNESCO

## ULPIN: Unique Land Parcel Identification Number to be issued

- The Centre plans to issue a 14-digit identification number to every plot of land in the country within a year's time.
- The Unique Land Parcel Identification Number (ULPIN) scheme has been launched in 10 States in the year 2021 and will be rolled out across the country by March 2022.

### Key Points:

- It will subsequently integrate its land records database with revenue court records and bank records, as well as Aadhaar numbers on a voluntary basis.
- The scheme will enhance the service deliveries to the citizens of the country and will also function as inputs to the schemes of the other sectors like Agriculture, Finance, Disaster Management etc.
- The ULPIN is described as "Aadhaar for land". The ULPIN is a fourteen-digit Alpha Numeric ID.
- The number will be used to identify every surveyed parcel of land.
- The identification number is to be launched based on latitude and longitude coordinates of the land parcel.

## Govt. created National Portal for Transgender Persons



- The Government of India has opened the National Portal for Transgender People. The platform will help the transgender people register online for identification cards and certificates.
- It was created in compliance with the guidelines on the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Rules, 2020.

## ULPIN

Unique Land Parcel Identification Number

14-Digit

ULPIN will provide coordinates of the land

Six States

will get the unique number in first phase

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It will be linked to Aadhaar, revenue system

HELP

- Land Acquisition will become easier
- Real Estate transactions will be transparent
- Put An End to fraudulent land ownership

- The biggest advantage of the platform is that the portal can allow transgender people to receive a credential without any physical device.

### Key Features of Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019

- According to the Act, transgender people are identified as persons whose gender does not conform to the gender assigned to them at birth.
- The act forbids discrimination against transgender people in education, jobs, health care, housing and other facilities.
- It demands that people be recognised as transgender people on the basis of identification cards. Identity cards shall be issued by the District Magistrates.
- It enforces a small right of residency. This forces transgenders under 18 years of age to cohabit with their spouses.
- According to the act, it is the right of transgender people to undergo sex reassignment surgery. It is also their right to qualify for other health services.

#### About National Council for Transgender Persons

- The Council shall advise the central government on the formulation of services, strategies, regulations and initiatives.
- It tracks and measures the effect of legislation and services intended for the complete participation of transgender people.

### MHA suspended licences of NGOs under FCRA

- The Ministry of Home Affairs has suspended licenses of six NGOs under the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA).

#### Key Information:

- An FCRA license is mandatory for a non-profit organisation to receive foreign funds.
- It is mandatory to have FCRA clearance from the Union Home Ministry for any organisation to receive foreign funds.

- Foreign funding of voluntary organizations in India is regulated under Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, 2010.

### Key highlights of Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA), 2010

- The Act seeks to regulate the foreign contributions or donations and hospitality (air travel, hotel accommodation etc.) to Indian organizations and individuals and to stop such contributions which might damage the national interest.
- Since the Act is internal security legislation, despite being a law related to financial legislation, it falls into the purview of the Home Ministry and not of the Finance Ministry or Reserve Bank of India (RBI)
- Under the Act, organisations are required to register themselves every five years.
- As per the amended FCRA rules, all NGOs registered or granted prior permission under FCRA are now required to upload details of foreign contributions received and utilized by them every three months on their website or the FCRA website.
- NGOs now need to file their annual returns online, with the hard copy version dispensed with.



### Who cannot accept Foreign Contribution?

- An Election candidate
- Member of any legislature (MP and MLAs)
- Political party or office bearer in it
- Correspondent, columnist, cartoonist, editor, owner, printer or publishers of a registered Newspaper or journalist
- Judge, government servant or employee of any corporation or any other body controlled or owned by the Government.

Important Committees in news		
S.N.	Committee	Objective
1.	Harsh Vardhan Committee	It will review the existing state of <b>mortgage securitisation</b> in Indian and suggest measures to deeper it.
2.	Nandan Nilekani Committee	It gave suggestions to promote <b>digital payments</b> in India.
3.	V.G. Kannan Committee	RBI forms committee to review the <b>ATM interchange fee</b> structure.
4.	D.K. Mohanty Committee	RBI forms committee to review on <b>Currency Movements (CCM)</b> .
5.	U.K. Sinha Committee	RBI setup an expert committee to review the <b>current framework for the MSME sector</b> .
6.	Ramesh Chand Committee	The centre constituted a working group for the revision of the current series of the <b>wholesale price index</b> (base 2011-12).
7.	Devendra Fadnavis Committee	A high powered committee of chief ministers constituted for the transformation of <b>agriculture and raising farmers' income</b> .
8.	Tapan Ray Committee	The RBI has constituted a working group to review regulatory and supervisory framework for <b>Core Investment Companies (CICs)</b> .
9.	T. N. Manoharan Committee	RBI constituted task force on the development of secondary market for <b>corporate loans</b> .
10.	M.K. Sharma Panel	Its a panel formed by Central Works Public Departments (CPWD) to formulate design policy for <b>building construction</b> .
11.	Sanjeev Sharma Committee	Central Board of Direct Taxes (CTSDT) formed a committee to address tax related points and reduce the <b>number of tax litigations</b> .
12.	Amitabh Kant Committee	It is being setup to promote clean and sustainable <b>mobility initiatives</b> in the country.
13.	Anop Satpathy Committee	Its a committee formed to review and recommend ways to calculate the national <b>minimum wage</b> . The committee submitted its report to the labour secretary.
14.	Dr. Alok Srivastava Committee	Its a committee to examine issues related to framing of a proper and structured scheme for providing of <b>insurance cover</b> to the advocates.
15.	Bezbarauah Committee	Its a committee formed to find out ways for implementation of Clause-VI of <b>Assam accord</b> .
16.	Sankar De Committee	Its a committee constituted by SEBI to analyse the new methods of policy making for the development of <b>capital market</b> .
17.	Nitin Patel Committee	Its a committee for boosting <b>the real estate sector under the GST regime</b>
18.	Sudhir Mungantiwar Committee	To suggest whether a <b>uniform tax rate</b> should be imposed on <b>lotteries</b> or the current differential tax rate system be continued
19.	Praveen Kutumbe Committee	To identify domestically <b>Systematically Important Insurers</b> .
20.	U. C. Dhyani Committee	Committee to oversee <b>rejuvenation work of the Ganga River</b> .
21.	Dr. Bibek Debroy Committee	The committee was tasked to assess key challenges in <b>logistic development</b> and associated commerce and suggest policy reforms for case of doing trade in India.
22.	Bimal Jalan Committee	To review to <b>economic capital framework</b> of the Central Bank.
23.	Kiren Rijju Committee	The committee forms to ensure that the <b>performance of the Indian athletes</b> is optimised in Olympics and other multidisciplinary events.

Important Committees in news		
24.	Injeti Srinivas Committee	It will <b>review competition regulations</b> in view of changing business environment and suggest the necessary changes to strengthen and re-calibrate existing law to promote best practices.
25.	Injeti Srinivas High Level Committee	It will review existing framework and guide and formulate roadmap for coherent policy on <b>Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)</b> .
26.	AJ Paulraj Committee	It gave wide-ranging recommendations to <b>drive India's 5G adoption</b> entailing areas like spectrum policy, regulatory policy, standards and education.
27.	Amitava Roy committee	It looks into the <b>problems of jails</b> in India and <b>suggest reform measures</b> .
28.	Bhaskar Ramamurthy Committee	It will <b>suggest changes to JEE (Advanced)</b> in the wake of an inadequate number of candidates qualifying entrance test this year.
29.	B Sesikeran Committee	It will look into draft food labelling and display regulations- <b>Food Safety and Standards (Labelling and Display) Regulations 2018</b> .
30.	Rajiv Gauba Committee	It will make recommendations for a separate penal provision on incidents of <b>mob violence</b> .
31.	Ravindra Dholakia Committee	Government formed committee for Sub-National Accounts to upgrade the norms for <b>computation of economic data at states and districts level</b> in backdrop of plans to revise the base year for National Accounts or Gross Domestic Production (GDP) calculation.
32.	E Sreedharan Committee	It will lay down <b>standards for metro rail systems</b> in the country.
33.	Rajesh Bindal Committee	It submitted recommendations on legal issues related to <b>inter country removal and retention of children</b> .
34.	Manmohan Juneja Committee	It will review enforcement of <b>Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) provisions</b> under Companies Act, 2013.
35.	Subhash Chandra Garg Committee	It look into the development and regulation of the <b>financial technology (fintech) sector</b> in India.
36.	N Gopalaswami Committee	It select <b>20 Institutions of Eminence</b> from among 104 institutions (public or private) that have applied for the status.
37.	YH Malegam committee	It look upon the entire gamut of issues relating to classification of <b>bad loans, effectiveness of audits and rising incidents of frauds</b> .
38.	Vinay Sheel Oberoi Committee	The committee will monitor and expedite capital acquisition projects for <b>modernisation of armed forces</b> and bolster armed forces preparedness.
39.	N Chandrasekaran Task force	The task force will study the whole gamut of issues surrounding strategic <b>implications of AI in national security perspective</b> , in global context.
40.	Umesh Sinha Committee	It will suggest changes to Section 126 of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 (RP Act) in view of <b>social media expansion</b> .
41.	Amitabh Kant Committee	It's a committee to address problem of <b>Non-performing Assets (NPAs) or stressed assets</b> in India's power sector. It comprises secretaries in the ministries of power, coal and department of financial services as its members.
42.	Uday Kotak Committee	Committee on <b>corporate governance</b> has submitted its report to the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI).
43.	Suresh Mathur Committee	To review <b>insurance marketing firms</b>
44.	Bijoyo Chakarvarty Committee	Committee on <b>Women's healthcare</b>
45.	DB Shekatkar Committee	To recommend measures <b>to enhance combat capability and rebalance defence expenditure of the armed forces</b> .



# Bills & Acts

## High Court and Supreme Court Judges (Salaries and Conditions of Service) Amendment Bill, 2021

- Rajya Sabha has recently approved The High Court and Supreme Court Judges (Salaries and Conditions of Service) Amendment Bill, 2021.

### Key Highlights:

- The Bill seeks to amend "Supreme Court Judges (Salaries and Conditions of Service) Act, 1958" as well as "High Court Judges (Salaries and Conditions of Service) Act, 1954". These Acts regulate the conditions of services and salaries of High Courts & Supreme court judges in India.
- Bill provides for additional quantum of pension or family pension. Under it, all the retired judges of the Supreme Court and High Courts including their family members are authorized to pension or family pension.
- They are also authorized to an additional quantum of pension or family pension, after they attain a certain age in line with a specified scale.
- Specified scale comprises five age brackets, with minimum age of 80, 85, 90, 95, and 100 years.
- The additional quantum increases with increasing age, from 20% to 100% of the pension or family pension.
- As per bill, a person will be authorized to the additional pension or family pension from the first day of that month in which they complete the minimum age under the concerned age bracket.

### Constitutional Provisions for Appointment of Judges

- Judges of the Supreme Court and High Courts are appointed by the President under Articles 124(2) and 217 of the Constitution.
- **Article 124(2) says:** "Every Judge of the Supreme Court shall be appointed by the President by warrant under his hand and seal after consultation with such Judges of the Supreme Court and of the High Courts in the States as he may deem necessary.

- **Article 217:** "Every Judge of a High Court shall be appointed by the President by warrant under his hand and seal after consultation with the Chief Justice of India, the Governor of the State, and, in the case of appointment of a Judge other than the Chief Justice, the Chief Justice of the High Court."

## Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act

- Recently, the Chief Minister of Nagaland has called for scrapping the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act after a botched ambush by para commandos in Nagaland.

### About the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA)

- It was enacted by the Parliament and approved by the President in 1958.
- It confers certain special powers on members of the Armed Forces (military forces, air forces operating on the ground as land forces and any other armed forces of the Union (CRPF, BSF, ITBP etc) for carrying out proactive operations against the insurgents in a highly hostile environment.
  - They have the authority to prohibit a gathering of five or more persons in an area.
- The AFSPA is also in force in the entire Nagaland, certain districts of Arunachal Pradesh, and most parts of Manipur barring the Imphal municipal areas.

### Significance

- Armed Forces are deployed in counter-insurgency / terrorist operations when all other forces available to the State have failed to bring the situation under control.
- Armed forces operating in such an environment require certain special powers and protection in the form of an enabling law.
- Therefore, AFSPA is absolutely essential to combat insurgency in the country and protect the borders.

## Assisted Reproductive Technology (Regulation) Bill, 2021

- A bill to regulate and supervise assisted reproductive technology clinics was passed by the Lok Sabha by a voice vote.

**Key Highlights:**

- The Bill seeks to regulate and supervise assisted reproductive technology clinics and banks, prevent misuse of the technology, and promote ethical practice of the services.
- This bill is meant for those who aspire to parenthood. It is for the women to attain motherhood if they so desire.
- The bill has excluded live-in couples, single men and the LGBTQ community.
- The Assisted Reproductive Technology (Regulation) Bill stipulates that a woman wishing to donate ovum must be between 23 and 35 years, married and have at least a child of her own, 3 years or older.
- According to the bill, a woman above the legal age of marriage and below the age of 50 and a man above the legal age of marriage and below the age of 55 can avail the assisted reproductive technology services.
- The bill stipulates that every ART clinic and bank must be registered under the National Registry of Banks and Clinics of India.
- It also proposes stringent punishment for those practising sex selection and sale of human embryos or gametes.
- The bill proposes the constitution of a national board.

**About Surrogacy**

- Surrogacy involves a woman agreeing to carry a baby for someone else.
- After the baby is born, the birth mother gives custody and guardianship to the intended parent or parents.
- A woman who agrees to carry and give birth to a baby for another person is a surrogate or birth mother.

**Haryana State Employment of Local Candidates Act, 2020**

- The Haryana State Employment of Local Candidates Act, 2020 provides 75% reservations to local people in private-sector jobs. This reservation is only applicable for jobs that offer a salary of less than Rs 30,000 a month.

**Key Points:**

- The law covers the whole of the State and will be in effect for 10 years. It will be applicable to:
  - All the Companies, Societies, Trusts.
  - Limited Liability Partnership firms, Partnership Firm.
  - Any person employing ten or more persons.
  - An entity, as may be notified by the Government, from time to time.

- The compliance time period would be 3 months.
- In the case of noncompliance, a fine between 25,000 and 1,00,000 would be levied.
- The benefits of the law could be availed by those who have the domicile.

**Constitutional Provisions:**

- **Article 16(3):** Provides for an exception by saying that Parliament may make a law "prescribing" a requirement of residence for jobs in a particular state. This power vests solely in the Parliament, not state legislatures.
- **Article 371:** Some states have special protections under Article 371. Andhra Pradesh under Section 371(d) has powers to have "direct recruitment of local cadre" in specified areas.

**Inheritance of Property Bill, 2021**

- The Khasi Hills Autonomous District Council (KHADC) is scheduled to introduce the Khasi Hills Autonomous District Khasi Inheritance of Property Bill, 2021.

**Key Highlights:**

- It will enable all siblings, both males and females, to get an equal share of the parent's property. It is an attempt to modify a customary practice of inheritance of the Khasi tribe in which the youngest daughter of the family is bequeathed the full share of parental property.
- It will prevent a sibling from getting parental property if they marry a non-Khasi and accept the spouse's customs.

**About Khasi Hills Autonomous District Council**

- Khasi Hills Autonomous District Council was constituted under the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India (Article 244 (2), 275 of The Constitution of India) with Executive, Legislative and Judicial powers.
- Its jurisdiction extends to the 4 (four) Districts of Meghalaya State, namely
  - East Khasi Hills District,
  - West Khasi Hills District,
  - South West Khasi Hills District and Ri Bhoi District

**Note**

The 6th Schedule of the Indian Constitution provides for the administration of tribal areas in Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram to safeguard the rights of the tribal population in these states. This special provision is provided under Article 244(2) and Article 275(1) of the Constitution.

## PESA Act, 1996

- Recently, the Union Minister of Tribal Affairs and the Union Minister for Rural Development & Panchayati Raj jointly inaugurated the one-day National Conference on provisions of the Panchayats Extension to Scheduled Areas (PESA) Act 1996 (PESA).
- The conference aims to celebrate 75 years of progressive India and commemorate the 25th year of enactment of the PESA.

### About PESA Act, 1996

- The Parliament enacted special legislation called Panchayat (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act (PESA) in 1996 and came into force on 24th December 1996.
- It is now applicable in the Fifth Schedule areas, which deals with the administration of the districts dominated by the tribal communities, and is in force in 10 states of the country.
- Six States namely Andhra Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Telangana have notified PESA Rules.

## Personal Data Protection (PDP) Law

- The Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) has asked for exemption from the Personal Data Protection (PDP) Law.
- The UIDAI demanded that it should get a blanket exemption from the Personal Data Protection (PDP) Law.

### Key Features of Personal Data Protection (PDP) Bill, 2019:

- **Categorisation of Data:** Constitute 3 types of user data: Sensitive, Critical and General.
- **Concept of Data Principle:** Gives data principle right over his/her personal data & how it can be utilised.
- **Right to Forgotten:** This allows an individual to remove consent for data collection and disclosure.
- **Exemptions:** Government is qualified to obtain the data for research or on national security concerns.
- **The setting of Independent Regulator:** Data protection Authority (DPA) to safeguard the interest and check misuse of data.
- **Data Protection Officer (DPO):** Each company will have a DPO in which to work in liaison with the Data Protection Authority (DPA).
- **User Verification Mechanism:** Social media companies need to develop UVM based on the severity of data.

- **Data Localisation Norms:** Non-personal data can be stored and processed outside but personal data within the Indian territory.

## Medical Termination of Pregnancy (Amendment) Act, 2021

- The Union Government has notified new rules under the "Medical Termination of Pregnancy (Amendment) Act, 2021.
- In this, the gestational limit for termination of a pregnancy has been increased from 20 to 24 weeks for certain categories of women.

### Key Highlights:

- Enhancing the upper gestation limit from 20 to 24 weeks for special categories of women. It will be defined in the amendments to the MTP Rules later.
- It would include survivors of rape, victims of incest and other vulnerable women (like differently-abled women, minors) etc. Upper gestation limit not to apply in cases of substantial foetal abnormalities diagnosed by the Medical Board.
- The composition, functions and other details of the Medical Board to be prescribed subsequently in Rules under the Act. Name and other particulars of a woman whose pregnancy has been terminated shall not be revealed except to a person authorised in any law for the time being in force.

### Note

Under the new rules, state-level medical boards will be set up that will decide if a pregnancy can be terminated after 24 weeks in cases of foetal malformation. Boards will examine the woman & her reports and then either accept or reject the proposal for medical termination of pregnancy.

## Patents (Amendment) Rules, 2021

- The Ministry of Commerce & Industry has notified the Patents (Amendment) Rules, 2021 whereby it has reduced the patent fees for educational institutions.

### Key Points:

- Government has reduced patent filing and processing fees charged on educational institutions by 80%, which is at par with similar concessions provided to start-ups under the Start-up India initiative.
- The step will nurture innovation and creativity in a knowledge economy.
- It will help in promoting greater collaboration between industry and academia.
- By amending the Rules, the procedures are made more compact, time-bound, user-friendly and compatible for e-transactions.

### About Patents

- A patent is a form of preservation of intellectual property. It is an exclusive right granted for an invention, which is a product or a process that provides, in general, a new way of doing something, or offers a new technical solution to a problem.
- The term of every patent in India is twenty years from the date of filing the patent application, irrespective of whether it is filed with provisional or complete specification.

### Constitution (127th Amendment) Bill, 2021

- The Constitution 127th Amendment Bill, 2021 was passed with unanimous support in Lok Sabha.
- The Bill amends the Constitution to allow states and union territories to prepare their own list of socially and educationally backward classes.

#### Key Highlights:

- The Bill seeks to restore the power of State governments to identify Other Backward Classes that are socially and economically backward.
- The Bill says that 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.
- The Bill enables states and union territories to prepare their own list of socially and educationally backward classes.
- This list must be made by law, and may differ from the central list.

#### National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC):

- 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 NCBC, and empowered the President to notify the list of socially and educationally backward classes for any state or union territory for all purposes.
- 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.

#### Background:

- On May 5, while scrapping a separate quota for the Maratha community in Maharashtra, the Supreme Court had ruled

that after a 2018 amendment in the Constitution (102nd constitutional amendment), only the central government could notify socially and educationally backward classes (SEBCs), not the states.

### About 127th Constitution Amendment Bill

- The Amendment Bill will amend clauses 1 and 2 of Article 342A and will also introduce a new clause 3. It will also amend Articles 366 (26c) and 338B (9).
- The 127th Constitution Amendment Bill is designed to clarify that the State Governments can maintain the 'state list' of OBCs as was the system prior to SC judgment. Articles 366 (26c) define the socially and educationally backward classes.
- The latest 'State List' will be taken out completely of the ambit of the President and will be notified by the State Assembly as per the proposed bill.

### Draft Cinematograph (Amendment) Bill, 2021

- The Standing Committee on Information and Technology has conveyed its discontent to the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting on the "super censorship" clause introduced in the draft Cinematograph (Amendment) Bill, 2021.

#### Cause of concern:

- In the draft, there is a provision which allows the government to order recertification for a film already certified by the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC).
- The government says the clause would only be invoked if the content of a film impinged on security and integrity of the nation.

#### Key Provisions in the draft bill:

- **Revision of certification:** This provision will give the Centre "revisionary powers" and enable it to "re-examine" films already cleared by the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC).
- **Age-based certification:** It seeks to introduce age-based categorisation and classification. It proposes to divide the existing categories (U, U/A and A) into further age-based groups: U/A 7+, U/A 13+ and U/A 16+.
- **Provision against piracy:** At present, there are no enabling provisions to check film piracy. Violation shall be punishable with imprisonment and fine.
- **Eternal certificate:** It proposes to certify films for perpetuity. Currently a certificate issued by the CBFC is valid only for 10 years.

## Trafficking in Persons (Prevention, Care and Rehabilitation) Bill, 2021

- The Ministry of Women and Child Welfare has invited suggestions and comments for its Trafficking in Persons (Prevention, Care and Rehabilitation) Bill, 2021.



### Key Highlights:

- The bill proposes stringent punishments for offenders, including hefty fines and seizing of their properties.
- The Bill also extends beyond the protection of women and children as victims to now include transgenders as well as any person who may be a victim of trafficking.
- The draft also does away with the provision that a victim necessarily needs to be transported from one place to another to be defined as a victim.
- Applicability:**
  - All citizens inside as well as outside India.
  - Persons on any ship or aircraft registered in India wherever it may be or carrying Indian citizens wherever they may be.
  - A foreign national or a stateless person who has his or her residence in India at the time of commission of offence under this Act.
  - Every offence of trafficking in persons with cross-border implications.
  - Defence personnel and government servants, doctors and paramedical staff or anyone in a position of authority.

### Note

Trafficking in Human Beings or Persons is prohibited under the Constitution of India under Article 23 (1). The Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956 (ITPA) is the premier legislation for prevention of trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation.

## Uttar Pradesh Population (Control, Stabilization and Welfare) Bill, 2021

- The UP State Law Commission has proposed a population control bill titled the Uttar Pradesh Population (Control, Stabilization and Welfare) Bill, 2021.

- The Law Commission said the bill proposes to bar the violators of the two-child policy from contesting local body elections or applying for government jobs.

### Key Points:

- The Uttar Pradesh law commission formulated a proposal for population control and welfare, rewarding couples that adhere to a 'two-child policy'.
- The UP law commission said that the policy will be voluntary — it will not be enforced upon anyone.
- However, if any person decides to "voluntarily" keep the number of their family members limited, they will be eligible for government schemes. On the other hand, if someone doesn't follow the policy, they will face restrictions in government jobs, availing ration, and other benefits.

### Key provisions:

- Bill called to debar those having more than two children from contesting in local polls.
- They will also be prevented from applying for or getting promotion in government jobs.
- They would also be debarred from receiving government subsidies.
- As per the draft proposal, it shall be the duty of the government to introduce a compulsory subject on population control in secondary schools.
- Bill put emphasis on the need to control & stabilise the population of the state in order to promote sustainable development with more equitable distribution. Bill also seeks to provide welfare to the population in the state by implementing and promoting the two-child norm.

## Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Amendment Bill, 2021

- Parliament passed the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Amendment Bill, 2021 that seeks to strengthen and streamline the provisions for protection and adoption of children.

### Key Points

- The amendments include authorizing District Magistrate including Additional District Magistrate to issue adoption orders under Section 61 of the Juvenile Justice Act, in order to ensure speedy disposal of cases and enhance accountability.

- The District Magistrates have been further empowered to ensure its smooth implementation, as well as garner synergized efforts in favour of children in distress conditions.
- As per the amended provisions of the Act, any Child Care Institution shall be registered after considering the recommendations of the District Magistrate.
- The DM shall independently evaluate the functioning of District Child Protection Units, Child Welfare Committees, Juvenile Justice Boards, Specialized Juvenile Police Units, Child Care Institutions, etc.
- The eligibility parameters for appointment of Child Welfare Committee (CWC) members have been redefined. Disqualification criteria for the same have also been introduced.

### Note

All Child Care Institutions, whether run by State Government or by voluntary or non-governmental organisations are to be mandatorily registered under the Act within 6 months from the date of commencement of the Act.

## Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (Amendment) Bill, 2021

- The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (Amendment) Bill, 2021 was recently passed by Parliament, replacing an ordinance on the same.

### Key highlights:

- It will replace the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (Amendment) Ordinance, 2021, which was promulgated on 4th April 2021.
- It proposed the Pre-packaged Insolvency Resolution Process (PIRP), also called 'pre-packs' as an insolvency resolution mechanism for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs).
- It will introduce a time-bound process to resolve issues of insolvency of the corporate debtors within 330 days. This process of resolution is called the Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process (CIRP).
- Under the CIRP, debtors or its creditors will be able to apply for initiation of CIRP in case there is default of Rs. 1 lakh.
- A committee of creditors will also be constituted under CIRP to decide on insolvency resolution.

### Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process (CIRP)

- As stated in the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC), under the existing corporate insolvency resolution process

(CIRP), a maximum number of 270 days is provided for the resolution process to be completed.

- Under the new pre-pack scheme, the time limit for the resolution will be reduced and the participants will get 90 days to submit resolution plans and NCLT will approve them in another 30 days.

### About Pre-pack

- It envisages the resolution of the debt of a distressed company through a direct agreement between secured creditors and the existing owners or outside investors, instead of a public bidding process.
- Under the pre-pack system, financial creditors will agree to terms with the promoters or a potential investor and seek approval of the resolution plan from the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT).

## Deposit Insurance Credit Guarantee Corporation Bill, 2021

- Recently, the Union Cabinet clears changes to the deposit insurance laws, under this, up to Rs 5 lakh of funds will be provided to an account holder within 90 days in the event of a bank being put under moratorium by the RBI.

### Key Highlights

- The deposit insurance premium has been raised by 20% effective immediately and maximum premium limit by 50%.
- The current Rs 5-lakh deposit insurance cover has been raised from Rs 1 lakh in the year 2020.
- Depositors normally have to wait for 8 to 10 years for the liquidation of a distressed bank before they receive their fund deposits. With the change in rule, depositors within 90 days will get insurance money without having to wait for the distressed banks to get liquidated.
- With the bank being put under moratorium, in the first 45 days, Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation (DICGC) will collect all deposit accounts related information. Then in the next 45 days, the information will be reviewed and depositors will be repaid within 90 days.
- Currently, as premium for insurance cover, banks pay 10 paise on every Rs 100 worth of deposits to the DICGC. This is being raised to 12 paise on every Rs 100.
- DICGC insures deposits in private and public banks, small finance banks, local area banks, cooperative banks, regional rural banks, payment banks as well as Indian branches of foreign banks.

**Note**

DICGC is a fully owned subsidiary of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and was established in 1978. It insures functioning of all the banks in India.

**AERA (Amendment) Bill, 2021**

- The Parliament passed the Airports Economic Regulatory Authority of India (Amendment) Bill, 2021 after the Rajya Sabha approved it after a brief discussion amid protests by the opposition on various issues.

**Key Highlights:**

- Bill was tabled by Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia and was passed in the Lok Sabha in June 2021.
- Now, it will be sent to the President Ram Nath Kovind for his assent. Airports Economic Regulatory Authority of India (Amendment) Bill 2021
- The AERA bill proposes to amend the definition of 'major airport' in accordance with the Airports Economic Regulatory Authority Act, 2008 (AERA Act).
- Bill seeks to aid the government's plan of privatisation of smaller airports under its asset monetisation programme that was announced during the union budget for 2021-22.
- It also promises to help in faster development of small airports and expediting regional air connectivity UDAN scheme by expanding air connectivity in remote areas.
- Amendment will enable AERA to regulate tariff and other charges of aeronautical services for major airports with annual passenger traffic of more than 3.5 million as well as a group of airports together.

**Note**

Airports Economic Regulatory Authority (AERA) is a regulatory agency that regulates tariff and other expenditure & fees of major airports in India. This statutory body was established under the Airports Economic Regulatory Authority of India Act (AERA), 2008.

**Tribunals Reforms Bill, 2021**

- The Tribunals Reforms Bill passed in Parliament by voice vote. The Bill replaces a similar Ordinance promulgated in April 2021.
- The Bill seeks to provide for uniform terms and conditions of the various members of the Tribunal and abolish

certain tribunals, as a part of its bid to rationalize the tribunals.

- Lok Sabha passed the Tribunals Reforms Bill on August 3, 2021 that seeks to abolish nine appellate tribunals.

**About Tribunals Reforms Bill, 2021**

- The bill provides for the abolition of the tribunals or the authorities under various Acts by amending the Copyrights Act, 1957, Cinematograph Act, 1952, the Customs Act, 1962, the Airport Authority of India Act, 1994, the Patents Act, 1970, and the Trade Marks Act, 1999.
- The tribunals under the Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers Rights Act, 2001, Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999, and the Control of National Highways (Land and Traffic) Act, 2002, will also be wound up.
- All the pending cases before such tribunals or the authorities will be transferred to the High Court or Commercial Court.
- The Tribunal Reforms Bill will also provide for the uniform terms and the conditions of service for Chairperson and members of various tribunals.

**Note**

All pending cases before such tribunals or authorities will be transferred to Commercial Court or High Court.

**General Insurance Business (Nationalisation) Amendment Bill**

- The General Insurance Business (Nationalisation) Amendment Bill, 2021 passed in Parliament. The Bill seeks to amend the General Insurance Business (Nationalisation) Act, 1972. The Act was enacted to nationalise all private companies undertaking general insurance business in India. The Bill seeks to provide for a greater private sector participation in the public sector insurance companies regulated under the Act.

**Key Highlights:**

- The first aims to omit the provision to Section 10B of the Act so as to remove the requirement that the Central government holds not less than 51 per cent of the equity capital in a specified insurer.

- The second amendment is to insert a new Section 24B, providing for cessation of application of the Act to such a specified insurer from the date on which the Centre ceases to have control over it.
- And, the third amendment is also to insert a new Section 31A, making a director, who is not a whole-time director, liable only for acts of omission or commission committed with his knowledge and connivance by the insurer.
- Although the Bill has a provision that will allow the government to bring down its shareholding below 51 per cent, Sitharaman clarified that this is not a Bill for privatisation.

## Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act [UAPA]

- Since 2019, the Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) administration has booked over 2,300 people in more than 1,200 cases under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, and 954 people under the Public Safety Act (PSA).
- Of these, 46 per cent of those booked under UAPA and about 30 percent of those detained under PSA are still in jail, both inside and outside J&K.

### Key Points about Act:

- It was first promulgated in 1967 to target secessionist organisations and considered to be a predecessor of laws such as the (now repealed) Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act (TADA) and Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA).
- It aims at effective prevention of unlawful activities associations in India.
- Unlawful activity refers to any action taken by an individual or association intended to disrupt the territorial integrity and sovereignty of India.
- The Act assigns absolute power to the central government, by way of which if the Centre deems an activity as unlawful then it may, by way of an Official Gazette, declare it so.

### Note

In June 2021, delivering a judgment defining the contours of the otherwise “vague” Section 15 of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967, (UAPA), the Delhi High Court laid down some important principles upon the imposition of Section 15, 17 & 18 of the Act.

## GNCTD (Amendment) Act, 2021

- The Government of National Capital Territory (GNCT) of Delhi (Amendment) Act, 2021, which gives primacy to the Lieutenant Governor (L-G) over the elected government in the city, has come into force.

### Key Provisions:

- The Act basically gave more power to the Lieutenant Governor (LG) of the National Capital Territory of Delhi and diminished the elected government’s power. The Act also seeks to bring in some clarity on certain subjects in the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi Act, 1991.
- The Act makes amendments to the Government of National Territory of Delhi Act, 1991.
- It gives more power to the LG in some respects while ensuring the Delhi Legislative Assembly’s accountability.
- As per the Act’s objects and reasons, it is aimed at ending the absence of clarity on what matters or proposals are needed to be submitted to the LG before orders could be issued.
- It also aims to “further define the responsibilities of the elected government and Lieutenant Governor (LG) in Delhi”.

### Note

The Delhi Legislature was constituted under Article 239AA of the Constitution. By law, the Delhi Legislature has all powers to make laws in matters except public order, land and police.

## Copyright (Amendment) Rules, 2021

- The Government of India notifies Copyright (Amendment) Rules, 2021. The amendment has been made to bring the existing Copyright rules in the country with parity with the other relevant legislations.

### Key Highlights:

- In India, the copyright regime is governed by the Copyright Act, 1957 and the Copyright Rules, 2013.
- The Copyright Rules, 2013 were last amended in the year 2016.
- Objective of the amendments is to bring the existing rules in parity with other relevant legislations.
- Publication of a copyrights journal has been incorporated eliminating the requirement of publication in the Official Gazette.
- The journal would be available at the website of the Copyright Office.

- In order to encourage accountability and transparency, new provisions have been introduced to deal with the undistributed royalty amounts and use of electronic and traceable payment methods while collection and distribution of royalties.

### About Copyright

- Copyright is an intellectual property. It gives the owner the exclusive right to make copies of his or her creative work. It can be education, artistic, literary or music.
- According to the World Intellectual Property Organisation, Copyright protects two types of rights. They are Economic rights and moral rights.

## Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Amendment) Bill, 2021

- The Parliament has cleared The Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Amendment) Bill, 2021.

### Key Highlights:

- The bill aims to replace an order to combine the Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) cadres and the Arunachal Pradesh, Goa, Mizoram Union Territory (AGMUT) cadres of civil service officers.
- The bill would also raise the strength of officers in the Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh Union Territories.
- The Jammu and Kashmir Reorganization (Amendment) Bill, 2021, was enacted in accordance with the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganization Act, 2019, following the repeal of Article 370 in the country. The Act of 2019 reconstituted the State of Jammu and Kashmir into two Union territories, namely Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, on 31 October 2019.

### Note

Voice Vote is a voting method in parliamentary procedure in which vote is taken on a topic or motion orally. It is the simplest and quickest of voting methods that are used by deliberative assemblies.

## Jammu and Kashmir Language Bill, 2020

- The Union Cabinet has approved the Jammu and Kashmir Language Bill, 2020.

- As per the Bill, five languages namely Urdu, Hindi, Dogri, English and Kashmiri will be recognized as the official language of the UT of Jammu and Kashmir.

### Article 343:

- The Article 343 of Constitution of India says that the official language of the Union shall be Hindi in Devanagari script.

### Eight Schedule:

- The Eight Schedule of the Constitution of India lists the 22 official languages which have been recognised by the Constitution.
- These are Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Kashmiri, Malayalam, Marathi, Odia, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Tamil, Telugu, Urdu, Sindhi (added by 21st Amendment Act, 1967), Konkani, Manipuri, Nepali (added by 71st Amendment Act, 1992), Bodo, Dogri, Maithili, Santhali (added by 92nd Amendment 2003).

## The Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu (Merger of Union Territories) Bill, 2019

- The Parliament has passed the bill to merge the union territories of Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu.
- The Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu (Merger of Union Territories) Bill, 2019 proposes to merge the two union territories of Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu for better utilization of manpower, boost administrative efficiency, reduce expenditure and enable better monitoring and implementation of schemes.

### Key Features:

- The Bill aims at merging the two Union Territories of 'Daman and Diu' and 'Dadra and Nagar Haveli' into one.
- Both the UTs are located on India's western coast near Gujarat.
- They were colonial possessions of Portugal before they became part of independent India.
- Dadra and Nagar Haveli has just one district while Daman and Diu has two.
- Daman and Diu are separated by the Gulf of Khambhat.
- The merger of the two UTs is said to be done for better administration and checking duplications of various works.



# Government Schemes/ Programmes

## Pradhan Mantri Rojgar Protsahan Yojana

- More than 1.2 crores benefited under Pradhan Mantri Rojgar Protsahan Yojana.

### Key points:

- The scheme is implemented by the Ministry of Labor and Employment.
- It has been designed to incentivise employers for the generation of new employment.
- Under the scheme, the Government of India is paying the Employer's contribution i.e. 12% for a period of three years to the new employees earning wages less than or equal to Rs. 15,000/- through EPFO.
- The beneficiaries registered up to 31st March 2019 will continue to receive the benefit for 3 years from the date of registration under the scheme i.e. up to 31st March 2022.
- Benefits:
  - The employer is incentivised for increasing the employment base of workers in the establishment.
  - A large number of workers will find jobs in such establishments.
  - A direct benefit is that these workers will have access to social security benefits of the organized sector
  - It brings informal workers to the formal workforce.

## Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maandhan (PM-SYM) Scheme

- The Union Minister of State for Labor And Employment replied in the Rajya Sabha that a total 45, 77,295 unorganized workers have been registered under the Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maandhan (PM-SYM) scheme.
- Unorganized sectors contribute around 50% of India's GDP.

### Key points:

- Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maandhan (PM-SYM) Scheme is a Voluntary and Contributory Pension Scheme under the purview of the Central Sector Scheme, administered by the Ministry of Labor and Employment and implemented by LIC.
- **Eligibility:**
  - The scheme is open for Unorganized Workers.

- They should not be engaged in the Organized Sector (member of EPFO/NPS/ESIC) or an income taxpayer.
- They should be aged between 18-40 years when registering.
- Their monthly income should be equal to or less than Rs 15,000 per month.

### • Features:

- Assured Pension of Rs. 3000/- month after attaining the age of 60 years. After the death of a subscriber, the spouse will get 50% of the pension as a family pension.
- Matching Contribution by the Government of India.
- In case of permanent disability, subscribers can continue or exit with the contributed amount.
- After the death of the subscriber and his or her spouse, the corpus shall be credited back to the fund.
- In case the contribution has not been made continuously, the subscriber is allowed to regularize it after payment of outstanding dues, penalty charges, if any, decided by the government.

## North-East Industrial Development Scheme (NEIDS)

- Till end-October 2021, a total of 391 new industrial units have been granted registration under North East Industrial Development Scheme (NEIDS).

### Key points:

- It has come into force with effect from 01.04.2017 for a period of five years.
- It covers eligible industrial units in the manufacturing and service sectors of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura and Sikkim to promote industrialization and boost employment and income generation.
- Various benefits provided under the scheme include:
  - Central Capital Investment Incentive (30% of the investment in plant & machinery with an upper limit of Rs. 5 crores).
  - Central Interest Incentive (3% interest on working capital for 5 years)
  - Central Comprehensive Insurance Incentive (Reimbursement of 100% insurance premium for 5 years).

- Income Tax Reimbursement of centre's share for 5 years
- GST reimbursement of Central Govt. share of CGST & IGST for 5 years
- Employment Incentive under which additional 3.67% of the employer's contribution to EPF in addition to Govt. bearing 8.33% Employee Pension Scheme (EPS) contribution of the employer in PMRPY

## Nutrition Smart Villages

- Recently, the Union Agriculture Minister announced a programme on "Nutrition Smart Village" to strengthen the Poshan Abhiyan. It will be part of the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, to commemorate the 75th year of Independence of India.



### Key Points:

- This new initiative aims to reach out to 75 villages across India through the network of All India Coordinated Research Project on Women in Agriculture (AICRP-WIA) which is in operation at 13 centres in 12 States of India.
- The initiative has been undertaken in line with the Prime Minister's call to all the academicians, agricultural scientists and all the institutions to adopt and transform 75 villages.
- Under the initiative, a total of 75 villages will be adopted by AICRP centres and ICAR-CIWA, for which the AICRP centres will adopt 5 villages each with the remaining to be adopted by ICAR-CIWA with an aim to develop 75 Nutri-Smart villages.

### Objectives:

- Promoting nutritional awareness, education and behavioural change in rural areas involving farm women and school children, harnessing traditional knowledge through the local recipe to overcome malnutrition and implementing nutrition-sensitive agriculture through homestead agriculture and Nutri-garden.

## Intensified Mission Indradhanush (IMI) 3.0

- The Union Government provided performance details of Mission Indradhanush (IMI) 3.0 in Rajya Sabha.
- It is an initiative by the government to provide immunization free of cost to pregnant women and children in India.
- Two rounds of IMI 3.0 of 15 days' duration were conducted in February 2021 & March 2021 to reach out to the pregnant women and children who missed vaccination under routine immunisation programmes in 250 districts across 29 states/UTs.

- During IMI 3.0 around 9.5 lakh children and 2.2 lakh pregnant women were vaccinated.
- **Targeted Beneficiaries:**
  - The focus of the IMI 3.0 will be the children and pregnant women who have missed their vaccine doses during the COVID-19 pandemic.
  - Beneficiaries from migration areas and hard to reach areas will also be targeted.
- **Aims:**
  - To reach the unreached population with all the available vaccines under the Universal Immunisation Programme (UIP) and thereby accelerate the full immunization coverage of children and pregnant women.

### Note

- Mission Indradhanush was launched by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MOHFW) on 25th December 2014 with the aim of expanding immunization coverage to all children across India.
- The Ministry of Health is being technically supported by WHO, UNICEF, Rotary International and other donor partners.

## Student Entrepreneurship Program (SEP) 3.0

- Third series of Student Entrepreneurship Program 3.0 (SEP 3.0) was launched recently for the young innovators of Atal Tinkering Labs (ATL).
- This program was launched by Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) NITI Aayog in collaboration with La Fondation Dassault Systemes.
- Theme of SEP 3.0 is 'Made in 3D – Seed the Future Entrepreneurs Program'.

### About SEP 3.0

- It is a joint programme of Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) and La Fondation Dassault Systems in India.
- The theme of SEP 3.0 is based on the 'Made in 3D - Seed the Future Entrepreneurs Program'.
- It was conceptualized and rolled out in France by La Main à la Pate Foundation and La Fondation Dassault Systèmes Europe in 2017.
- As part of this program, a team from each school (6 students and a teacher) will be allocated seed funding towards:
  - Creating their own start-up;
  - Design and prototype their innovation using 3D printing;
  - Prepare marketing campaign;
  - Define product pricing; and
  - Create expansion strategy

## Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) 3.0

- The Union Ministry of State for Skill Development, Entrepreneurship launched two ambitious projects of 'Revival of Namda craft of Kashmir and 'Upskilling of artisans and weavers of Kashmir under the under Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) 3.0'.

### Key Points:

- The Namda project will be an industry-based training programme that will contribute towards preserving and reviving the rich heritage associated with the unique craft in Kashmir.
- Namda is a rug made of sheep wool through a felting technique instead of the normal weaving process.

### PMKVY 3.0

- The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) launched the third phase of its flagship scheme PMKVY 3.0 in January 2021.
- PMKVY 3.0 will be implemented in a more decentralised structure with greater responsibilities and support from States/UTs and Districts by incorporating the learnings from PMKVY 1.0 and PMKVY 2.0.
- The new scheme will be more trainees and learner-centric addressing the ambitions of Atmanirbhar Bharat.
- It aims to empower the country's youth and continue the journey of the Skill India Mission in building India as the skill capital of the world.

## O-SMART Scheme

### O-SMART Benefits

Sustainable  
Development  
Goal

S & T Support  
to Blue  
Economy

Harnessing  
Ocean  
Resources

- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs gave its approval for the continuation of the umbrella scheme O-SMART for implementation during the period from 2021-26.
- The present decade has been declared as the Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development by the United Nations (UN) and continuation of the scheme would strengthen our stand in the global oceanographic research and technology development.

## About O-SMART Scheme

- O-SMART Scheme is a scheme of the Ministry of Earth Sciences launched on August 29, 2018.
- Objectives:
  - Promote ocean research and setting early warning weather systems. It also aims to address ocean development activities like technology, services, science, resources, and observations.
  - Generate and regularly update information on Marine Living Resources and their relationship with the physical environment in the Indian Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).
  - Develop high resolution models for ocean forecast and reanalysis systems.

### Note

Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) is prescribed by the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. Every coastal country's EEZ extends to 200 nautical miles (370 km) from its shores and the country has exclusive rights to all resources in the water, including oil, natural gas and fish. Any military activity in the EEZ requires Country's permission

## PM Awas Yojana-Gramin Scheme

- Recently, The Union Cabinet has approved the continuation of Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana Gramin (PMAY-G) for another three years till March 2024.
- The extension of the scheme will help in the construction of the remaining 155.75 lakh houses. It will help achieve the target of 2.95 crore 'pucca' houses.
- Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana – Gramin (PMAY-G) 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 by the Ministry of Rural Development.
- It is a social welfare program through which the Government provides financial assistance to houseless beneficiaries identified using SECC 2011 data to help them construct a house of respectable quality for their personal living.
- Under PMAY, the cost of unit assistance is to be shared between Central and State Governments in the ratio 60:40 in plain areas and 90:10 for North Eastern and hilly states.



- The program envisages the completion of 2.95 crore PMAY-G houses with all basic amenities by the year 2022.

### Note

The program is being implemented and monitored through end to end e-governance solutions, AwaasSoft and AwaasApp. AwaasSoft provides functionalities for data entry and monitoring of multiple statistics related to implementation aspects of the scheme.

## Member of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS)

- Recently, the Union Cabinet has restored the Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS) till 2025-26.

### Key Points:

- This scheme was suspended in April 2020 and its funds were subsumed in the consolidated fund of India. It was suspended for two financial years, 2020-21 and 2021-22.
- However, as the covid-19 pandemic situation has improved and the economy is recovering, the Government announced a partial rollback.
- **Reason for Restoration:**
  - Citing economic recovery, the Government announced a partial rollback.
  - The MPs will get 2 crore instead of the annual approved 5 crore.

### MPLADS Scheme:

- The MPLADS is a Plan Scheme fully funded by the Government of India. The annual MPLADS fund entitlement per MP constituency is Rs. 5 crores. It was introduced in December 1993.
- Lok Sabha Members can recommend works within their Constituencies Elected Members of Rajya Sabha can recommend works within the State of Election.
- Nominated Members of both the Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha can recommend works anywhere in the country.
- The objective is to enable the Members of Parliament (MP) to suggest and execute developmental works of capital nature based on locally felt needs with an emphasis on the creation of durable assets.

## Krishi UDAN 2.0

- The Minister of Civil Aviation released Krishi UDAN 2.0. to facilitate and incentivize the movement of Agri-produce by air transportation.

### Key Points:

- Krishi UDAN 2.0. 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 lays out the vision of improving value realization through better integration and optimization of Agri-harvesting and air transportation.
- It aims to contribute to Agri-value chain sustainability and resilience under different and dynamic conditions.
- E-KUSHAL (Krishi Udaan for Sustainable Holistic Agri-Logistics) platform proposed to develop that will facilitate information dissemination to all the stakeholders.

### About Krishi UDAN scheme

- The Minister of Civil Aviation launched the Krishi Udan scheme to assist farmers in transporting agricultural products so that it improves their "value realisation".
- It was launched on international and national routes.
- This will immensely help improve value realisation (on agricultural products), especially in the north-east and tribal districts
- Under the scheme, financial incentives in terms of concessions from the Centre, state governments and airport operators are extended to selected airlines to encourage operations from unserved and underserved airports and keep airfares affordable.

## Ayushman Bharat – Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY)

- NITI Aayog suggests extending Ayushman Bharat – Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY) coverage to 'missing middle'.
- The report has recommended three models for increasing the health insurance coverage in the country.

### Key Highlights:

- The AB-PMJAY and State Government extension schemes provide comprehensive hospitalization cover to the bottom 50% population ( 70 crore individuals).
- The report has recommended three models for increasing the health insurance coverage in the country.
  - The first model focuses on increasing consumer awareness of health insurance.
  - The second model is about developing a modified, standardized health insurance product like 'Arogya Sanjeevani'

- The third model expands government-subsidized health insurance through the PMJAY scheme to a wider set of beneficiaries. This model can be utilized for segments that remain uncovered Due to limited ability to pay for the voluntary contributory models.

### About AB PM-JAY

- Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB PM-JAY) offers a sum insured of Rs.5 lakh per family for secondary care as well as tertiary care.
- Cashless and paperless access to services is provided to the beneficiaries at the point of service.
- The Health Benefits Packages covers surgery, medical and daycare treatments, the cost of medicines and diagnostics.
- Beneficiaries will be identified by the latest Socio-Economic Caste Census (SECC) data.
- It is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme
- The Nodal Agency National Health Authority (NHA).

## Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban 2.0 and AMRUT 2.0

- The Prime Minister of India launched the Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban 2.0 (SBM-U 2.0) with the Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation 2.0 (AMRUT 2.0).

### Key Points:

- Both the schemes, SBM-U 2.0 and AMRUT 2.0, are in line with the vision of PM Narendra Modi.
- Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban 2.0 (SBM-U 2.0) mission would be implemented over five years from 2021 to 2026. The focus of SBM-U 2.0 will be on sustaining the sanitation and solid waste management outcomes achieved and accelerate the momentum generated, thus taking Urban India to the next level of 'Swachhata'. The aim of 'Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban 2.0' is to "make the cities completely free of garbage".

### AMRUT 2.0 mission

- AMRUT 2.0 mission will help in making cities self-reliant. It will ensure water security across the cities. This mission has been launched with the aim of providing 100 percent coverage of water supply to all households in 4,700 urban local bodies.
- This target will be achieved by providing 2.68 crore tap connections and 100% coverage of sewerage across 500 AMRUT cities. An outlay of Rs 2.87 lakh crore has been sanctioned for this mission.

## Pradhan Mantri POSHAN Scheme

- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) has approved the continuation of the 'National Scheme for PM POSHAN in Schools' for the five year period 2021-22 to 2025-26.
- This is a Centrally-Sponsored Scheme which covers all school children studying in Classes I-VIII of Government, Government-Aided Schools. The earlier name of the scheme was 'National Scheme for Mid Day Meal in Schools' popularly known as Mid Day Meal Scheme.
- The scheme covers about 11.80 crore children studying in 11.20 lakh schools across the country. During 2020-21, Government of India invested more than Rs 24,400 crore in the scheme, including a cost of about Rs 11,500 crore on foodgrains.
- Total budget of the scheme is 1,30,795 crore rupees.

### About PM-POSHAN scheme

- PM POSHAN is a revamped version of "Mid-Day Meal Scheme", which stands for "PM Poshan Shakti Nirman". With the new nomenclature, Centre has initiated a major political push towards 'child nutrition'.
- This scheme will cover around 24 lakh students, who are receiving pre-primary education at government schools and government-aided schools, from the year 2022.
- The scheme will be extended to students studying in pre-primary or Balvatikas running in government and government aided primary schools.

### Note

Balvatika is the pre-school that was started in government schools last year to include children aged younger than six years in the formal education system.

## SVAMITVA Scheme

- The Prime Minister of India distributed e-property cards to over 1,71,000 beneficiaries of 3,000 villages in Madhya Pradesh under the "SVAMITVA" scheme, saying the scheme would vector growth of rural India.

### About Scheme:

- SVAMITVA (Survey of Villages And Mapping with Improved Technology in Village Areas) Scheme was launched by the Prime Minister on National Panchayati Raj Day, 24th April 2020

- It is launched to enable economic progress of Rural India by providing “Record of Rights” to every rural household owner.
- It is implemented by the “Ministry of Panchayati Raj”. The scheme is implemented with the aim of providing property rights to residents across rural areas.
- The scheme will also make way to use property as a financial asset by villagers to take loans and other financial benefits in urban areas.
- It also aims to demarcate inhabited lands in rural areas using the latest surveying drone-technology. Thus, the scheme also boosts the ecosystem of drone manufacturing in India.

### Prime Minister Atmanirbhar Swasth Bharat Yojana

- The Prime Minister launched the 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.

#### Key Points:

- Its objective is to fill gaps in public health infrastructure, especially in critical care facilities and primary care in both urban and rural areas. It also aims 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
- Through this, critical care services will be available in all the districts of the country with more than five lakh population through exclusive critical care hospital blocks, while the remaining districts will be covered through referral services.
- Under this, People will have access to a full range of diagnostic services in the public healthcare system through a network of laboratories across the country, and integrated public health labs will be set up in all the districts.

#### Significance:

- People will have access to a full range of diagnostic services in the public healthcare system through a network of laboratories across the nation.
- An IT enabled disease surveillance system will be made by developing a network of surveillance laboratories at block, district, regional and national levels, in metropolitan areas.
- Number of hospitals are being opened up in various districts of Uttar Pradesh.
- It will also work towards building up a trained frontline health workforce to respond to any public health emergency.

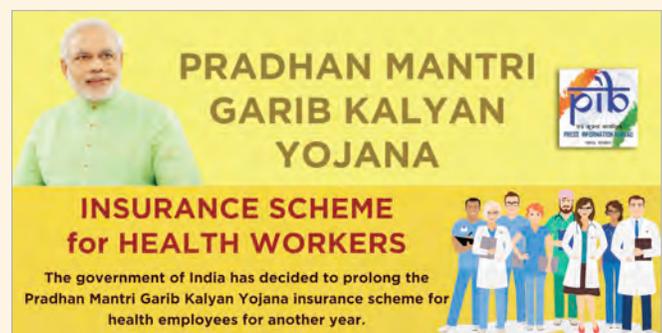
### Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission

- The Prime Minister has launched the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission to provide a digital Health ID to people which will contain their health records.

#### Key Points:

- Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission aims to provide digital health IDs for all Indian citizens to help hospitals, insurance firms, and citizens access health records electronically when required.
- The pilot project of the Mission had been announced by the Prime Minister from the ramparts of the Red Fort on 15th August 2020. The project is being implemented in the pilot phase in six States & Union Territories.
- Implementing Agency: National Health Authority (NHA) under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
- The key components of the project include:
  - Health ID for every citizen that will also work as their health account, to which personal health records can be linked and viewed with the help of a mobile application.
  - Healthcare Professionals Registry (HPR).
  - Healthcare Facilities Registries (HFR) that will act as a repository of all healthcare providers across both modern and traditional systems of medicine.

### Insurance Scheme for Health Workers under PMGKY



- The current COVID Warrior Insurance Scheme that was launched by the Government of India in 2020 was ended by March 24, 2021. Thus, the Government is extending the scheme.
- The Government had provided one month window to invite final claims under the scheme till April 24, 2021. However, now the scheme has been extended for a period of one year after increasing concerns against the closure of the scheme.

### Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana

- Under this scheme, 80 crore poor people, covering about two-thirds of the country's population, will get 5 kg rice or wheat each month for the next three months free of charge, in addition to the 5 kg they already get. Each household will get 1 kg of dal of their choice, for next three months, also free of charge.
- Besides, to ensure adequate availability of protein to all the above mentioned individuals, 1 kg per family, would be provided pulses according to regional preferences for next three months.

### Benefit to farmers:

- The first instalment of Rs 2,000 due in 2020-21 will be front-loaded and paid in April 2020 itself under the PM KISAN Yojana. It would cover 8.7 crore farmers.

### YUVA Scheme

- The Ministry of Education has launched "YUVA- Prime Minister's Scheme for Mentoring Young Authors".
- YUVA is an Author Mentorship programme which will train young and budding authors aged below 30 years in order to promote reading, writing and book culture in India. It will also project India and Indian writings worldwide.



### Key Highlights

- YUVA stands for "Young, Upcoming and Versatile Authors".
- The scheme is in line with the PM's vision of encouraging young writers to write about India's freedom struggle.
- Call on the young generation to write about freedom fighters was taken in PM's Mann ki Baat in January 2021. YUVA is a part of India@75 Project which seeks to bring perspectives of the young generation of writers on themes including Freedom Fighter, Unsung Heroes, Unknown and Forgotten Places etc.
- The Scheme will be implemented by "National Book Trust of India" under the Ministry of Education. Books written under this scheme will be published by National Book Trust. Books will be translated into different languages to exchange culture and literature.
- Under the YUVA scheme, a total of 75 authors were selected by an All-India Contest and the winners names were announced on August 15, 2021. Young winning authors to be trained by eminent authors to prepare manuscripts.
- The published books will be launched in January 2022 on the occasion of National Youth Day.

### PM-CARES for Children Scheme

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi recent launched a PM-CARES for Children scheme for children orphaned due to COVID-19.
- Children who lost either parents or surviving parents or legal guardians or adoptive parents due to COVID-19 disease, will be supported through the PM-CARES fund.
- As per data, about 577 children have lost their parents till date.



### Key Highlights

- Measures under the scheme include free education, creation of Rs 10 lakh corpus for each child- to be given to them at the age of 23.
- Under the PM-CARES scheme, contributions will be made through the PM CARES Fund till they attain the age of 18 years. Contribution will help in creating a corpus of Rs 10 lakh for them.
- They will be given a monthly stipend for five years starting from 18 years till 23 years to fulfil their personal requirements.
- Students going for higher education will be given education loans for which PM CARES will pay interest and scholarships.
- After they attain 23 years of age, they will be given a full amount of Rs 10 lakh to use it professionally or personally.
- Scheme will ensure free education for such kids by giving them admissions in nearest Kendriya Vidyalayas or private schools fees for which will be given from the PM CARES fund.
- Provisions are there for educating kids between 11 to 18 years in residential schools like Sainik Schools and Navodaya Vidyalayas.
- All expenditure concerned with child's education such as expenditure on notebooks, textbooks and uniform will be made through the PM CARES Fund.
- They will also be enrolled under Ayushman Bharat Scheme to provide them health insurance cover of Rs 5 lakh till 18 years.

### FAME Scheme

- Government of India has decided to extend the adoption of electric vehicles 'Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Electric Vehicles in India Phase II (FAME Phase II)' by 2 years.



**Key Highlights:**

- Initially, the FAME scheme was to be implemented for a period of three years from April 1, 2019.
- Now, it will be in force till March 31, 2024.
- Date was extended after the Department of Heavy Industries increased the demand incentive for electric two-wheelers (e2W) from Rs 10,000/KWh to Rs 15,000/KWh.
- This scheme is a part of the National Electric Mobility Mission Plan. Scheme was launched to encourage electric vehicles by providing subsidies. This scheme aims to incentivise all vehicle segments.
- It was launched in two phases. Phase 1 was started in 2015 & ended on 31st March, 2019. Phase II was started from April 2019 and will end in 2024 (Earlier to end in 2022).
- Scheme is monitored by the Department of Heavy Industries under the Ministry of Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises.

**About National Electric Mobility Mission Plan (NEMMP)**

- Under the NEMMP, the government targeted to achieve 6-7 million sales of electric and hybrid vehicles across India by 2020. This plan aims to achieve national fuel security by promoting hybrid and electric vehicles.

**PM Fasal Bima Yojana**

- The Central government extended the cut-off date for enrolment of farmers under Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana for the Kharif season 2021.

**Key Points:**

- Maharashtra government had requested to extend the deadline of the Crop Insurance scheme, PMFBY till July 23.
- State Government has requested to extend the cut-off for Kharif 2021 in the aftermath of challenges faced due to COVID-19 pandemic.

**Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY):**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana on February 18, 2016, as a yield insurance program for farmers.
- It was introduced in accordance with the One Nation–One Scheme principle by combining the finest characteristics of the previous two schemes, the National Agricultural Insurance Scheme (NAIS) and the Modified National Agricultural Insurance Scheme (MNAIS), and eliminating their inherent flaws.

- Its goal is to lower the cost of premiums for farmers and to ensure that crop assurance claims are paid in full as soon as possible.
- This scheme provided cover to all Food & Oilseeds crops and annual commercial or horticultural crops for which past yield data is available.
- It covers those crops as well for which a requisite number of Crop Cutting Experiments (CCEs) are being conducted under the General Crop Estimation Survey (GCES).

**Note**

PMFBY is implemented by empanelled general insurance companies. Selection of Implementing Agency (IA) is done by concerned State Government by bidding. It is administered by the Ministry of Agriculture.

**Vivad Se Vishwas scheme**

- Over 1.32 lakh declarations entailing disputed tax of Rs 99,765 crore have been filed under the 'Vivad se Vishwas' dispute resolution scheme.

**Key Points**

- The declarations received under the 'Vivad se Vishwas' scheme cover approximately 28.73 percent of the country's total ongoing direct tax issues.
- The overall number of pending tax disputes was 5,10,491 as of the date of qualifying.
- The government has settled a large number of direct tax disputes with taxpayers via the Vivad se Vishwas initiative.
- Taxpayers can also make payments until October 31st, but they will be charged an extra amount of interest.

**About Vivad se Vishwas scheme**

- On 17th March, 2020, the Direct Tax Vivad se Vishwas Act, 2020 was enacted with the primary aim to settle all the various direct tax disputes which are currently locked up in numerous appellate forums across the country.
- This scheme provides for the settlement of disputed interest, disputed tax, disputed fees or disputed penalty on payment of 25% of the disputed penalty, fee or interest and 100% of the disputed tax or interest or fee.

## Ujjwala-2 Scheme

- The Prime Minister of India launched the second phase of the Ujjwala gas connection scheme for the poor and said it would provide the biggest relief to lakhs of migrant worker families in the country.



### Key Points:

- Under Ujjwala 2.0 (Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana), migrant workers would no longer have to struggle to get address proof documents to get the gas connections.
- Second edition of the scheme was launched from poll-bound Uttar Pradesh.
- Ujjwala-2 is the updated version of Ujjwala-1 that provided free LPG connections to 8 crore women beneficiaries. Apart from a deposit-free LPG connection, Ujjwala-2 will provide the first refill and a hotplate free of cost to beneficiaries.
- Under the Ujjwala-2 scheme, migrants will not be required to submit ration cards or address proof to get the LPG cylinders. A self-declaration would be used as "family declaration" and as "proof of address."

### Objectives of the Scheme:

- Empowering women and protecting their health.
- Reducing the serious health hazards associated with cooking based on fossil fuel.
- Reducing the number of deaths in India due to unclean cooking fuel.
- Preventing young children from a significant number of acute respiratory illnesses caused due to indoor air pollution by burning fossil fuel.

### About Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY)

- Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana is a scheme of the Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas for providing LPG connections to women from Below Poverty Line (BPL) households.
- The PMUY scheme was launched in 2016 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
- The women who are willing to apply must have attained the age of 18 years. Women belonging from following categories can also apply: SC, ST, MBC, applicant of PM Awas Yojana, Tea and Ex Tea Garden Tribes, Females residing in river islands or islands etc.

## NIPUN Bharat Programme

- The Ministry of Education has launched NIPUN (National Initiative for Proficiency in Reading with Understanding and Numeracy) Bharat Scheme.
- It aims to cover the learning needs of children in the age group of 3 to 9 years.



### About NIPUN Bharat

- This initiative is being launched as a part of NEP (National Education Policy) 2020.
- This policy aims to pave the way for transformational reforms in school and higher education systems in the country. This policy replaced the 34 year old National Policy on Education (NPE), 1986.
- It will be implemented by the Department of School Education and Literacy.
- Target:** It has been envisioned for ensuring that every child in the country necessarily attains foundational literacy and numeracy by the end of Grade 3, by 2026-27.
- A five-tier implementation mechanism will be set up at the National- State- District- Block- School level in all States and UTs, under the aegis of the centrally sponsored scheme of Samagra Shiksha.

### Key components:

- Foundational skills enable to keep children in class thereby reducing the dropouts and improve transition rate from primary to upper primary and secondary stages.
- Activity based learning and a conducive learning environment will improve the quality of education.
- Innovative pedagogies such as toy-based and experiential learning will be used in classroom transactions thereby making learning a joyful and engaging activity.
- Intensive capacity building of teachers will make them empowered and provide greater autonomy for choosing the pedagogy.

### Note

The National Education Policy, 2020 focuses on improving the standard of education through various measures such as the introduction of New pedagogical and curricular structure, Early Childhood Care and Education, Foundational Literacy and Numeracy, Transforming Assessment for Student Development, Experiential and Competency-based Learning etc.

## Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) 4.0

- Government has increased the scope of the Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) for three more months, overlooking the disruptions caused by the second wave of COVID-19 pandemic.
- Modifications in ECLGS will enhance utility and impact of ECLGS by providing additional support to MSMEs.
- It will safeguard livelihoods and help in resumption of business activity. It will facilitate flow of institutional credit at reasonable terms



### Key Highlights

- 100% guarantee cover to be provided on loans, in hospitals/nursing clinics/medical colleges/homes, up to Rs.2 crore. Loan can be utilized to set up on-site oxygen generation plants. Interest rate on load was capped at 7.5%.
- Ceiling of Rs. 500 Cr. of loan outstanding for eligibility under ECLGS 3.0 will be removed.
- Additional ECLGS assistance of up to 10% of outstanding by February 2020 to borrowers who are covered under ECLGS 1.0.
- Civil Aviation sector will be eligible under ECLGS 3.0
- Validity of ECLGS extended to 30.09.2021.

### About Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS)

- ECLGS was launched under Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan package in May 2020.
- It was launched to overcome the distress caused on economy due to lockdown. It helped different sectors by providing credit to them.
- The credit is provided to them for four years besides one year moratorium period on principled repayment.

### PM-KISAN scheme

- PM Narendra Modi recently released the ninth instalment of financial benefit of about Rs 19,500 crore to over 9.75 crore farmers under the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) scheme.
- With this, the government has so far transferred nine installments amounting around Rs 1.57 lakh crore to farmer families under the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) scheme.

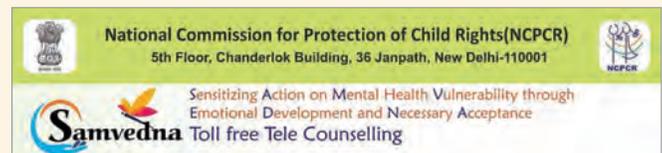


**PM-Kisan Samman Nidhi**  
Department of Agriculture, Cooperation & Farmers Welfare  
Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare

### About PM-KISAN scheme

- Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi Scheme was launched in February 2019.
- An annual financial benefit of Rs 6,000 is provided to eligible beneficiary farmer families, payable in three equal four-monthly installments of Rs 2,000 each, under the PM-KISAN scheme.
- This amount is transferred in three equal instalments, directly into the bank accounts of all landholding farmers. Amount is transferred to all the beneficiaries irrespective of the size of their land holdings.
- PM-KISAN is a Central Sector Scheme which is 100% funded by the central government.
- This scheme is being implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare.

### SAMVEDNA : Tele-Counselling for children



- With the objective of providing psychological first-aid and emotional support to children affected during the COVID-19 Pandemic, the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) is providing Tele-Counselling to children through SAMVEDNA.
- It is a toll-free helpline through which children affected during COVID-19 pandemic are provided counselling.

### Key Points:

- SAMVEDNA is Sensitizing Action on Mental Health Vulnerability through Emotional Development and Necessary Acceptance.
- It is a Toll-Free Helpline launched to provide psycho-social mental support for Children affected during COVID 19 Pandemic.
- The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) is providing Tele-Counselling to children through SAMVEDNA.
- The tele-counselling is being provided through a network of qualified Experts/Counselors/Psychologists.
- It is for psychological support to children to address their stress, anxiety, fear and other issues during the Pandemic.
  - The tele counselling is provided to the children under three categories:

- Children who are in Quarantine/isolation/COVID Care centers;
- Children who have COVID positive parents or family members and near ones; and
- Children who have lost their parents due to COVID-19 Pandemic

## Jal Jeevan Mission

- The Government of India has released funds to implement the Jal Jeevan Mission. The funds were released to fifteen states. This is the first instalment of the four to be released in 2021-22.
- It complements the Jal Jeevan Mission (Rural) which envisages supply of 55 litres of water per person per day to every rural household through Functional Household Tap Connections (FHTC) by 2024.



### About Jal Jeevan Mission

- The Mission was announced in August 2019. The chief objective of the Mission is to provide piped water supply (Har Ghar Jal) to all rural households by 2024.
- It aims to create local infrastructure for rainwater harvesting, groundwater recharge and management of household wastewater for reuse in agriculture.
- The Jal Jeevan Mission is set to be based on various water conservation efforts like point recharge, desilting of minor irrigation tanks, use of greywater for agriculture and source sustainability.
- The Jal Jeevan Mission will converge with other Central and State Government Schemes to achieve its objectives of sustainable water supply management across the country.
- In order to promote Public private partnership, it has been mandated for cities having millions plus population to take up PPP projects worth a minimum of 10% of their total project fund allocation.

## Arogya Dhara 2.0

- Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya recently launched Arogya Dhara 2.0 to increase the reach of Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana.



- Arogya Dhara 2.0 also seeks to create more awareness regarding the Ayushman Bharat Scheme.
- On the occasion, the minister launched three initiatives namely, Adhikar Patra, Ayushman Mitra and Abhinandan Patra.

### Key Points:

- Adhikar Patra will be issued to the beneficiaries when they will be hospitalised for treatment under the PM-JAY scheme. This patra will make beneficiaries aware of their rights in a way that they can claim free and cashless health care services.
- Abhinandan Patra is a 'thank you note' and will be issued to the beneficiaries when beneficiaries will be discharged after their treatment under PM-JAY.
- Ayushman Mitra is an initiative launched to encourage citizens to participate in motivating eligible beneficiaries to get verified under the PM-JAY scheme. It also seeks to help beneficiaries to get the Ayushman Cards issued.

## SWAMIH Fund

- The SWAMIH Fund is expected to produce its first completed apartments in the year 2021. It is a 250 billion-dollar fund set up by the Government of India.
- This fund was set up to finish the stalled housing schemes. The Fund provides a solution to the issue that hampered the savings of homeowners and distressed developers.
- SWAMIH stands for 'Special Window for Completion of Construction of Affordable and Mid-Income Housing Projects'.



### About SWAMIH Investment Fund

- This fund was created to complete the development of stalled, RERA-registered, affordable and middle-income housing projects.
- It credits funding to ventures that are stalled due to lack of capital. It was founded as a Category II Alternative Investment Fund debt fund registered with SEBI.

## Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana

- Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana (PMMY) has seen a sanction of more than 28.68 crore loans for an amount of Rs 14.96 lakh crore have been sanctioned since launch of the scheme.
- A total of 4.20 crore PMMY loans have been sanctioned in 2020-21 and Rs. 2.66 lakh Crore sanctioned in FY 2020-21 (As on 19.03.2021).
- The Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana has helped to generate 1 crore 12 lakh net additional employment between 2015 and 2018. Of this, women accounted for 62%.



### About Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana

- The PMMY was launched in 2015. The full form of MUDRA is Micro Units Development and Refinance Agency Limited.
- The main objective of Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana was to refinance collateral free loans given by the lenders to small borrowers.
- The scheme shall lend between Rs 50,000 and Rs 10 lakhs.
- The PMMY loans are available to non-agricultural activities up to Rs 10 lakhs.
- PMMY loans are available for agricultural activities as well. This includes Poultry, Dairy, Beekeeping and farming.

## SUJALAM Campaign



- The Ministry of Jal Shakti has begun 'SUJALAM', a '100 days campaign' as part of the 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav'.
- The objective of the campaign is to create more and more ODF Plus villages by undertaking waste water management at village level. This is done particularly through creation of 1 million Soak-pits and also other grey water management activities.
- The campaign will not only build desired infrastructure i.e. soak pit for management of greywater in villages but will also

aid in sustainable management of waterbodies.

- The campaign would boost the momentum of Swachh Bharat Mission- Grameen phase II activities through community participation.

### About Open defecation Free (ODF)

- A city/ward is notified as ODF city/ward if, at any point of the day, not a single person is found defecating in the open.

### About About ODF+

- A city, ward or work circle could be declared ODF+ if, "at any point of the day, not a single person is found defecating and/or urinating in the open, and all community and public toilets are functional and well-maintained."

### About About ODF++

- The ODF++ protocol adds the condition that faecal sludge/septage and sewage is safely managed and treated, with no discharging and/or dumping of untreated faecal sludge/septage and sewage in drains, water bodies or open areas.

### Note

- ODF+ and ODF++ were launched in August 2018 to further scale up and sustain the work undertaken by the cities after achieving the ODF status under Phase I of the Swachh Bharat Mission — Urban (SBM-Urban).
- Cities that had been certified ODF at least once, on the basis of the ODF protocols, are eligible to declare themselves as ODF+ & ODF++.

## National Urban Digital Mission

- The 'National Urban Digital Mission' was launched by the Union Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs and Ministry of Electronics & IT.

### Key Points:

- This mission will institutionalise the citizen-centric and ecosystem-driven approach for the urban governance and service delivery in cities by the year 2022. It will also be providing these service deliveries in all cities and towns by 2024.
- Initiatives like Smart-Code, India Urban Data Exchange (IUDX), Smart Cities 2.0 website, and Geospatial Management Information System (GMIS) were also launched at this virtual event.
- "India Urban Data Exchange (IUDX)" initiative has been developed by the Smart Cities Mission in partnership with the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru.
- This mission will help in creating a shared digital infrastructure which in turn can be used to consolidate and cross-leverage the several digital initiatives of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.

### About India Urban Data Exchange (IUDX)

- It is an open-source software platform facilitating a secure and authenticated exchange of data across several data platforms, data producers, 3rd party applications and consumers. IUDX will provide full control to the data owners regarding the sharing of data. They could control as to what data needs to be exposed and to whom.
- **Smart Cities Mission** : It is an urban renewal and retrofitting program that seeks to develop smart cities across India so as to make cities citizen friendly and sustainable. This mission is being implemented by the Union Ministry of Urban Development in association with the respective state governments. It initially included 100 cities that will be completed in between 2019 and 2023.

### PLI Scheme for Telecom Sector

- The Government of India has approved the Telecom Development Related Incentive (PLI) requirements.
- The approval of the PLI scheme was granted for the production of telecommunications and network equipment in a bid to boost the local production of the components.



- Under the PLI scheme, Telecom production will be boosted for more than 5 years in order to increase production of more than Rs 2.4 lakh crore.

### Objectives:

- The Cabinet decision to approve the PLI scheme for the telecommunications industry intends to make India a global centre for the manufacture of telecommunications equipment.
- The Government also plans to make India a centre of the 4G/5G Fifth Generation Radio Connectivity Network, main communication facilities, and cellular equipment.
- This move will also boost the local manufacturing of telecom gear in the domestic market as well as for exports.
- The scheme would include main transmission infrastructure, 4G/5G and next-generation radio connectivity network and cellular equipment, Internet of Things (IoT) access devices, access and customer premises equipment (CPE) and business equipment such as switches and routers.

### About Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme

- This scheme was implemented in March 2020 with a view to improving domestic demand. It also aims to reduce import bills.
- The programme was introduced with the goal of offering incentives for businesses to boost the sales of domestically produced goods.
- This scheme does not stop any foreign companies to set shop in India. But, it also encourages the local companies to set up or expand the existing manufacturing units.

### Submission for Agricultural Mechanization (SMAM)



- In the Union budget 2021, Rs. 1050 Crore budget was allocated to the Submission for Agricultural Mechanization (SMAM) for the financial year 2021-2022.

### About SMAM Scheme

- The Sub-Mission on Agricultural Mechanization (SMAM) was launched in April 2014 with the goal of achieving inclusive growth of farm mechanisation to improve productivity.
- The scheme was initiated by the Government of India with the goal of 'achieving the unreached.' The programme aims to meet the unreached by making farm equipment available and affordable to small and marginal farmers (SMFs).
- Subsidies for the purchase of machinery are also given to individual farmers under the programme.
- Agricultural mechanisation tends to improve productivity by timely farm activities and decreases operations by maintaining efficient handling of inputs.
- Mechanization often increases the production of natural capital and decreases the amount of drudgery involved with different farm operations.

### Components of the scheme

- The scheme lets SMFs interact with hiring organisations that encourage SMFs to employ machines because the procurement of farm machines for SMFs is not financially feasible.
- It also raises awareness among stakeholders by demonstrating the computer operations and skills growth of farmers and young people.

### PM SVANidhi Scheme



- The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MOHUA) and Zomato have signed a MoU under the Prime Minister Street Vendor's AtmaNirbhar Nidhi (PM SVANidhi) Scheme.

### Key Facts:

- Under the MOU, it was decided to board street food vendors at the Zomato Food-Tech location.
- This will allow street food vendors to meet thousands of customers online. It would also encourage these suppliers to grow their businesses.

- As per the MoU, MoHUA and Zomato will initially run a pilot programme with 300 vendors on board.
- The street vendors will be empowered with the PAN and FSSAI
- They will also be given training on technology & partner app usage, menu digitization % pricing and hygiene & packaging.

### About PM SVANidhi Scheme

- The scheme was implemented on 1 June 2020. It was launched with the intention of providing a low-cost working capital loan to street vendors.
- The system was launched to help vendors resume their livelihoods, which were affected by the lock-out of Covid-19.
- It seeks to benefit over 50 lakh Street Vendors. The scheme provides the vendors a collateral free loan of up to Rs. 10,000, of one year.

### Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana

- The Ministry of Women and Child Development has informed the parliament that the Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana has crossed 1.75 crore eligible women till the financial year 2020.



### Key Highlights:

- The central government's original report states that the government's goal was to cover 51.60 lakh women a year under the scheme.
- As per the written reply to the Parliament, a cumulative amount of 5.931.95 crore was charged to the 1.75 crore qualifying beneficiaries in the 2018 to 2020 financial year.

### About Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana

- The PMMVY scheme has been initiated by the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD).
- The scheme requires the allocation of assistance to pregnant women and lactating mothers with Rs 5,000 at the birth of their first child.
- This payment is paid in three instalments after such conditions have been met.

### What are the conditions for beneficiaries?

- The PMMVY scheme is targeted only at those women who bear their first child.

- Furthermore, pregnant women are expected to file early.
- Women should provide at least one pre-natal check-up and infant birth registration.
- The maternity benefits are not provided to women in the regular employment with the Central Government or State Government.
- Women employed in any Public Sector Undertaking or who are receiving similar benefits under any law are not eligible for the maternity benefits.

## Aahaar Kranti

- Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare recently launched a new initiative called 'Aahaar Kranti'. The initiative aims to spread awareness about a nutritionally balanced diet in India. It will also promote the importance of accessibility to local fruits and vegetables.



### About Aahaar Kranti

- The initiative 'Aahaar Kranti' will focus on addressing the problem of hunger and diseases in abundance across India and the world.
- The initiative will shine a light on the richness and value of India's traditional diet, the miracles of local fruits and vegetables, and the healing powers of a balanced diet.
- The motto of the mission is "Good Diet-Good Cognition".
- The mission will train the teachers. The teachers in turn will pass on the message to students.

### Note

India has been ranked at 94 among 107 countries in the Global Hunger Index (GHI) 2020. With a score of 27.2, India has a level of hunger that is "serious".

## Atmanirbhar Bharat Rozgar Yojana

- Recently, the Union Finance Minister announced the fourth tranche of Atmanirbhar Bharat Rozgar Yojana targeted towards fast track investments in the eight sectors.



- Atma Nirbharat Bharat Rozgar Yojana will benefit new employees of EPFO registered organizations and the new employees who had lost jobs between March 1, 2020 and September 30, 2020.

### Key Points:

- The fourth tranche focuses on eight sectors namely, coal, minerals, defence production, civil aviation, power distribution, social infrastructure, space and atomic energy.
- The announced measures also form a part of the Rs. 20 lakh crore economic stimulus package to deal with the Covid-19 pandemic.
- The government has already announced the Economic Stimulus-I, the Economic Stimulus-II and the Economic Stimulus-III.
- The centre under Atma Nirbharat Bharat Rozgar Yojana will provide subsidy for two years.
- For the establishments employing up to 10,000 employees, the GoI will provide employees' contribution (12% of wages) and employer's contribution (12% of the wages).

### EPF Scheme:

- The Employment Provident Scheme shall be managed by the Employees Provident Fund Organization. It refers to all establishments that hire more than 20 staff.
- Within the scheme, the employee must pay a certain contribution to the scheme. The same contribution shall also be paid by the employer. During the resignation of the employee, the employee shall be paid a lump sum with interest in both.
- Under the scheme, an individual receiving a salary of less than Rs 15,000 is not eligible. Thus the GoI took Atma Nirbhar Bharat Rozgar Yojana to include them as well as further improve the generation of jobs in the region.
- Here in Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan, the GoI had declared that it would pay both employee and employer contributions.

## Har Ghar Nal Yojana

- Prime Minister of India has launched the 'Har Ghar Nal Yojana' (Tap Water to Every Household) for the residents of Uttar Pradesh's Sonbhadra and Mirzapur district.
- The scheme was launched to provide tap water to every Household.

### Objectives

- The main objective of the scheme is to provide tap water for every household.
- The water of lakes and rivers will be purified and supplied to the families in Sonbhadra.

### Eligibility

- All households are eligible to claim the benefits of the scheme.

### Components of the scheme:

- Development of drinking water sources,
- Bulk water transfer
- Treatment plants
- Distribution network to every rural region

### RE-HAB Project

- The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways recently launched the project of Khadi and Village Industries (KVIC) called RE-HAB has become a huge success.
- Thus, it is to be implemented in other states as well. This includes Odisha, West Bengal, Jharkhand, Assam, Chhattisgarh, Tamil Nadu, and Kerala.



#### About Project RE-HAB

- Project RE-HAB is Reducing Elephant Human Attacks using Bees. It was launched at four spots in the Nagarhole National Park of Karnataka.
- The project aims to prevent elephant human conflicts without creating harm to either of them. The project is highly cost effective.
- The project uses bee boxes as fences to prevent elephants from entering human habitation. The buzz of the bees irritates elephants. Also, elephants fear that the bees might sting them in the inner side of the trunk and in their eyes.
- The bee boxes were provided as a part of Honey Mission.

#### Note

The KVIC has launched the Honey Mission to provide awareness, training and 'Bee Boxes' along with Bee Colonies to the farmers. The mission was launched in August 2017 in line with the 'Sweet Revolution'.

### PM-KUSUM Scheme

- The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy has recently given orders for the expansion of Pradhan Mantri Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Utthan Mahabhiyan (PM-KUSUM).
- As a result, the current goal of the scheme has been increased to reach a solar potential of 30.8 GW by 2022.



#### About PM-KUSUM Scheme

- The scheme was launched to help farmers installing solar pumps, grid-connected solar electricity and other renewable power plants. Initially, the goal of the scheme was set to hit 25,720 MW by 2022.
- **There are three components of the scheme as follows:**
  - **Component A:** To install 10,000 MW of decentralised ground mounted grid connected renewable power plants.
  - **Component B:** To install 17.5 lakh standalone solar power agricultural pumps with capacity up to 7.5 HP.
  - **Component C:** To solarise 10 lakh grid connected agriculture pumps.

### Mid-day Meal Scheme

- The Vice President of India recently suggested that milk could be given either as part of breakfast or the mid-day meal in order to improve the nutritional levels of children.



#### About scheme :

- The scheme guarantees one meal to all children in government aided schools and madrasas supported under Samagra Shiksha.
- Students up to Class VIII are guaranteed one nutritional cooked meal at least 200 days in a year.
- The Scheme comes under the Ministry of Education.
- It was launched in the year 1995 as the National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education (NP-NSPE), a centrally sponsored scheme. In 2004, the scheme was relaunched as the Mid Day Meal Scheme.

- The cost of the MDMS is shared between the central and state governments. The central government provides free food grains to the states. The cost of cooking, infrastructure development, transportation of food grains and payment of honorarium to cooks and helpers is shared by the centre with the state governments.

### Objectives:

- To enhance the enrollment, retention and attendance and simultaneously improve nutritional levels among school going children studying in Classes I to VIII of Government, Government - aided schools, Special Training centres (STC) and Madrasas and Maktabs supported under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan.

### The MDM rules 2015, provide that:

- The place of serving meals to the children shall be school only.
- If the Mid-Day Meal is not provided in school on any school day due to non-availability of food grains or any other reason, the State Government shall pay food security allowance by 15th of the succeeding month.
- The meal shall be prepared in accordance with the Mid Day Meal guidelines issued by the Central Government from time to time.
- Procuring AGMARK quality items for preparation of midday meals, tasting of meals by two or three adult members of the school management committee, including at least one teacher, before serving to children.
- The School Management Committee mandated under the Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 shall also monitor implementation of the Mid-day meal Scheme.
- The State Steering-cum Monitoring Committee (SSMC) shall oversee the implementation of the scheme including establishment of a mechanism for maintenance of nutritional standards and quality of meals.

### Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY)

- The Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY), the national mission for financial inclusion, recently completed seven years of successful implementation.



### About scheme:

- Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) is the world's largest financial inclusion initiative which aims to ensure access to financial services viz. Banking/ Savings & Deposit Accounts, Remittance, Credit, Insurance, Pension in an affordable manner.

- It was announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his first Independence Day address and was launched on 28th August, 2014.

### Salient features of the Scheme

- All households across the country - both rural and urban are to be covered under the scheme.
- All bank accounts opened under the scheme are to have an overdraft facility of Rs 5,000 for Aadhar-linked accounts after satisfactory operation in the account for 6 months.
- Issuance of RuPay Debit Card with inbuilt Rs 1 lakh personal accident insurance cover provided by HDFC Ergo and a life cover of Rs 30,000 provided by LIC.
- Under the scheme, a total of 29.75 crore RuPay cards were issued to PMJDY account holders.

- Implementation of the Scheme:** The mission has been implemented in these phases, and key objectives of these phases are:

#### (i) Phase-I (15 August 2014 - 14 August 2015)

- To cover all households with at least one basic banking account with RuPay Debit Card with inbuilt Rs 1 lakh accident insurance cover.
- Expansion of Direct Benefit Transfer under various government schemes through bank accounts of the beneficiaries.
- Issuance of Kisan Credit Card is also proposed.

#### (ii) Phase-II (15 August 2015 - 14 August 2018)

- Providing microinsurance to the people.
- Unorganised sector pension schemes were introduced (e.g. Swavalamban)

#### (iii) Phase-III (Beyond 14 August 2018)

- The focus of the PMJDY scheme was shifted from 'Every Household' to 'Every Unbanked Adult'.
- Existing Overdraft (OD) limit of Rs 5,000 to be raised to Rs 10,000.
- The upper age limit for Overdraft facilities was increased from 60 to 65 years.

### One Nation One Ration Card Scheme

- Recently, UTs of Ladakh and Lakshadweep have been integrated with One Nation One Ration Card scheme. With this, the scheme now connects a total of 26 states and Union Territories with one another.

### Key Points:

- It is an ambitious project of Government of India that ensures delivery of food entitlements to the beneficiaries covered under National Food Security Act, 2013.

- The scheme mainly targeted the help migrants who frequently change their home in search of temporary employment.
- Under the scheme, the beneficiaries can get their quota of food grains from any state.

## Make in India

- Make in India initiative was launched by PM Narendra Modi in 2014.
- The main aim of the scheme is as follows:
  - ♦ To increase indigenously produced goods
  - ♦ To attract foreign investments for new industrialization
  - ♦ To develop already existing industries in India by surpassing China
  - ♦ To create 100 million additional jobs by 2022
  - ♦ To promote export-led growth
  - ♦ To increase the share of the manufacturing sector in India's GDP from 16% to 25% by 2022.



### Context:

The Ministry of Defence placed indents on OFB (Ordnance Factory Board). This has been done to boost Make in India initiative. The indents have been placed for the supply of 156 BMP Infantry Combat Vehicles to be used for mechanized forces of Indian Army.

## Bharatmala Program

- Bharatmala is a umbrella program for the highways sector that focuses on optimizing efficiency of freight and passenger movement across the country by bridging critical infrastructure gaps through effective interventions like development of Economic Corridors, Inter Corridors and Feeder Routes, Border and International connectivity roads, Coastal and Port connectivity roads, Green-field expressways, etc.
- It gives special importance to projects connecting far-flung areas and rural areas. The scheme will build 4-lane highways, move 80% freight traffic and interconnect logistics parks. It will also connect seven north-east Multi-Nodal Waterway ports.



### Context:

1. National Highway Authority of India has recently finished construction of 3,979 km of national highways during the 2019-20 financial year. This is the authority's highest ever achieved target in a financial year since its inception.

2. The Bharatmala that was scheduled to be completed in 2021-22 is to be completed by 2025-26. The announcement of delay was announced by the rating agency ICRA (Investment Information and credit Rating Agency). The prevailing COVID-19 crisis could delay the asset monetization plan of National Highway Authority of India (NHAI).

## Char Dham Pariyojana

- The foundation stone of Char Dham Pariyojana (Char Dham Highway Development Project) was laid by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2016. It is a two-lane National Highway project currently under construction in Uttarakhand with a total investment of around Rs. 12000 Crore.
- Originating from Rishikesh, Char Dham highway network will have four distinct routes connecting the four holy places in Uttarakhand viz. Badrinath, Kedarnath, Gangotri and Yamunotri.



### Context:

Nitin Gadkari, the Union Minister for Road Transport & Highways inaugurated the Chamba Tunnel under Chardham Pariyojana through video conference.

## Atal Pension Yojana

- Atal Pension Yojana was launched to provide old age income security to people of India, especially working in the unorganized sector. It was launched by PM Modi in 2015. The scheme is implemented by Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) operating under Ministry of Finance.
- The Scheme can be subscribed by any Indian citizen of age 18 to 40 years. Upon enrolment, the scheme provides a minimum guaranteed pension of Rs 1000 to Rs 5000 on attaining 60 years of age. Also, when the pensioner dies, it amounts to guaranteed pension for lifetime to the spouse. In case of death of the both the subscriber and spouse, a nominee shall claim the amount.



### Context:

Atal Pension Yojana has completed 5 years of its implementation. The total enrolment under the scheme as per recent data is 2.25 crore.

Recently Released

## Reports & Indices

### SDG Urban Index



- NITI Aayog released the inaugural SDG Urban Index and Dashboard 2021–22.

#### Key Points:

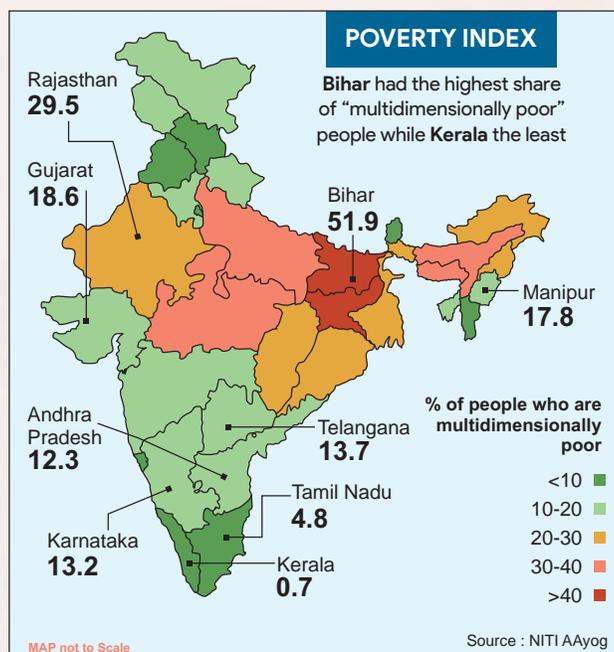
- The index and dashboard are a result of the NITI Aayog-Germany's International Cooperation Agency (GIZ) and BMZ collaboration focused on driving SDG localization in our cities, under the umbrella of Indo-German Development Cooperation.
- It ranks 56 urban areas on 77 SDG indicators across 46 targets of the SDG framework.
- Methodology:**
  - For each SDG, the urban areas are ranked on a scale of 0-100.
  - A score of 100 implies that the urban area has achieved the targets set for 2030; a score of 0 implies that it is the farthest from achieving the targets among the selected urban areas.
  - Urban areas have been classified as below based on their composite score:
    - **Aspirant:** 0–49
    - **Performer:** 50–64
    - **Front-Runner:** 65–99
    - **Achiever:** 100
- Urban Areas Performance:** Shimla tops the Index followed by Coimbatore and Chandigarh.

#### Note

Indo-German development cooperation is a solid pillar of the Indo-German strategic partnership. Both countries are equally committed to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs); further, they want to tackle global challenges in the fields of climate and environment.

### National Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI)

- Recently, Niti Aayog has published the first-ever National Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) of India.



#### Key Findings

- Bihar has the highest proportion of people who are multidimensionally poor, followed by Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh.
- Kerala, Goa, and Sikkim have the lowest percentage of the population being multidimensionally poor.
- This baseline report of the national MPI measure is based on the reference period of 2015-16 of the National Family Health Survey (NFHS).
- Dadra and Nagar Haveli (27.36 per cent), Jammu & Kashmir, and Ladakh (12.58), Daman & Diu (6.82 per cent) and Chandigarh (5.97 per cent), have emerged as the poorest UTs in India.
- Global Rank:** According to Global MPI 2021, India's rank is 66 out of 109 countries.

#### Note

- The National Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) is prepared by the Government think-tank NITI Aayog.
- Its objective is to measure poverty across its multiple dimensions and in effect complements existing poverty statistics based on per capita consumption expenditure.

## Reports &amp; Indices

**Logistics Ease Across Different States (LEADS) Report, 2021**

- The Union Minister for Commerce and Industry has launched the 3rd edition of the Logistics Ease Across Different States (LEADS) report, 2021.

**Key Points:**

- Gujarat has been adjudged as the Best Performing State.
- Haryana second while Punjab got the third position as per the report.
- Uttar Pradesh is the top improver.

**About LEADS Report**

- Logistics Ease Across Different States (LEADS) Index is a composite indicator to assess international trade logistics across states and Union territories. LEADS is an attempt to bring Longevity, Efficiency, Accuracy, Durability, and Smartness in the Logistics sector.
- It is a perception-based survey.
- It is based on a stakeholders' survey for the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
- LEADS is influenced by the World Bank's biannual Logistics Performance Index (LPI).

**Climate Vulnerability Index**

- Recently, Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW) has carried out a first-of-its-kind district-level climate vulnerability assessment, or Climate Vulnerability Index (CVI).

**Key Points:**

- CEEW is an environmental think tank. The index is published in a report titled "Mapping India's Climate Vulnerability – A District-level Assessment".
- In this index, CEEW has analysed 640 districts in India to assess their vulnerability to extreme weather events such as cyclones, floods, heatwaves, droughts, etc.
- Assam, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Bihar are most vulnerable to extreme climate events such as floods, droughts and cyclones in India.

- More than 80 per cent Indians live in districts vulnerable to climate risks – that is 17 of 20 people in India are vulnerable to climate risks, out of which every five Indians live in areas that are extremely vulnerable
- 60% of Indian districts have medium to low adaptive capacity in handling extreme weather events – these districts don't have robust plans in place to mitigate impact
- The CVI has ranked 20 states out of which Assam and Andhra Pradesh are the most vulnerable to extreme weather events, and Kerala, Tripura and West Bengal are the least vulnerable.

**CEEW:**

- Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW) is one of Asia's leading not-for-profit policy research institutions.
- The Council was founded in 2010 to also serve as a platform for people with different skills to come together, pursue their interests and build careers in public policy.

**Sustainable Development Index**

- Recently, the third edition of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) India Index and Dashboard 2020–21 was released by NITI Aayog. The SDG India Index 2020–21 is developed in collaboration with the United Nations in India.

**Key Points:**

- The index measures the progress at the national and sub-national level in the country's journey towards meeting the Global Goals and targets.
- It has been successful as an advocacy tool to propagate the messages of sustainability, resilience, and partnerships, as well.
- From covering 13 Goals, 39 targets, and 62 indicators in the first edition in 2018-19 to 17 Goals, 54 targets and 100 indicators in the second; this third edition of the index covers 17 Goals, 70 targets, and 115 indicators.
- In terms of score improvement, Mizoram, Haryana and Uttarakhand are the top gainers in 2020-21 who have gained 12, 10 and 8 points, respectively as compared to the index of 2019-2020.

**India's Overall SDG Score**

- India's overall SDG (Sustainable Development Goal) score has increased from 60 in 2019 to 66 in 2020-21. This increase is driven by good performance in SDG goal 6 (clean water and sanitation) and SDG goal 7 (affordable and clean energy).

# 4

# International Affairs

## G20 Summit 2021 held in Rome



- Recently, leaders from major World economies participated in the G20 Summit held in Rome, Italy. During the summit, the leaders adopted the Rome Declaration and emphasised COVID-19 immunisation across the globe.

### Key Highlights:

- The 2021 G20 Rome summit was the sixteenth meeting of the Group of Twenty (G20).
- The world leaders had elaborate deliberations on issues of global importance like fighting the pandemic, improving health infrastructure, boosting economic cooperation and furthering innovation.
- **Adopted the 'Rome Declaration':** The Rome Declaration consists of 16 mutually agreed principles, which aims to guide joint action for preventing future health crises and to build a safer, equitable and sustainable world.
- The countries agreed that the COVID-19 immunisation is global public good. Besides, there was agreement on strengthening the World Health Organisation to fast-track the process for emergency use authorisation for COVID-19 vaccines.
- G-20 countries also committed to ending international financing for all new coal plants by the end of 2021.

### About G-20 Group

- The G20 is an informal group of 19 countries and the European Union, with representatives of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.
- The members of the G20 are USA, Canada, Mexico, Argentina, Brazil, EU, Germany, France, UK, Italy, South Africa, Saudi Arabia, Turkey; India, Indonesia, Australia, Russia, China, South Korea and Japan.
- It does not have any permanent secretariat or headquarters.
- The G20 Summit is formally known as the "Summit on Financial Markets and the World Economy".

## UN granted observer status to International Solar Alliance (ISA)

- Recently, the UN General Assembly has conferred Observer Status to the International Solar Alliance (ISA).



### Key Points:

- The granting of Observer Status to ISA in the General Assembly would help provide for regular and well-defined cooperation between the Alliance and the United Nations that would benefit global energy growth and development.
- It would help ISA to expand its network through setting up a trans-national grid -- One Sun One Work One Grid (OSOWOG).

### About International Solar Alliance (ISA)

- The ISA was conceived as a joint effort by India and France to mobilize efforts against climate change through the deployment of solar energy solutions.
- It was presented by the leaders of the two countries at the 21st Conference of Parties (COP21) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) held in Paris in 2015.
- The Assembly is the apex decision-making body of the ISA. It meets annually at the Ministerial level at the seat of the ISA.
- **Membership:** A total of 80 countries have signed and ratified the ISA Framework Agreement and 101 countries have only signed the agreement.
- **Headquarters:** Gurugram (India)

## India re-elected to UN Human Rights Council for 2022-24

- India got re-elected to the U.N. Human Rights Council for the 6th term with an overwhelming majority in the General Assembly.
- It vowed to continue to work for the promotion and protection of Human Rights through "Samman, Samvad and Sahyog."



### Key Facts:

- India's current term was set to end on December 31, 2021.
- Countries elected by the UN General Assembly through secret ballot: Argentina, Benin, Cameroon, Eritrea, Finland, Gambia, Honduras, India, Kazakhstan, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Montenegro, Paraguay, Qatar, Somalia, UAE and the US.
- USA, which had quit the council in 2018 under the previous Donald Trump's regime, was re-elected to the global rights body for a period of three-and-a-half years.
- These new members will serve for a period of three years, starting from January, 2022.

### New members:

- The 193-member General Assembly elected Argentina, Cameroon, Benin, Finland, Eritrea, Honduras, Gambia, Lithuania, India, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Luxembourg, Montenegro, Qatar, Paraguay, UAE, Somalia, and the USA by secret ballot for the 2022-2024 term.
- Members of the Council will serve for a period of three years. They will not be eligible for immediate re-election following two consecutive terms.

### About UN Human Rights Council (UNHCR)

- The UNHRC is an intergovernmental agency within the UN framework.
- The Organisation is committed to improving the promotion and defence of human rights around the world.
- It tracks and advises cases of human rights abuses.
- The Council was formed in 2006 by Resolution 60/251 of the UN General Assembly.
- The Department shall be active in the debate of all thematic human rights issues.
- The UNHRC was set up after replacing the United Nations Committee on Human Rights (UNCHR).
- The Council is made up of 47 UN Member Nations. Member States shall be elected by direct and secret ballot to the UNGA.

### Note

The President of the U.S. Joe Biden announced that U.S. had joined the UN Human Rights Council. The United States had quit from the Council in 2018 under the administration of the then President Donald Trump.

## Barbados: World's Newest Republic

- Recently, Barbados has officially removed Queen Elizabeth II as its head of state and become the world's newest republic.
- Before Barbados, the last nation to remove the Queen as head of state was Mauritius in 1992.
- The Royal Barbados Police Force will become the Barbados Police Force and crown lands would become state lands.
- The country would continue to celebrate Independence Day on November 30 in the memory of the country's first president Errol Walton Barrow.



### About Barbados

- It is a country in the southeastern Caribbean Sea, situated about 100 miles east of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.
- The geographic position of Barbados has profoundly influenced the island's history and culture and aspects of its economic life.

## Delhi Regional Security Dialogue on Afghanistan held

- India hosted the Delhi Regional Security Dialogue on Afghanistan in a first such meeting on Afghanistan.
- This National Security Advisors' (NSAs') level dialogue was participated by Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Pakistan and China refused to participate.



### Key Points

- The dialogue was led by India's NSA Ajit Doval, who reviewed the security situation in the region following the recent Taliban takeover of Afghanistan.
- The meeting, however, did not have any representation from the erstwhile Afghan government or the Taliban, which has not been recognised by India as a legitimate political player in Afghanistan
- **Delhi Declaration:**
  - 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.
  - No representation from Afghan government or the Taliban:

### IEA invites India to become full-time member

- The International Energy Agency (IEA) has invited India, the world's third-largest energy consumer, to become its full-time member. 
- After acceptance of the proposal India will require to raise strategic oil reserves to 90 days requirement. India's current strategic oil reserves equal 9.5 days of its requirement.
- In January 2021, IEA members & India agreed to enter into a strategic partnership in order to strengthen their collaboration with respect to energy security and clean energy transition.

#### About International Energy Agency (IEA)

- The International Energy Agency (IEA) is an autonomous intergovernmental organization established in the framework of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 1974 in the wake of the 1973 oil crisis.
- Based in Paris, IEA was initially dedicated to responding to physical disruptions in the supply of oil, as well as serving as an information source on statistics about the international oil market.
- In the decades since, its role has expanded to cover the entire global energy system, encompassing traditional energy sources such as oil, gas, and coal as well as cleaner and faster growing ones such as solar PV, wind power and biofuels.
- It is best known for the publication of its annual World Energy Outlook.

### Pakistan retained on FATF's 'Greylist'

- Pakistan will continue to be on the "Grey List" of the FATF as it needs to "further demonstrate" that action is being taken against UN-designated terrorists. 
- The FATF also announced the 'greylisting' of Jordan, Mali and Turkey, following the conclusion of the Plenary session.

#### About Financial Action Task Force (FATF)

- It is an inter-governmental decision-making body. It was established in 1989 during the G7 Summit in Paris to develop policies against money laundering and its Secretariat is located in Paris.
- India became an Observer at FATF in 2006. Since then, it has been working towards full-fledged membership. On June 25, 2010, India was taken in as the 34th country member of FATF.
- **FATF Lists:**
  - **Black List:** Countries known as Non-Cooperative Countries or Territories (NCCTs) are put on the blacklist. These countries support terror funding and money laundering activities. The FATF revises the blacklist regularly, adding or deleting entries. *Enlisted nations:* North Korea and Iran.
  - **Grey List:** Countries that are considered a safe haven for supporting terror funding and money laundering are put in the FATF grey list. This inclusion serves as a warning to the country that it may enter the blacklist.

#### Note

Pakistan has been on the FATF grey list since June 2018 and was asked to implement the FATF Action Plan fully by September 2019.

### QUAD Leaders' Summit 2021 held



- PM Modi along with his counterparts from Australia and Japan recently attended the first in-person summit of QUAD leaders which was held in Washington.

**Key Highlights**

- Meeting was attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi along with leaders of the US, Japan, and Australia. US President Joe Biden is hosting all of them at the White House.
- The focus of the first-ever in-person QUAD summit in 2021 is on 'deepening our ties and advancing practical cooperation' on areas such as promoting a free and open Indo-Pacific, combatting COVID-19 pandemic, addressing the climate crisis, and partnering on emerging technologies and cyberspace, stated the White House statement.
- PM Modi shared concerns regarding extremist elements in Afghanistan
- During the meeting, PM Modi noted that four nations of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue came together in the interest of humanity amid the COVID-19 pandemic. He added that the "QUAD vaccine initiative" will help Indo-Pacific nations.

**About QUAD**

- It is also known as Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QSD).
- QUAD is an informal group of India, the US, Japan and Australia.
- It is a strategic dialogue with the objective to ensure a free, open, inclusive and prosperous Indo Pacific.

**Great Green Wall of Africa to combat desertification**

- Africa's Great Green Wall (GGW) programme to combat desertification in the Sahel region has an important contribution towards combating climate change.
- The study showed that for every dollar invested into land restoration yields across the African continent from Senegal in the west to Djibouti in the east, investors can expect larger returns.

**Sahel region:**

- Extends south of the Sahara from Senegal in the west to Ethiopia in the east of Africa.

- Vast areas of the formerly fertile region are now virtually uncultivated due to droughts, poor agricultural cultivation methods as well as land overuse due to the growing demand for food and firewood.

**Great Green Wall (GGW) Programme:**

- GGW was launched in 2007 by the African Union.
- Initial idea for the GGW: A band of trees about 8,000 kilometers long and 8 kilometers wide, stretching across Africa from east to west.
- The GGW programme aims to restore 100 million hectares of degraded ecosystems across 11 countries in the region. It aims to promote sustainable development and climate change mitigation.
- Countries selected as intervention zones for the Great Green Wall are Burkina Faso, Chad, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal and Sudan.

**Indian Ocean Naval Symposium held**

- The 7th edition of the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) Conclave of Chiefs held in Paris.

**About Ocean Naval Symposium (ONS)**

- The IONS is a voluntary and inclusive project that brings together the navies of the Indian Ocean Region's (IOR) littoral states in order to strengthen maritime cooperation and regional security.
- It also contributes to the development of an effective response mechanism as well as humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) in the event of natural disasters.
- India (2008–10), the United Arab Emirates (2010–12), South Africa (2012–14), Australia (2014–16), Bangladesh (2016–18), and the Islamic Republic of Iran (2018-21) have all held the IONS chairmanship.
- France took over as Chairman in June 2021 for a two-year term.

**Members:**

- The IONS is composed of 24 member nations that border or lie inside the IOR, as well as eight observer nations.
- The members have been classified geographically into four sub-regions:
- Bangladesh, Maldives, India, Pakistan, Seychelles, Sri Lanka, and the United Kingdom are all coastal states in South Asia.

- Iran, Oman, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates comprise the West Asian Littorals.
- France (Reunion), Mauritius, Kenya, Mozambique, Tanzania and South Africa comprise the East African Littorals.
- Australia, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Myanmar, Thailand, and Timor-Leste are all part of the South East Asian and Australian littorals.

## Global Resilience Index Initiative (GRII) launched

- Recently, ten global organisations with partial funding and in-kind contributions from the insurance sector and partner institutions have launched a Global Resilience Index Initiative (GRII) at COP26.
- It will provide a globally consistent model for the assessment of resilience across all sectors and geographies.
- The GRII will be using cross-sector risk modelling experience, including public-private partnerships between governments, academia, insurance and engineering.
- GRII has been initiated with partial funding and in-kind contributions from the insurance sector and partner institutions.
- It will help in mobilising the trillions of investment needed to meet the Paris goals on climate-resilient development.
- GRII partners and supporters:
  - Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI).
  - Coalition for Climate Resilient Investment (CCRI) & others.



## Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI)

- It is a partnership of national governments, the United Nations (UN) agencies and programmes, multilateral development banks and financing mechanisms, the private sector, and knowledge institutions.
- It aims to promote the resilience of new and existing infrastructure systems to climate and disaster risks in support of sustainable development.
- India is a member of the coalition and has also invested in the estimated fund requirements to cover the core costs over the first five years.

## Sweden to launch 'Time for India' Drive

- Sweden set to launch the 'Time for India' drive as a trade promotion event to boost bilateral trade.
- Under it, there shall be no requirement for vaccination for entry nor will there be a quarantine regime in place. But travellers need to take a COVID-19 test on arrival.



## India-Sweden Relations

- The two nations enjoy a cordial relationship and excellent cooperation in regional and international fora. Sweden supports India's membership in the expanded United Nations Security Council (UNSC).
- Sweden participated in the First India Nordic-Baltic Conclave co-chaired by External Affairs Minister Dr S Jaishankar in November 2020.
- India is Sweden's 19th largest export market and third-largest trade partner after China and Japan in Asia.
- Trade-in goods and services have increased from USD 3 billion (2016) to USD 4.5 billion (2019).
- The main Swedish exports to India are communication equipment, motor vehicles, paper & pulp products, pharmaceuticals, chemicals and engineering products.
- Sweden congratulated India on its eighth term as an elected member of the UN Security Council for 2021-2022.
- India had proposed the idea of the first nordic summit, which was held in 2018. Nordic countries include Sweden, Norway, Finland, Denmark and Iceland.

## 16th East-Asia Summit held virtually



- Recently, the Indian Prime Minister spoke about Global Value Chains, during ASEAN - East Asia Summit virtual summit on the sidelines of the ASEAN summit with the leaders.

### Key Highlight:

- The 16th East Asia Summit was hosted by Brunei as EAS and ASEAN Chair.
- Their overall focus on the importance of a resilient global value chain was highlighted. They discussed about important regional and international issues, including Indo-Pacific, South China Sea, UNCLOS, terrorism, and the situation in Korean Peninsula and Myanmar.
- India stressed the importance of Free, Open and Inclusive Indo-Pacific and raised the idea of developing global standards on cybersecurity.
- India's commitment to provide Quad-sponsored vaccines to Indo-Pacific nations was reiterated.

### About East Asia Summit(EAS)

- The concept of East Asia Grouping was first promoted in 1991 by the then Malaysian Prime Minister, Mahathir bin Mohamad.
- It established in 2005, it is the Indo-Pacific's premier forum for strategic dialogue.
- It is the only leader-led forum at which all key partners meet to discuss political, security and economic challenges facing the Indo-Pacific.
- Apart from the 10 ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) member states, the East Asia Summit includes India, China, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Australia, New Zealand, the United States and Russia.
- India is one of the founding members of the East Asia Summit.

## Jaynagar-Kurtha Cross-border Rail Section in news



- Recently, India handed over a 34.9 km long cross-border rail link to the Nepal government.

### Key Points:

- It is connecting Jayanagar in Bihar to Kurtha in Nepal.
- It is part of the 68.7 km Jayanagar - Bijalpura-Bardibas rail link built under the Government of India's grant assistance programme of NPR 8.77 billion.
- **Benefits:** The cross-border rail link is expected to enhance trade and commerce activities as well as people to people linkage between the two countries.

### India- Nepal Relations

- India and Nepal share a very cordial relation spanning across different fields. Economic Cooperation: India has been a key development partner of Nepal.
- Following the massive earthquakes in Nepal in April and May 2015, India promptly offered to help.
- About 150 Indian ventures operate in Nepal in manufacturing, services (banking, insurance, dry port, education and telecom), power sector and tourism industries.
- Both Nepal and India have a common approach to regional and multilateral institutions and hence, work in tandem in the United Nations, Non-aligned Movement and other international fora on most of the important international issues.
- India as Nepal's largest trading partner. India has provided a transit facility to Nepal for the third country trade. Both the public and private sectors of India have invested in Nepal.

## UNESCO designated Srinagar in Network of Creative Cities

- The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has designated Srinagar as a part of UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN).



### Key Highlights:

- 295 across the globe: UNESCO designated 49 other cities too as a part of the creative cities network. With this, the total number of creative cities in the world has reached 295 across 90 countries.
- Sixth Indian city: After Mumbai, Chennai, Hyderabad, Varanasi and Jaipur, Srinagar is the sixth Indian city to achieve this distinction.
- The Srinagar city has been designated the creative city in the field of Crafts and Folk Arts only second city in India in this category after Jaipur.
- Other 4 cities:** This year four Indian cities Kolkata, Gwalior, Indore and Srinagar had applied to the Ministry of Culture.

### UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN):

- It was created in 2004 to promote cooperation with and among cities that have identified creativity as a strategic factor for sustainable urban development.
- UNESCO designates the creative cities in seven fields: Craft, Folk Art, Media Arts, Film Design, Gastronomy, Literature and Music.

## One Sun, One World, One Grid (OSOWOG) in news

- Recently, an initiative was announced by India and the United Kingdom to tap solar energy and have it travel seamlessly across borders. They call for 'One Sun, One World, One Grid' to improve the viability of solar power.



### Key Points:

- It was announced on the second day of the COP26. The focus is to improve the viability of solar power.
- This brings together the International Solar Alliance and the UK's green grid initiative and complements India's focus on harnessing the sun's energy.

- The grid will be set up over the next few years by the International Solar Alliance (ISA).

### About One Sun One World One Grid (OSOWOG) Initiative

- The concept of a single global grid for solar was first outlined at the First Assembly of the ISA in late 2018.
- It envisions building and scaling inter-regional energy grids to share solar energy across the globe, leveraging the differences of time zones, seasons, resources, and prices between countries and regions.
- It includes a group of governments called the Green Grids Initiative — One Sun One World One Grid group — and was announced at COP26 by summit host United Kingdom's Prime Minister Boris Johnson and Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
- Green Grids Initiative Working Groups: It has been made up of national and international agencies that have already been established for Africa and for the Asia-Pacific region. Their membership includes most major multilateral development banks, such as the African Development Bank (AfDB), the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank.

## Switzerland legalised Same-sex Marriage

- Switzerland allowed legalise civil marriage and the right to adopt children for same-sex couples by a nearly two-thirds majority in a referendum making it one of the last countries in Western Europe to legalise gay marriage.

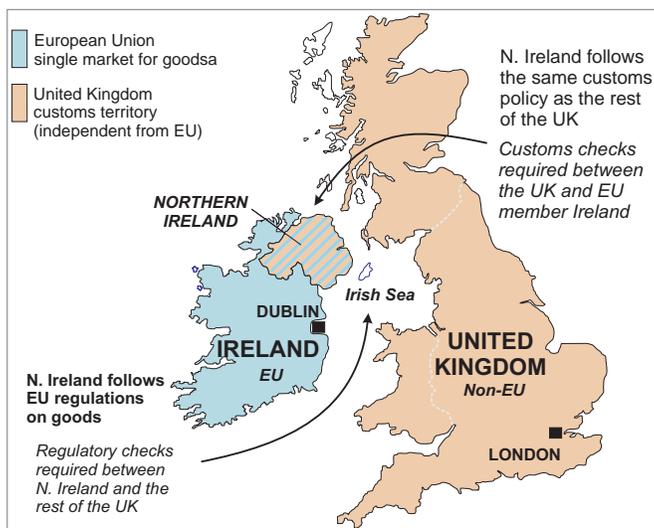
### Key Points:

- According to results of referendum, 64.1% of voters voted in favour of same-sex marriage in the nationwide.
- Apart from opening up the option of marriage to all couples, the government also approved an amendment to Switzerland's marriage law which was put to voters in a referendum.
- This law also grants lesbian couples to get access to sperm banks as well as allows same-sex couples to adopt children.
- Under the amended law, same-sex couples will be able to have a civil wedding. They will be granted the same institutional and legal rights as heterosexual couples.

### Note

Italy is the only country in Western Europe which does not allow marriage between same-sex couples. It only allows civil unions.

## Northern Ireland Protocol in news



- The Northern Ireland protocol was designed to prevent checks across the border between Northern Ireland (UK) and the Republic of Ireland (EU), following Brexit.
- It has resulted into disagreements between the UK and EU as it disrupted trade between Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

### About Northern Ireland Protocol

- It aims to resolve the issue of the border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. Northern Ireland is part of the UK and the Republic of Ireland remains part of the European Union (EU). It has been one of the major issues created by Brexit.
- This frontier is contested and parts of it were fortified during the decades of violence known as "The Troubles".
- With the Good Friday Agreement those visible signs of division melted away along the open border, however, it has again come into a troubled position with Brexit.

### Note

Brexit is the name given to the UK's departure from the EU. It is a combination of 'Britain' and 'exit'. On 23rd June 2016, the UK held a referendum on its membership of the EU.

## India, US, UAE, and Israel form a New QUAD

- India, Israel, the United States and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) are planning to create a new QUAD by the "Abraham Accords" by holding the first meeting of their foreign ministers.

### Key Points:

- The meeting is being described in some quarters as a "New QUAD".
- **It was joined by:** External affairs minister S Jaishankar, US secretary of state Antony Blinken from Washington Israeli foreign minister Yair Lapid from Jerusalem and UAE foreign minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan from Abu Dhabi.
- This meeting is the first to bring four countries together on a single platform.
- Meeting will also be linked with India's efforts of building new plurilateral and multilateral partnerships which focuses on cooperation in areas including security, connectivity and energy.

### About Abraham Accords

- The Israel-UAE normalization agreement is officially called the Abraham Accords Peace Agreement.
- It was initially agreed to in a joint statement by the United States, Israel and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) on August 13, 2020.
- The UAE thus became the third Arab country, after Egypt in 1979 and Jordan in 1994, to agree to formally normalize its relationship with Israel as well as the first Persian Gulf country to do so.
- Concurrently, Israel agreed to suspend plans for annexing parts of the West Bank.
- The agreement normalized what had long been informal but robust foreign relations between the two countries.

## Indo-US Health Dialogue 2021 held

- The 4th session of the Indo-US Health Dialogue 2021 was inaugurated recently which was hosted by India.
- Both leaders spoke about a variety of topics, including Covid-19, climate change, and economic cooperation.

### Key Points

- The issues that were discussed at the dialogue include: strengthening of epidemiological research and surveillance, vaccine development, One Health, zoonotic and vector-borne diseases, health systems and health policies.
- During the dialogue, an MoU was signed between the Ministry of Health and the Department of Health and Human Services of the USA concerning cooperation in the field of health and biomedical sciences.

- Moreover, the two countries also signed a separate memorandum to continue joint support for the highly productive Indo-U.S. International Center of Excellence in Research (ICER) program. It is an infectious disease research partnership located at the National Institute for Research on Tuberculosis in Chennai.

### Note

The United States is India's second-largest commercial partner and a major destination for its goods and services exports. During the 2020-21 year, the United States will overtake Mauritius as the second-largest source of foreign direct investment into India.

## India became Dubai's second biggest trade partner



- India has emerged as Dubai's second biggest trading partner after China with the overall volume touching 38.5 billion dirham in the first half of 2021.

### Key Points:

- According to a Dubai government statement, the emirate had a trade volume of 86.7 billion dirham with China in H1 (first half) of 2021, followed by India and the U.S. at third position.
- Trade with India grew 74.5% year-on-year to 67.1 billion dirham from 38.5 billion dirham in H1 2020.
- China recorded 30.7% growth year-on-year with total trade with Dubai standing at 66.3 billion dirham in H1 2020.
- Saudi Arabia came fourth with 30.5 billion dirham up 26% from H1 2020, followed by Switzerland at 24.8 billion dirham.
- The total share of the five biggest trade partners in H1 2021 amounted to 241.21 billion dirham compared to 185.06 billion dirham in H1 2020, up 30.34%.

### Top commodities of trade:

- Gold topped the list of commodities in H1 external trade of Dubai, amounting to 138.8 billion dirhams. It accounts for 19.2% of Dubai trade.
- Gold is followed by telecoms amounting to 13% of total trade. It is followed by Diamonds, jewellery and vehicle trade. Non-oil external trade of Dubai has increased by 31% in the first half of 2021.

## India-UAE : Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)

- India and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) have officially launched negotiations for the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA).



- Within five years of the signing of the agreement, bilateral trade in goods is anticipated to reach USD 100 billion, and bilateral trade in services is expected to reach USD 15 billion, resulting in increased social and economic possibilities in both countries.

### Key Points:

- Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement a type of free trade agreement that encompasses negotiations on trade in services and investment, as well as other aspects of economic cooperation. It may even contemplate negotiating on issues like trade facilitation and customs cooperation, as well as competition and intellectual property rights.
- Free Trade Agreements are less extensive than Partnership Agreements or Cooperation Agreements.
- CEPA also looks into the regulatory side of the trade and includes an agreement that covers these concerns.
- South Korea and Japan have both inked CEPAs with India.

### Note

The UAE is the eighth-largest investor in India, having invested \$11 billion between April 2000 and March 2021, while investment by Indian companies in the UAE is estimated to be over \$85 billion.

## Afghanistan-Taliban Conflict

Recently, the Taliban seized Kabul, the capital city of Afghanistan, raising questions over the US and NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) trained Afghan Forces.

### Key Points:

- Taliban had ruled Afghanistan from 1996 until 2001 when US troops toppled.
- This group had sheltered Osama bin Laden as he planned the 9/11 attack of 2001.
- Taliban's control over Afghanistan now poses a new threat to the entire political and social order of the US as well as its allies.

### Taliban

- The Taliban is a Sunni fundamentalist organisation that is involved in Afghan politics. It is also a military group that is involved in an insurgency against the currently elected government in Afghanistan.
- The Taliban controlled almost three-quarters of the country from 1996 to 2001 and was notorious for their strict implementation of the Sharia or Islamic law there.
- The period saw widespread abuse of human rights, especially targeted against women. The current head of the Taliban is Hibatullah Akhundzada.

### India's first meeting with Taliban

- India's ambassador to Qatar held talks with a top Taliban leader. The first formal diplomatic engagement since the hardline Islamist group took over Afghanistan.
- With this meeting, the Government of India has softened its stance on the Taliban.
- Indian security officials and diplomats are already understood to have engaged with Taliban representatives for several months.
- This meeting was held on the request of Taliban, because Taliban leaders have been keen to receive acceptability.
- During the meeting, discussions focused on safety, security and early return of Indian nationals who were stranded in Afghanistan.



### Panjshir Valley

- After occupying most of the area of Afghanistan including Kabul, the Taliban took control of Panjshir province which was putting formidable resistance to Taliban. It was the area remaining out of control of major powers over the decades of war.
- Panjshir is a valley in north-central Afghanistan, near the Hindu Kush Mountain range. It is divided by the Panjshir River. Panjshir means "Five lions". The valley is home to Afghanistan's largest concentration of ethnic Tajiks. The valley is also known for its emeralds, which were used in the past to finance the resistance movements against those in power.



### Note

India's only concern was that "Afghanistan's soil should not be used for any anti-Indian activities and terrorism"

## BRICS Bank admits UAE, Bangladesh, Uruguay as new members

- The New Development Bank (NDB) by the BRICS group of nations has recently added the United Arab Emirates, Uruguay and Bangladesh as the new members.
- The purpose of the bank is to mobilize resources for infrastructure and sustainable development projects in BRICS.



### About New Development Bank

- New Development Bank was Launched in 2015 by the BRICS Members- Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. It was formerly referred to as "BRICS development bank".
- It is headquartered in Shanghai. The first regional office of the NDB was set up in Johannesburg, South Africa while a second regional office was established in 2019 in Brazil, followed by in Russia.
- The bank mobilises resources for infrastructure and sustainable development projects in the member countries as well as in other developing nations.



### Note

The Bank has an authorised capital of USD 100 billion. It is open for subscription by members of the United Nations.

## India to issue Electronic Visa (e-visa) for Afghanistan nationals

- India has decided to invalidate or cancel all visas issued to Afghan nationals, as the Taliban has virtually captured the country. Now, all Afghans must enter India now only on special e-visas applied online.
- The government was concerned that passports deposited by Afghan nationals for visas could get into the hands of anti-India terror groups. As a result, the Home Ministry decided to cancel them.



### About e-Visa

- The e-visa system is an innovation introduced by the government in 2014. The facility was expanded in 2017-2018.
- The process was started in the 2010 Tourist Visa on Arrival (TVOA) scheme for Japan, Singapore, Finland, Luxembourg and New Zealand. The government merged the TVOA with Electronic Travel Authorisation, thereby creating the e-visa.
- An e-visa also called Electronic Visa is provided in five categories—tourist, business, conference, medical, and medical attendant.
- The facility is not available for the citizens of Pakistan and they are expected to apply for regular visas from the Indian High Commission in Islamabad.

### Do You Know?

The Ministry of Home Affairs is the nodal ministry that issues visas to foreigners.

## India-US launched Hydrogen Task Force

- US-India hydrogen taskforce has been launched under the aegis of Strategic Clean Energy Partnership (SCEP), according to a statement from US India Strategic Partnership Forum (USISPF) which will boost India's energy security efforts.
- The US-India Hydrogen Task Force was constituted with the aim of serving as a forum to achieve affordable hydrogen solutions.

### Key Points:

- The US-India Hydrogen Task Force was launched by the United States Department of Energy, Union Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) and the USISPF.
- According to a draft proposal circulated by the Renewable Energy Ministry, leveraging India's green hydrogen is one of the steps for achieving energy sufficiency for the country.
- This task force will bridge government research with unique industry perspectives which will help in reaching the goals of decarbonizing, high-polluting industrial sectors and achieving a greener & cleaner planet.

## WFP-ICRISAT signed agreement on Food Security

- The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) and the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) have partnered on programmes and research to strengthen food, nutrition security, and livelihoods in India.

### Key Highlights

- Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed on programmes and research in order to improve food, nutrition security and livelihoods across India.
- It was signed between WFP India Representative, Bishow Parajuli and Director General of ICRISAT, Dr Jacqueline Hughes.
- Both WFP and ICRISAT will work in collaboration to promote research, advocacy and raise awareness regarding the traditional nutritious crops, undertaking food & nutritional security analysis.
- This agreement is a strategic partnership between WFP and ICRISAT because both are aligned to their vision of food security, especially for the poorest and vulnerable communities.

### About ICRISAT

- The International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) is a non-profit, non-political international organization that conducts agricultural research for development in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa.
- ICRISAT and its partners work towards empowering the poorest of the poor people across the world to overcome the threats of poverty, hunger, and a degraded environment through better agriculture.

## Narendra Modi: First Indian PM to chair UNSC debate



- Prime Minister Narendra Modi becomes first Indian PM to chair an open debate at the UN Security Council. This is India's first presidency in the UNSC during its 2021-22 tenure as a non-permanent member of the UNSC.
- India started its two-year tenure as a non-permanent member of UNSC on January 1, 2021. It is India's eight term on UNSC as a non-permanent member. Earlier, India has been a member of UNSC in 1950-51, 1967-68, 1972-73, 1977-78, 1984-85, 1991-92 and 2011-12.

### About United Nations Security Council (UNSC)

- UNSC is one among six principal organs of the United Nations (UN). It has been tasked with ensuring international peace and security. It also recommends admission of new members at UNSC and approves any changes to the UN Charter.
- Some of its functions and powers include- establishment of peacekeeping operations, enactment of international sanctions and authorization of military action. It is the only UN body having the authority to issue binding resolutions on member states.



## Global Education Summit held in London

The United Kingdom and Kenya have co-hosted a Global Education Summit in London with the objective to raise 5 billion USD for the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) which funds public education in up to 90 territories and countries.



### Key Highlights

- The summit was held as the governments are facing huge challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic which has caused disruptions. Due to the pandemic schools have closed abruptly in most countries.
- Many closures happened without any response plan and this has led to serious gaps in the various governments' delivery of learning via online platforms during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The disruption towards the education of children has highlighted the need for the governments of various countries to devote more resources and attention to address this longstanding inequality in the education system of the countries which have been exacerbated by the pandemic.
- To tackle these challenges which are being faced, education ministries of the countries should deliver funding that will help in achieving the international targets and protect their respective education budgets from possible cuts.
- These countries which require public education funds are home to more than 80% of the world's children who are out of school.

## UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) to be renewed



- There is discussion among member countries of UN for the renewal of the mandate of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), which expired on September 17, 2021.

### About UNAMA

- UNAMA was established on 28 March 2002 by United Nations Security Council Resolution 1401. It was basically established to assist the state and the people of Afghanistan in laying the foundations for sustainable peace and development.
- Its original mandate was to support the implementation of the Bonn Agreement of 2001.
- Reviewed annually, this mandate has been altered over time to reflect the needs of the country.
- UNAMA is an integrated mission, which means that all UN agencies, funds and programmes, work in a multidimensional and integrated manner to better assist Afghanistan according to nationally defined priorities.



### Key decisions of Bonn Agreement

- The United Nations and several other international actors played major roles in pushing the negotiations forward, and the Bonn Agreement was forwarded by the U.N. Security Council.
- Under this, the Emergency Loya Jirga (Grand Council) of 2002 established the transitional administration, a new Constitution was ratified in early 2004, and presidential and parliamentary elections were held in 2004 and 2005.

### IMF warns for 'Ricochet Impact'

- According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the struggle of emerging-market countries to emerge from a pandemic-induced economic crisis might harm developed countries.
- According to the report of IMF, the crisis is having a "Ricochet effect" on the developed and advanced countries.



- The IMF recommends that industrialized countries do all possible to guarantee better and more fair access to vaccinations, as well as fair recovery.
- Poorer nations are facing the risk of increasing interest rates even though their economies aren't growing.

### Note

Ricochet means rebound, bounce, or skip off from the surface, particularly in projectile cases.

## Greater Male Connectivity Project (GMCP) signed



- Maldives government has officially signed an agreement with Mumbai-based company AFCONS, for the construction of the Greater Male Connectivity Project (GMCP).

### About Greater Male Connectivity Project (GMCP):

- This infrastructure project involves the construction of a 6.74-km-long bridge and causeway link that will connect the Maldives capital Male with the neighbouring islands of Villingili, Gulhifalhu and Thilafushi.
- This project was funded by India in a grant of \$100 million, with a line of credit of \$400 million.
- The GMCP is not only the biggest project India is doing in the Maldives but also the biggest infrastructure project in the Maldives overall.
- This project is significant because it facilitates inter-island connectivity in the country. Also, the GMCP is concrete proof that India is a robust development partner of the Maldives in addition to being the First Responder in times of any emergency in the Maldives.

## El Salvador adopted bitcoin as legal tender

- El Salvador, a small coastal country in Central America has become the first in the world to adopt Bitcoin, as legal tender. Legal tender is the legally recognized money within a given political jurisdiction.



### Key Highlights

- Even though there were concerns regarding potential impact of legalising cryptocurrency on El Salvador's program of \$1 billion with the International Monetary Fund, the proposal was passed with a majority of 62 out of 84 possible votes.
- El Salvador has not had its own monetary policy since 2001, when a right-wing government made the US dollar the official currency. Along with Ecuador and Panama, El Salvador is currently among three nations in Latin America to have a 'dollarized economy'.

### About Bitcoin

- Introduced in 2009, it is a type of cryptocurrency that enables instant payments to anyone.
- Cryptocurrency is a specific type of virtual currency, which is decentralized and protected by cryptographic encryption techniques.
- Bitcoin, Ethereum, Ripple are a few notable examples of cryptocurrencies.
- Bitcoin is based on an open-source protocol and is not issued by any central authority.
- Originally, Bitcoin was intended to provide an alternative to fiat money and become a universally accepted medium of exchange directly between two involved parties.

## Albania, Brazil, Gabon, Ghana, UAE elected to UNSC

- Albania, Brazil, Gabon, Ghana and the United Arab Emirates were elected unopposed to the powerful UN Security Council recently as non-permanent members for the 2022-23 term.
- All the five nations were elected unopposed to the 15-member UN body. They will replace- Vietnam, Estonia, Niger, Saint Vincent, Tunisia and the Grenadines, whose terms to be ended this year.



## Regional distribution of seats in UNSC

- As per regional distribution for the 2021 election, three seats were available from African & Asian States. Gabon, Ghana and the United Arab Emirates won these three seats. Apart from that, one Latin American and Caribbean Group seat was available for which Brazil was elected. Albania won Eastern European Group seat.

### Note

Election for the non-permanent members of UNSC is held by secret ballot. Candidates require a two-thirds majority in UNGA to be elected as a non-permanent member. Five countries are elected to the Council of 15-member (UNSC) as non-permanent members for a two-year term.

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

- The US, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Uzbekistan have agreed in principle to establish a new quadrilateral diplomatic platform focused on enhancing regional connectivity.
- The parties consider long-term peace and stability in Afghanistan critical to regional connectivity and agree that peace and regional connectivity are mutually reinforcing.
- This QUAD group was announced by the administration of Biden.



### Key Points:

- All four nations- the US, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Uzbekistan intend to cooperate to expand trade, build transit links and strengthen business-to-business ties, recognising the historic opportunity to open flourishing interregional trade routes.
- The representatives from the four nations will be meeting in the coming months to determine the modalities of the cooperation with mutual consensus. The new diplomatic platform will work to expand trade, build transit links and strengthen business-to-business ties.

### Note

The four nations have agreed to meet in the coming few months to chalk out the various modalities of this QUAD cooperation with mutual consensus.

## QUAD virtual Meeting held

- Recently, Senior officials of Australia, India, Japan, U.S. met at a video conference for the first QUAD meeting since March, 2021.

### Key Highlights:

- QUAD leaders exchanged views on regional issues such as the East and South China seas, where the Chinese navy has had conflicts over territorial rights with other countries, North Korean actions, and military rule in Myanmar.
- There were also deliberation on Quadrilateral cooperation in the areas of "quality infrastructure, maritime security, counter-terrorism, cybersecurity, and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief toward the achievement of a Free and Open Indo-Pacific region.
- A special emphasis was made on their support for the "centrality" for the ASEAN grouping of South-East Asian countries in the Indo-Pacific region.
- They discussed plans to cooperate on COVID vaccines, for one billion Johnson and Johnson vaccines to be produced in India by 2022, funded by the U.S. and distributed by Japan and Australia in South East Asia.

- Representatives from nations with SCO observer status as well as SCO members attended the meeting.
- S Jaishankar, India's external affairs minister, voiced these concerns when he met with his SCO colleagues.
- Three prominent issues discussed by members were Afghanistan, public health and economic recovery

### About Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)

- SCO, also dubbed as Shanghai Pact, is a Eurasian political, economic & security alliance. Announcement for creating SCO was made on June 15, 2001 in Shanghai, China. SCO entered into force on September 19, 2003.
- Members of SCO; China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, India and Pakistan.



## SCO Dushanbe meet held



- During SCO meeting in Dushanbe, India called on members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) to act against terrorism and terror financing during a meeting in the Tajikistan capital that was dominated by the deteriorating security situation in Afghanistan.

### Key Highlights:

- The worsening security situation in Afghanistan dominated the meeting.

## Qeqertaq Avannarleq : World's Northern-most Island discovered



- Qeqertaq Avannarleq is a tiny, uninhabited and previously unknown island discovered recently off the coast of Greenland.

- Measuring 60×30 metres and with a peak of three metres above sea level, it has now become the new northernmost piece of land on Earth.
- Before this, Oodaq was marked as the Earth's northernmost terrain.
- The discovery comes at the time when Arctic nations, viz. the US, Russia, Canada, Denmark and Norway tries to take control of the North Pole and of the surrounding seabed, fishing rights and shipping routes exposed by melting ice due to climate change.

## International Day for South-South Cooperation observed

- The International Day for South-South Cooperation is observed on September 12, every year by the United Nations.
- The day highlights the efforts made by United Nations for cooperation among the developing countries.
- It is an initiative for the economic, social and political developments of the countries located in Southern region.

### About South-South Cooperation

- The South-South Cooperation refers to technical cooperation between developing countries in the Global South, i.e. a pioneering effort to strengthen diplomatic and international negotiating power among the nations, with the help of political dialogue.
- South-South collaboration helps the developing nations to share knowledge, expertise, skills, and resources in order to meet their development goals by concerted efforts.
- **Objectives of South-South Cooperation**
  - Enhancing self-reliance among developing countries and finding out creative solutions for their development problems.
  - Promoting self-reliance by exchanging experiences.
  - Recognising and responding to the problems and requirements of the least developed countries in order to enable them to achieve a greater degree of participation in international economic activities.



### Note

The day also commemorates the adoption of "Buenos Aires Plan of Action (BAPA). BAPA was adopted in 1978 to promote and implement technical cooperation among developing countries by 138 member states.

## Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project in final stage



- The Union External Affairs Ministry announced that the Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project is in the final stages; however, the project was delayed because of various challenges.

### Kaladan Road Project

- It is a US\$484 million project that connects the eastern Indian seaport of Kolkata with Sittwe seaport in Rakhine State, Myanmar through the sea route.
- The project will link the Sittwe seaport in Myanmar to Paletwa in Chin State through the Kaladan river boat route.
- The project will connect the Paletwa by road route to Mizoram in Northeast India. Currently, the Sittwe port, river dredging and Paletwa jetty projects are completed.
- Sittwe is the capital of Rakhine State, Myanmar. The city is located on an estuarial island. It lies at the confluence of rivers Kaladan, Mayu, and Lay Mro.

## Russia officially leaves Open Skies Treaty



- Russia announced that it is withdrawing from the Open Skies Treaty. The Treaty requires the signatories to carry out unarmed observation flights over each other's territory. In 2020, the US declared that it would drop the Open Skies Treaty.

### About Open Skies Treaty

- The Treaty of Open Skies was concluded in 1992 after the disintegration of the Soviet Union. It was first suggested by former US President Dwight Eisenhower in 1955 to de-escalate the Cold War.
- The deal was concluded by NATO members of the Non-Atlantic Treaty Organization and the countries of the old Warsaw Pact. In 2002, more than 35 countries ratified the pact.
- India is not a signatory of the Open Skies Treaty.

### Note

The US left the Open Skies Treaty accusing that Russia is non-compliant with the Open Skies Treaty. On the other hand, according to Russia, withdrawal of the US from the treaty has created imbalance in its implementation. This is the reason for Russia's withdrawal.

## Maitri Setu inaugurated between India and Bangladesh



- The Prime Minister of India inaugurated the 'Maitri Setu' between India and Bangladesh via video conferencing.
- He also inaugurated and laid the foundation stone of several infrastructure projects in Tripura on the occasion.

### About Maitri Setu

- The 'Maitri Setu' is a bridge that has been built in the River Feni. Feni river flows between Tripura and Bangladesh.
- The name 'Maitri Setu' has been chosen to symbolize the growing bilateral relations and friendly ties between both the countries. The construction of the bridge was done by the "National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Ltd".
- It is a 1.9 km long bridge that connects the Sabroom in India with Ramgarh in Bangladesh.

## India dropped from Chabahar Port-Zahedan Railway Line Project



- The Government of Iran has decided to drop India from the construction of the Chabahar Port-Zahedan Railway Line Project and now will be proceeding with the construction of the project on its own. The reason cited for dropping is the delay of funds from India.
- The agreement for the development of the Chabahar Port and for the construction of a 628 km railway line from Chabahar port to Zahedan (the nearest border of three countries- Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan) was signed in 2016 as a part of India's commitment in development of trade with Iran and Afghanistan.
- If India had part of this Railway Project, it would have served it as an alternative trade route with Afghanistan and the rest of Central Asian countries, bypassing Pakistan.

## National Security Bureau: China passed controversial legislation regarding Hong Kong

- China has passed a legislation that empowered the Chinese Parliament to draft security laws for Hong Kong. By establishing a National Security Bureau in Hong Kong, China will have the rights to deal with criminal cases and analyze intelligence that is related to the national security.
- In addition, bodies in all Hong Kong government departments, from finance to immigration, will be directly answerable to the central government in Beijing.

### About Hong Kong

- Hong Kong is a Special Administrative Region of China since 1997 when Britain returned its former colony to China.
- The matters related to foreign affairs and defence of Hong Kong are controlled by China, rest it has its own Executive, Legislative, and Independent Judicial Power.

Recently Released

# Reports & Indices

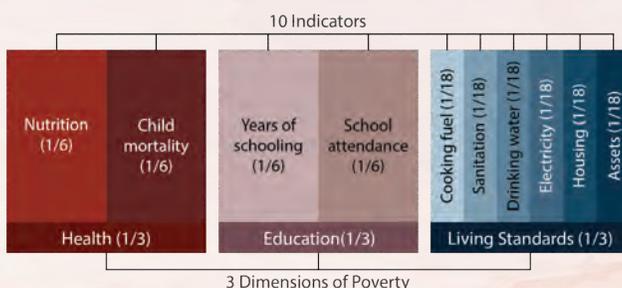
## Global TB Report, 2021

- The Global TB report 2021 was recently released by the World Health Organization (WHO).

### Key Highlights:

- WHO estimates that some 4.1 million people currently suffer from TB but have not been diagnosed with the disease or have not officially reported to national authorities. This figure is up from 2.9 million in 2019.
- The countries that contributed most to the global reduction in TB notifications between 2019 and 2020 were
  - India (41%)
  - Indonesia (14%)
  - the Philippines (12%)
  - China (8%).
- 12 other countries accounted for 93% of the total global drop in notifications.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has reversed years of global progress in reducing the number of people who die from TB, with the first year-on-year increase (of 5.6 per cent) since 2005 and the total number of deaths in 2020 returning to the level of 2017.
- The biggest impact was felt in terms of the detection of new cases. This means a large number of cases went undetected due to highly curtailed access to diagnostics and restrictions imposed to contain the pandemic.

## Global Multidimensional Poverty Index, 2021



© Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI)

- The Global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) is produced by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI).
- India ranked 62 in the Global MPI 2020 which ranked 107 countries. The MPI 2021 is to be released in July which is the month the index is released every year.

### Key Highlights:

- This report examines the level and composition of multidimensional poverty across 109 countries covering 5.9 billion people.
- As per report, 1.3 billion people are multidimensionally poor, of which around 644 million are children under age 18.
- The Scheduled Tribe group in India, which accounts for 9.4 percent of the population, is the poorest. Out of 129 million people, 65 million are living in multidimensional poverty.
- Out of 283 million scheduled caste group people, 94 million are living in multidimensional poverty.

### About Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI)

- The Multidimensional Poverty Index was launched by the UNDP and the OPHI in 2010.
- MPI is based on the idea that poverty is not unidimensional (not just depends on income and one individual may lack several basic needs like education, health etc.), rather it is multidimensional.
- The index shows the proportion of poor people and the average number of deprivations each poor person experiences at the same time.
- MPI uses three dimensions and ten indicators which are:
  - Education:** Years of schooling and child enrollment (1/6 weightage each, total 2/6);
  - Health:** Child mortality and nutrition (1/6 weightage each, total 2/6);
  - Standard of living:** Electricity, flooring, drinking water, sanitation, cooking fuel and assets (1/18 weightage each, total 2/6).

## Global Hunger Index, 2021

- India has slipped to the 101st position among 116 countries in the Global Hunger Index (GHI) 2021 from its 2020 ranking (94).
- In the 2021 edition, India has been placed behind its neighbour countries Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal.

### Key Points:

- The GHI score of India has also decreased. It was 38.8 in 2000 but now has been decreased to the range of 28.8 – 27.5 between 2012 and 2021. A total of 18 countries, including China, Kuwait and Brazil, shared the top rank with a GHI score of less than five.

## Reports &amp; Indices

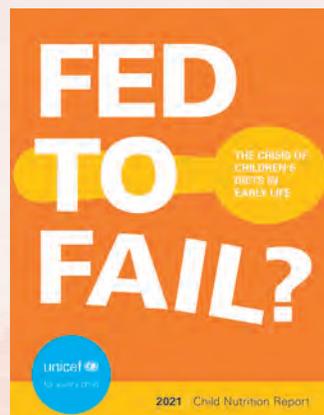
- Africa, South of the Sahara and South Asia are the world regions where hunger levels are highest.
- Drawing on data from 2016–2020, hunger is considered extremely alarming in one country (Somalia), alarming in 9 countries, and serious in 37 countries.
- In the index, eighteen countries such as China, Brazil and Kuwait, shared the top rank. They got a GHI score of less than five.

### About Global Hunger Index (GHI)

- GHI is a tool to measure and track hunger across the world, by region as well as by country.
- It is developed by a peer-reviewed annual report, jointly published by Concern Worldwide and Welthungerhilfe. It aims to trigger action to reduce hunger around the world.
- A tool designed to comprehensively measure and track hunger at global, regional, and national.
- GHI score is calculated on the basis of four indicators namely,
  - Undernourishment
  - Child wasting (share of children aged under five who are wasted i.e., those having low weight for their height).
  - Child stunting (children aged under five who are having low height for their age).
  - Child mortality (mortality rate of children aged under five).I levels.

### UNICEF's 'Fed to Fail?' Report

- As per the report "Fed to Fail? The Crisis of Children's Diets in Early Life" published by UNICEF, two in every three children between six months and two years didn't get the nutritious diet needed for healthy growth.



#### Key Findings:

- The report has found that children under the 2 years of age are not getting the food and nutrients necessary for growth, leading to irreversible developmental harm.

- Poor nutritional intake in the first two years of life can irreversibly harm children's rapidly growing bodies and brains, impacting their schooling, job prospects and futures.
- The report studied 91 countries and found that only half of the children between 6-23 months are being fed the minimum recommended number of meals every day.
- Moreover, only a third of the children consume the minimum number of food groups they need to thrive.
- Inadequate intake of nutrients at an early age puts children at risk of poor brain development, weak learning, low immunity, increased infections and potentially, death.

### WB's Migration and Development Brief Report

- According to the latest edition of the World Bank's Migration and Development Brief, despite COVID-19, remittance flows remained resilient in 2020, registering a smaller decline than previously projected.
- The report said that the remittance flows to the low-income and middle-income countries were 1.9% lower in 2020 as compared to that of 2019.

#### Key Findings:

- The reduction in remittance inflows were smaller than that of the 2009 Global Financial Crisis.
- However, the remittance inflows to China will be reduced by 30% in 2020.
- The inflows to the Caribbean and Latin countries increased by 6.5%.
- In 2019, India received 83.3 billion USD remittances. This fell by 0.2% in 2020. This was the maximum remittance from the UAE. The remittance from UAE to India was reduced by 17%.
- In Pakistan, the remittances increased by 17%. The biggest growth in remittances to Pakistan came from Saudi Arabia.

#### Note

Remittance is a sum of money sent from one country to another country. It can be business payments or remittances paid to a family member and friends.

## Reports &amp; Indices

**ILO- UNICEF Report on Child Labour**

- For the first time, the International Labour Organization and UNICEF jointly published a report Child Labour: 2020 global estimates, trends, and the road forwards to end child labour.

**Key Findings:**

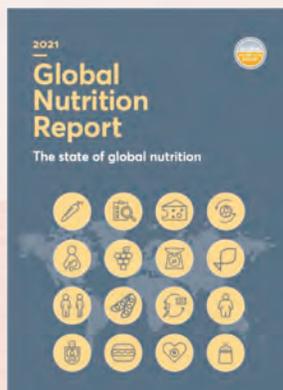
- As per the report, there has been a 38 per cent decrease in child labour in the last decade, however, 152 million children are still trapped in child labour. World has marked rise in child labour in two decades.
- Report highlights, coronavirus crisis might push millions more youngsters toward child labour.
- As of 2020, number of child labour stands at 160 million. It has increased by 8.4 million in four years.
- Number started increasing before COVID-19 pandemic hit, marking dramatic reversal of downward trend where numbers decreased by 94 million in between 2000 and 2016.
- Number of children, between ages 5 and 17 doing hazardous work, has increased. About 79 million children were considered to be engaged in hazardous work. This could affect a child's development, education or health.

**Note**

World Day Against Child Labour was launched by the ILO in 2002 on 12 June with an aim to raise awareness and end child labour on a global scale.

**Global Nutrition Report (GNR), 2021**

- India has made no progress on anaemia and childhood wasting according to the 2021 Global Nutrition Report (GNR, 2021).

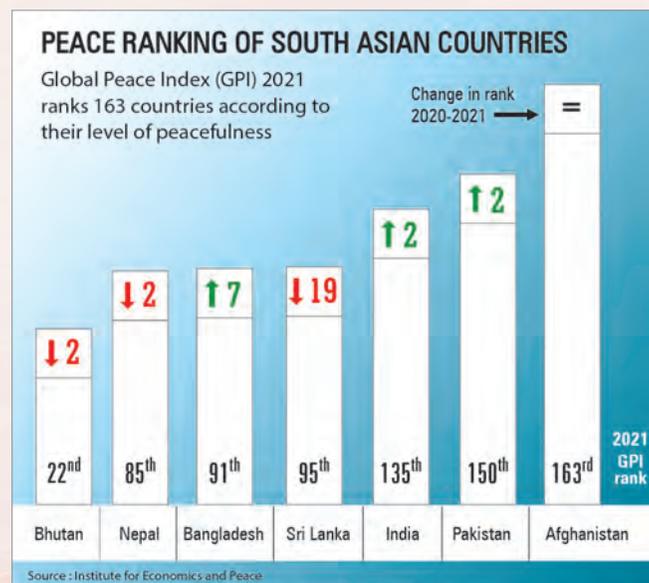
**Key findings:**

- Globally, most countries are off track to meet five out of six global maternal, infant and young children nutrition (MIYCN) targets, on stunting, wasting, low birth weight, anaemia and childhood obesity.

- They are also off track for meeting all diet-related non-communicable disease (NCD) targets, on salt intake, raised blood pressure, adult obesity and diabetes.
- The only countries on course to meet both raised blood pressure and diabetes targets are a few high-income Western countries.

**About Global Nutrition Report**

- The Global Nutrition Report was conceived following the first Nutrition for Growth Initiative Summit (N4G) in 2013 as a mechanism for tracking the commitments made by 100 stakeholders spanning governments, aid donors, civil society, the UN and businesses.
- It is the world's leading independent assessment of the state of global nutrition.
- It is data-led and produced each year to cast a light on progress and challenges.

**Global Peace Index, 2021**

- India has been ranked 135 among 163 countries in the Global Peace Index 2021.
- Bhutan and Nepal are first and second most peaceful in this region. Bangladesh was 91th out of 163 countries across the world while being 3rd in South Asia.
- Pakistan witnessed the most improvement in peacefulness with 150th rank globally and 6th in the South Asia region.

## Reports &amp; Indices

## Key Points:

- 163 independent states and territories were ranked for their level of peacefulness. India climbed up 2 places to be ranked at 135.
- GPI is the world's leading measure of global peacefulness. Report provides a comprehensive data-driven analysis on trends in peace, its economic value and recommendations on how to develop peaceful societies.
- Iceland has been the most peaceful country worldwide since 2008 and other top countries like Denmark, New Zealand, Portugal and Slovenia.
- Afghanistan is the least peaceful country again for the fourth consecutive year followed by Yemen, Syria, South Sudan, and Iraq.

## Note

The Global Peace Index (GPI) is published by the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP). This index is developed in partnership with the Economist Intelligence Unit, which collates data collected from various think tanks and experts from peace institutes.

## World Social Protection Report, 2020-22



International  
Labour  
Organization

- World Social Protection Report 2020-22 was recently released by International Labour Organisation (ILO). The report examined the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on social protection.

### Key Findings of report

- The report found that an additional spending required to ensure minimum social protection for all and reduce the financing gap has increased by 30 per cent since the start of the pandemic.
- As per report, more than half of the world population are not getting any form of social protection.
- Only 47 per cent of the global population had effective access

to one social protection benefit, in 2020 while 53 per cent (4.1 billion people) had no protection at all.

- 45 per cent of women with new-borns receive cash maternity benefit.
- One in three people with severe disabilities receive disability benefits.
- People in Europe and Central Asia are among the best covered population. 84 per cent of populations in Europe and Central Asia are having access to at least one benefit.
- In the USA, the rate of social protection is 64.3 per cent.
- In Asia, the Pacific and the Arab States, lesser than half of people are covered under protection.
- In Africa, only 17.4 per cent of the people are getting at least one social protection.



Social protection comprises of access to healthcare and income security in cases of unemployment, old age, inability to work, and for families with children.

## COVID-19 in news

### OMICRON

#### *New variant of concern*

- The World Health Organization (WHO) declared the recently-discovered B.1.1.529 strain of COVID-19 to be a variant of concern and renamed it 'Omicron'.

#### **B.1.1.529 strain:**

- The variant was first reported to the WHO from South Africa on November 24.
- The epidemiological situation in South Africa has been characterized by three distinct peaks in reported cases, the latest of which was predominantly the Delta variant.
- In recent weeks, infections have increased steeply, coinciding with the detection of the B.1.1.529 variant.
- This variant has a large number of mutations, some of which are concerning.

### Coronavirus

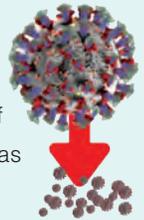
Coronavirus causes an infectious disease with symptoms like flu and gastro intestinal problems in human. They have great genetic variability, meaning, they can overcome barriers between different species. Coronaviruses were first found in human in 1960s.

The virus has protrusions on its surface. This makes the virus look like an emperor's crown and hence the name Coronavirus. The protrusions are made of proteins. Apart from human, the coronavirus can also infect cattle, dogs, pigs, camels, birds and hedgehogs apart from humans.

**COVID-19** On February 11, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) announced a new name for this new strain of Coronavirus- "COVID-19". WHO has chosen the name with no reference to a particular geographical location. According to WHO, the name was chosen in such a way that it does not affect normal lives of a country.

#### **Double Mutant Variant**

- The National Institute of Virology recently shared data showing a unique "double mutant" coronavirus variant with a combination of mutations not seen anywhere else in the world. The double mutant has been classified as B.1.617 recently.
- Genome sequencing of a section of virus samples by the Indian SARS-CoV-2 Consortium on Genomics (INSACOG), revealed the presence of two mutations, E484Q and L452R together, in virus samples from states such as Maharashtra, Delhi, Punjab and Gujarat.
- The INSACOG will submit details of this variant to a global repository called Global Initiative on Sharing Avian Influenza Data (GISAID) and, if it merits, classify it as a Variant of Concern (VOC).
- India recently became the second most COVID-19 infected country in the world. This was mainly due to the double mutant variant as they spread faster.

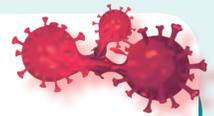


#### **Triple Mutant Variant**

- The 'triple mutant variant' or the 'Bengal strain' is a new variant of the COVID-19 virus that has been detected in India.
- Experts say this variant is more infectious and is spreading rapidly. It is predominantly circulating in West Bengal.

#### **Combination of Variant:**

- The Triple Mutant Variant has evolved from double mutation. In the triple mutant variant, three different COVID-19 strains have combined to form a new variant.
- As the name suggests, a 'triple mutant variant' is formed when three mutations of a virus combine to form a new variant. In this case, the three mutations are:
  - A deletion and two changes in spike protein
  - Deletion of H146 and Y145
  - Mutation in E484K and D614G in spike protein
- The 'triple mutant variant' is the second lineage of SARS-CoV-2 virus to be identified in India. It is being called 'B.1.618', and is mostly circulating in West Bengal.
- Earlier, a 'double mutant variant' of the virus was detected in India. It was officially named as 'B.1.617'.



## Govt. launched Digital India Land Record Modernisation Programme (DILRMP)

- Recently, the Union Minister for Rural Development and Panchayati Raj inaugurated 'Bhumi Samvaad' - National Workshop on Digital India Land Record Modernisation Programme (DILRMP).
- The discussion was held primarily on the progress of different components of the Digital Land Record Modernization Programme and best practices undertaken by different States/UTs to share with other States.



### About Digital India Land Records Modernisation Programme(DILRMP)

- In 2008, two schemes viz, Computerisation of Land Records (CLR) and Strengthening of Revenue Administration and Updating of Land Records (SRA&ULR) were merged into a modified scheme named DILRMP.
- It is a Central Sector Scheme that has been extended up to 2020-21 at a total cost of Rs. 950 crores.
- It attempts to build upon the commonalities that exist in the arena of land records in various States to develop an appropriate Integrated Land Information Management System (ILIMS) across the country.
- ILIMS integrates all the processes and land records databases with the banks, financial institutions, circle rates, Registration Offices and other sectors.
- It aims to replace the present deeds registration and presumptive title system with that of conclusive titling with a title guarantee.

## IREDA launched Whistleblower Portal

- Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency (IREDA) has launched a 'Whistleblower Portal', as a part of 'Vigilance Awareness Week 2021'.

### Key Points:

- IREDA is a PSU under the Ministry of New & Renewable Energy (MNRE). The latest issue of Vigilance journal 'Pahal' was also released by IREDA.
- Through this portal, IREDA employees can raise concerns related to fraud, corruption, abuse of The whistle-blower portal is a part of IREDA's "zero tolerance" of corruption. IREDA has a Good and Clean Governance policy that stresses the importance of transparency and procedural fairness.

### About Whistleblowing

- According to the Companies Act, whistleblowing is an action aimed at drawing the attention of stakeholders to instances of unethical practices in an organization.
- The Law Commission of India in 2001, recommended that, In order to eliminate corruption, a law to protect whistleblowers was necessary. It had drafted a bill as well to address this issue.
- In simple words, A whistleblower can be anyone who chooses to expose wrong practices and has evidence to support the allegations.
- The RTI Act, 2005 is a 'twin sister' of whistleblowing. The Act can expose illegal activities.

## DoT allowed 5G trials in India

- DoT has allowed 5G trials in rural and urban areas of Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Kolkata, Pune and Hyderabad, and Gujarat.
- The fifth generation mobile network, or 5G, is the next level of mobile network that will shape the Fourth Industrial Revolution, or Industrial 4.0, quality of service delivery, innovation, etc.



### About 5G technology

- 5G or fifth generation is the latest upgrade in the long-term evolution (LTE) mobile broadband networks.
- 5G mainly works in 3 bands, namely low, mid and high-frequency spectrum all of which have their own uses as well as limitations. The low band spectrum has shown great promise in terms of coverage and speed of internet and data exchange, the maximum speed is limited to 100 Mbps.
- The mid-band spectrum, on the other hand, offers higher speeds compared to the low band but has limitations in terms of coverage area and penetration of signals. The high-band spectrum offers the highest speed of all three bands, but has extremely limited coverage and signal penetration strength.

### 5Gi

- 5Gi is basically a Made in India 5G standard created through a joint collaboration between IIT Hyderabad and Madras (Chennai).

- 5Gi uses millimetre wave technology to provide high-speed internet connectivity.
- 5Gi offers more range at a lower frequency, which is the opposite of 5G.

### Log4j shell : A cybersecurity flaw

- A new vulnerability named 'Log4j shell' is being touted as one of the worst cybersecurity flaws to have been discovered.



#### Key Points:

- The vulnerability is dubbed Log4 Shell and is officially CVE-2021-44228. CVE number is the unique number given to each vulnerability discovered across the world.
- It is based on an open-source logging library used in most applications by enterprises and even government agencies.
- The exploits for this vulnerability are already being tested by hackers and it grants them access to an application, and could potentially let them run malicious software on a device or servers.
- The problem impacts Log4j 2 versions which is a very common logging library used by applications across the world. Logging lets developers see all the activity of an application.

### Autosomal DNA technique in news

- A technique based on 'Autosomal DNA' has been used for the first time to identify the great-grandson and closest living relative of Sitting Bull.

#### Key Points:

- Autosomal DNA is a term used in genetic genealogy to describe DNA that is inherited from the autosomal chromosomes. An autosome is any of the numbered chromosomes, as opposed to the sex chromosomes.
- A person inherits half of autosomal DNA from the father and a half from the mother which means genetic matches can be checked irrespective of whether an ancestor is on the father or mother's side of the family
- The autosomal DNA technique can be used even when very limited genetic data are available.



- Autosomal DNA tests can be used to confirm relationships with a high level of accuracy for parent/child relationships and all relationships up to the second cousin level.

#### Note

Sitting Bull is a prominent 19th-century Native American leader. He is most famous for his victory over US General George Armstrong Custer in the Battle of the Little Bighorn River in 1876.

### Lunar Crater named after Matthew Henson



- The International Astronomical Union (IAU) has named a crater at the Moon's south pole after Arctic explorer Matthew Henson, a black man who discovered and conquered the world's top (Arctic) in 1909.

#### Key Points:

- Hansen Crater is located at the south pole of the Moon between de Gerlache and Sverdrup craters.
- This is the same area on the Moon where NASA's "Artemis program" aims to land its lunar explorers.
- Matthew Henson was at the forefront of the group's pole exploration during Perry's expedition to reach the North Pole in the Arctic region.
- Artemis Programme was launched by NASA which aims to land the next slate of lunar explorers on the Henson Crater. They will be selected from NASA's increasingly diverse astronaut pool.

#### Note

International Astronomical Union (IAU) is a non-governmental organisation set up with the objective of advancing astronomy in all aspects such as promoting astronomical research, outreach, education, and development. IAU was founded in 1919 with its headquarter in Paris, France.

In news

## Various Viruses

### Parvovirus

- Nearly 2,000 pets and stray dogs in Amravati city were affected by canine parvovirus.

<b>WHAT IS IT?</b> ▶ Parvovirus infection is a highly contagious viral illness among dogs		<b>PREVENTION</b> ▶ Compulsory vaccination of puppies within 6 to 8 weeks ▶ Puppies must not be allowed to mix with other dogs ▶ Owners must dispose of feces immediately to avoid spread of intestinal parasites to other dogs
<b>How it spreads?</b> ▶ Through fecal-oral route ▶ Through contact with infected dogs		<b>SYMPTOMS ASSOCIATED WITH PARVO-VIRUS</b> ▶ Vomiting ▶ Drastic weight loss ▶ Bloody diarrhea ▶ Lethargy

### Parvovirus

- It is a highly contagious viral disease that can also be life-threatening in puppies and dogs.
- Parvovirus affects the intestinal tract of canines with puppies being more susceptible.
- Symptoms:**
  - Bloody diarrhoea, vomiting, drastic weight loss, dehydration and lethargy are some of the symptoms. The virus has reported a 90 per cent mortality rate.
  - The virus has reported a 90 per cent mortality rate.
- The highly contagious virus spreads through direct contact with an infected dog or by indirect contact with a contaminated object, including the hands and clothing of people who handle infected dogs.
- It has no cure and inoculating a puppy or a dog gives them a fighting chance against the infection.

### Norovirus

- Recently, the rare Norovirus infection was reported in some 13 students of a veterinary college in the Wayanad district of Kerala.



### Norovirus

- Norovirus is a very contagious virus. Anyone can get infected and sick with norovirus.
- Norovirus illness is not related to the flu.
- Transmission:**
  - Having direct contact with an infected person
  - Consuming contaminated food or water
  - Touching contaminated surfaces and then putting unwashed hands in the mouth

### Symptoms:

- Diarrhoea
- Vomiting
- Nausea
- Stomach pain

### Prevention:

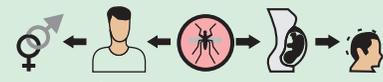
- Drinking water sources need to be hygienic.
- Wash the hands often.
- Everyone should be vigilant.
- Proper prevention and treatment can cure the disease quickly.

### Zika Virus

- With a rise in the number of Zika virus cases in Uttar Pradesh, doctors have advised that people should avoid all non-essential travel to areas reporting cases.

#### THE ZIKA VIRUS

Virus is transmitted by *Aedes aegypti* mosquito, the same mosquito that transmits dengue and chikungunya. Its name comes from the Zika forest of Uganda, where the virus was first isolated in 1947.



It can be transmitted through sexual interactions as well.

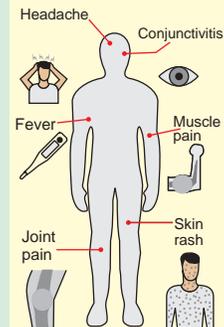


In pregnant women, Zika can cause birth defects such as microcephaly-unusually small head - and other brain abnormalities in babies. The infection can also cause Guillain-Barre syndrome, a rare neurological disorder that causes paralysis.

**THE ZIKA VIRUS**  
There is no treatment or vaccine for the Zika infection.



#### SYMPTOMS

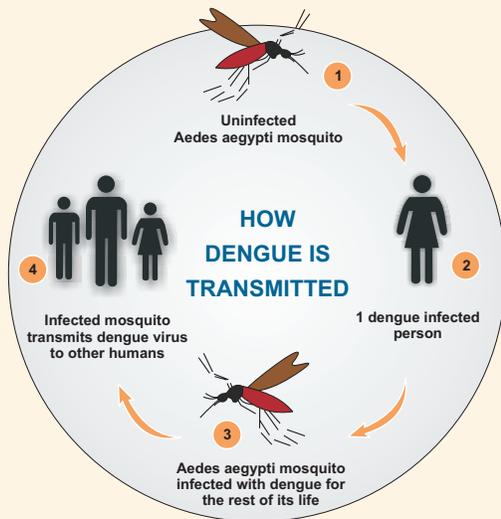


### About Zika Virus

- Mosquito-borne virus transmitted by *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes which also transmit 3 other vector-borne diseases – Chikungunya, dengue and yellow fever.
- It also spreads through blood transfusion and sexual contact.
- First identified in 1947 in Zika Forest, Uganda from where it derives its name.
- Pregnant women infected with the Zika virus may give birth to babies with severe brain damage or serious birth defects i.e. neurological disorders and foetal deformation known as Microcephaly in which infants are born with abnormally small heads.
- There is no specific treatment or vaccine currently available to treat Zika.
- WHO declared the Zika virus and its suspected link to birth defects as an international public health emergency.

## Dengue virus

- Researchers in Indonesia have found a way to fight disease-bearing mosquitoes by breeding a species of the insect which carries a kind of bacteria wolbachia that prevents viruses like dengue from growing inside them.



- Wolbachia is a common bacteria which is not found in dengue-carrying *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes.
- Results show that deploying mosquitoes with Wolbachia reduced dengue cases by as much as 77% and hospitalizations by up to 86%.

### About Dengue

- It is commonly known as break-bone fever is a flu-like illness caused by the Dengue virus. It is caused when an *Aedes* mosquito carrying the virus bites a healthy person.
- This disease is mainly found in the tropical and subtropical regions of the world.
- There is no specific treatment for dengue. Early detection of disease progression associated with severe dengue, and access to proper medical care lowers fatality rates of severe dengue to below 1%.

### Note

Wolbachia is a common bacteria that occurs naturally in 60% of insect species, including some mosquitoes, fruit flies, moths, dragonflies and butterflies.

## Govt. launched Heli-borne Survey Technology

- Union Minister, Dr Jitendra Singh recently launched state-of-the-art Heli-borne Survey Technology.
- This project has been developed with the aim of mapping potential groundwater sources and its management in providing safe drinking water to people in the water scarce arid regions of India.

### About Heli-borne Survey Technology

- The Heli-borne geophysical mapping technique of CSIR-NGRI provides a high-resolution 3D image of the subsurface up to a depth of 500 metres below the ground.
- The main advantages of the Heliborne geophysical survey is that it is fast, highly data dense, precise and economical.
- Survey will help in utilizing groundwater for drinking purposes.

### Note

In the first phase, the Arid area of Rajasthan, Punjab, Gujarat and Haryana are being taken up for the heli-borne survey.

## Department of Biotechnology launched Project SWADESH

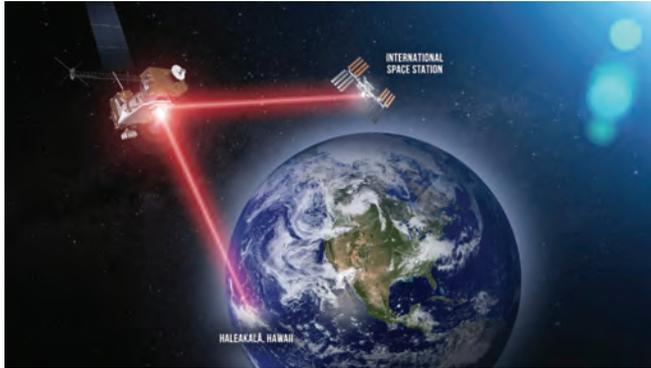
- DBT-National Brain Research Centre (DBT-NBRC) has recently developed the project SWADESH.

### 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 (Fig. 1) under one platform.
- SWADESH proposes a big-data architecture that manages and analyzes six modules, namely neurodegenerative [AD, mild cognitive impairment (MCI), and Parkinson's disease (PD)], neuropsychiatric (schizophrenia and bipolar disorder), neurodevelopmental (autism and epilepsy), COVID-19-related disorders, other disorders, and healthy subjects.
- SWADESH is supported by a JAVA-based workflow environment and Python.

## NASA launched Laser Communications Relay Demonstration (LCRD)

- NASA launched its new Laser Communications Relay Demonstration (LCRD). It is NASA's first-ever laser communications system from Cape Canaveral Space Force Station in Florida.



### About LCRD:

- Laser Communications Relay Demonstration (LCRD) will help NASA to test optical communication in space.
- LCRD is a technology demonstration that will pave the way for future optical communications missions.
- The LCRD payload is hosted onboard the US Department of Defense's Space Test Program Satellite 6 (STPSat-6).
- It will be in a geosynchronous orbit, over 35,000 km above Earth.
- Currently, most NASA spacecraft use radio frequency communications to send data. Optical communications will help increase the bandwidth 10 to 100 times more than radio frequency systems.

## NASA's Lucy Mission launched



- NASA's Lucy Mission launched to the Planet Jupiter. The mission of the spacecraft would be to study the Trojan Asteroid for initial life traces on Earth.

- Mission Lucy had been launched with the objective of investigating the group of rocky bodies that are circling the Sun in two swarms- one preceding Jupiter and the other trailing behind it.
- Spacecraft was launched from "Cape Canaveral Space Force Station, Florida".

### About Lucy Mission

- NASA's Lucy mission includes three Earth gravity assists and visits to eight asteroids called Jupiter's Trojan.
- Lucy took off from the Earth aboard the Atlas V 401 rocket.
- The mission was conceived seven years ago as a mission to two asteroids. However, it was expanded to many proportions, now that it would be covering seven asteroids.

### Note

Trojans are small celestial bodies or asteroids, sharing the orbit of larger one. They remain in a stable orbit, nearly 60° ahead or behind the main body.

## Digi Saksham Programme launched

- The Ministry of Labour and Employment, Labour and Microsoft India have jointly launched a digital skilled platform 'DigiSaksham' to enhance youth employability.
- This digital skills programme was launched with the objective of enhancing the employability of youth by improving their digital skills which has become an essential thing in an increasingly technology driven era.
- Programme will be implemented in the field by "Aga Khan Rural Support Programme India (AKRSP-I)".



### Key Highlights:

- 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 ([www.ncs.gov.in](http://www.ncs.gov.in)).
- 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.
- Programme will be implemented in the field by "Aga Khan Rural Support Programme India (AKRSP-I)".

- Under the DigiSaksham initiative, 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).
- The ILT training which is in person training would be conducted at the Model Career Centres (MCCs) and National Career Service Centres (NCSC) for SCs/STs across the country.

### AIIA developed Bal Raksha Kit

- The All India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA), under the Ministry of Ayush, has developed an immunity boosting 'Bal Raksha Kit' to protect the children up to the age of 16 from the viral infection till the time a vaccine is available.



#### Key Points:

- Kit comprises a syrup made of basil, giloy, cinnamon, liquorice and dry grapes, which have amazing medicinal qualities, apart from Annu oil, Sitopaladi and Chyawanprash whose regular consumption increases the immunity level among the children.
- The kit aims to help amplify the immunity of children to help them fight SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) infection and keep them healthy.
- This kit is significant because no COVID-19 vaccine is available for the children in India yet.

#### Note

This kit has been developed under the strict guidelines of the ministry of Ayush while it was manufactured by Indian Medicines Pharmaceutical Corporation Limited (IMPCL) in Uttarakhand.

### SACRED: Portal launched for senior citizens

- The Vice President of India launched the 'SACRED Portal' to connect senior citizens with job providers in the private sector to cater to senior citizens seeking job opportunities..
- Senior Able Citizens for Re-Employment in Dignity (SACRED) is the name of the portal created by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.
- Portal has been developed in order to provide a platform for senior citizens in India seeking employment opportunities.

#### Key Highlights:

- **Aim:** To devise ways to ensure Senior Citizens live healthy, happy, empowered, dignified and self-reliant life

- **Developed by:** The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.
- **Eligibility:** Citizens above 60 years of age can register on the portal and find jobs and work opportunities
- **Funding:** An amount of 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.
- The portal is shaped on the recommendations of the Empowered Expert Committee (EEC) report on start-ups for the elderly.

#### Note

International Day of Older Persons was observed on October 1, 2021 under the Theme- "Digital Equity for All Ages". The United Nations General Assembly has also declared 2021-2030 the "Decade of Healthy Aging".

### Covaxin approved for emergency use in 2-18 year olds

- Bharat Biotech's Covaxin has received the Subject Expert Committee recommendation for emergency use in children between the ages of 2 to 18 years.
- Covaxin is the country's first indigenous, whole-virion, inactivated vaccine developed by Bharat Biotech in collaboration with the Indian Medical Research Council (ICMR) and the National Institute of Virology (NIV).
- If given the green signal, it will emerge as the first COVID-19 vaccine globally to be used for vaccinating children as young as 2 years.

#### About Covaxin

- Covaxin is codenamed as BBV152. It is an inactivated virus-based COVID-19 vaccine. It was developed by Bharat Biotech in association with the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR).
- Vaccine is usually considered effective if the estimate is more than 50% with a more than 30% lower limit of the 95% confidence interval.
- Bharat Biotech reported that Covaxin is 64 percent effective against asymptomatic cases, 78% effective against symptomatic cases, 93% effective against severe infection while 65% effective against the Delta variant of coronavirus.

### Union Govt. launched Vikas Portal

- Recently, the Union Minister for Rural Development and Panchayati Raj launched MIS (Management Information System) Vikas Portal for rankings of States/UTs in Land Acquisition Projects under RFCTLARR Act, 2013.
- This portal is a result of the vision of the Prime Minister of India to give impetus to the government's Gati Shakti Mission.

#### Key Points:

- The Department of Land Resources developed this MIS portal to capture information on various parameters of land acquisition, required for ranking of the State/UTs, which is a software-driven program to submit information by respective State/UTs on land acquisition for developmental projects.
- The portal is developed in house by the NIC team of the department with zero cost.
- MIS portal will show data and figures and it will show the speed of the development in the country.
- In the first phase, land acquisition under RFCTLARR Act, 2013 undertaken from 01.01.2014 onwards will be covered for ranking purposes and this will be a continuous process.
- The suggestions/inputs received from the States/UTs have been considered and incorporated in the parameters for rankings.

#### About RFCTLARR Act, 2013

- Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013( RFCTLARR Act, 2013) replaces the colonial Land Acquisition Act, 1894.
- The new law gives people a say in land acquisition and makes the process participative, humane and transparent.
- It promises to put an end to forcible acquisitions, enhances compensation to landowners, resettles and rehabilitates families displaced by land acquisition and gives the gram sabha decision-making powers in land acquisition.
- It puts a check on the government from indiscriminately acquiring land for uncertain public purposes.

### NASA to launch Double Asteroid Redirection Test (DART) Mission



- The American Space Agency, NASA launched "asteroid-killing Double Asteroid Redirection Test (DART) spacecraft". The spacecraft launched, aboard SpaceX's Falcon 9 rocket.

#### Key Points:

- The Double Asteroid Redirection Test (DART) mission is directed by NASA to the Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Laboratory (APL) with support from several NASA centers: the Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL), Goddard Space Flight Center (GSFC), Johnson Space Center (JSC), Glenn Research Center (GRC), and Langley Research Center (LaRC).
- DART is a planetary defense-driven test of technologies for preventing an impact of Earth by a hazardous asteroid.
- DART is the first demonstration of the kinetic impactor technique to change the motion of an asteroid in space.

#### Note

The DART spacecraft comprises a compact Roll-Out Solar Arrays (ROSA) and a Didymos Reconnaissance & Asteroid Camera for Optical (DRACO) navigation.

### PM launched Indian Space Association

- Recently, the Indian Space Association (ISpA) was launched by the Prime Minister to increase private sector participation in the Indian space domain.



**Key Highlights:**

- Indian Space Association (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.
- ISpA will help in making India self-reliant, technologically advanced and a leading player in the space arena.
- ISpA is represented by leading home grown and global corporations with advanced capabilities in space and satellite technologies.

**'Trishul' and 'Garuda': Long haul freight trains**

- Railways successfully operated two long haul freight trains called "Trishul" and "Garuda" for the first time in South-Central Railway (SCR).

**Key Highlights:**

- These trains are twice or multiple times longer than the normal composition of freight trains and provide a very effective solution to the problem of capacity constraints in critical sections.
- Trishul is the first long haul train of South Central Railway (SCR) and consists of 177 wagons, or equal to three freight trains. It was launched from Kondapalli station of Vijayawada division to Khurda division of the East Coast Railway.
- SCR followed it up with the running of yet another similar train 'Garuda' from Raichur of Guntakal division to Manuguru of Secunderabad division.
- Both the long-haul trains had empty open wagons to be used to load coal meant for predominantly thermal power stations.

**Note**

South Central Railway is one among the 18 zones of Indian Railways. Its jurisdiction is spread over Telangana, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh.

**Indian Scientists developed Laser-based Clad Coating Technology (LCCT)**

- Recently, Indian Scientists have developed a unique Laser-based Clad Coating Technology (LCCT) that provides improved protection to the boiler parts in thermal power plants.

- Laser cladding, also known as laser metal deposition, is a technique for adding one material to the surface of another.
- Laser cladding involves the feeding of a stream of metallic powder or wire into a melt pool that is generated by a laser beam as it scans across the target surface, depositing a coating of the chosen material.

**Benefits:**

- It can enhance the life of boiler parts by 2- 3 times compared to currently used surfacing technologies.
- It has been found that this technology is suitable, not only for boiler parts of thermal power plants but also for any engineering application involving high temperature erosive and corrosive environments.

**Govt. launched Climate Resilience Information System and Planning Tool**

- The Union Minister of Rural Development has launched the Climate Resilience Information System and Planning (CRISP-M) Tool.

**Key Points:**

- CRISP-M is a web and mobile phone-based Geographic Information System(GIS) aided tool that has been designed to help communities make climate-smart decisions.
- The tool will help integrate climate information in the GIS-based planning and implementation of Mahatma Gandhi NREGA.
- This tool will be used in seven states where the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), Government of UK and Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India are jointly working towards climate resilience.
- The states are Bihar, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Odisha and Rajasthan.

**Note**

This tool will be used in seven states namely, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha and Rajasthan, for developing climate resilience.

**AIIMS launched 'Healthy Smile' Mobile App**

- A bilingual mobile application 'Healthy Smile' was launched by AIIMS in a bid to raise awareness on maintaining oral hygiene among children.
- This app is an initiative of the Department of Paediatric and Preventive Dentistry, with the help of AIIMS intramural research grant.

### Key Facts

- This app is an initiative of the Department of Paediatric and Preventive Dentistry, with the help of AIIMS intramural research grant.
- The app consists of a musical 2-minute brushing timer with “motivational songs”, it also has brushing demonstration videos, preventive dental care tips, and so on.
- App will provide information on how they can keep dental decay under control through simple home care measures.

### Note

This app was launched after realizing the fact that “dental caries was found to be prevalent” among the paediatric population of India up to the extent of 40-50 percent.

### e-Prisons databases to be updated

- Recently, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has advised the States to update the ‘ePrisons’ and ‘Interoperable Criminal Justice System’ databases.

### Key Points:

- It aims at computerization of the functioning of prisons in the country.
- It is a cloud-based product designed with easy to use GUI and embedded with comprehensive security features.
- It is developed by National Informatics Centre (NIC), Ministry of Electronics & IT. It has been operationalised in all States and Union Territories.
- The e-Prisons uses data maintained by the States and Union Territories on the National Prisons Information Portal as per protocols notified for e-Prisons.
- It provides vital information about the inmates, lodged in the prisons, in a real-time environment to the prison officials and other entities involved in the Criminal Justice System.

### About National Prisons Information Portal

- It is a citizen-centric portal showing statistical data of various prisons in the country.
- Visitors can book their visit request to meet their ward inside the prison through this portal. Grievances with respect to their wards inside the prisons can also be submitted through the portal.

### Note

Kara Bazaar Portal for showcasing and selling the products manufactured in various prisons of the country by inmates.

### Banni: India's First Buffalo IVF Calf

- India saw the birth of its first IVF calf of a Buffalo breed namely Banni in Gujarat's Kutch region.
- The process was carried out to enhance the number of genetically superior buffaloes to increase milk production.
- Banni buffaloes are also known as “Kutchi” or “Kundi”.



### Key Points

- This breed of buffaloes is usually bred and preserved by a local community found in Kutch, called the ‘Maldharis’.
- Banni Buffaloes has higher milk production potentials and is also more disease resilient when compared to other common breeds.
- They are also well-adapted to survive extreme weather conditions such as water scarcity, frequent droughts, low humidity and high temperatures.

### About In-vitro fertilization (IVF)

- IVF is a process of fertilization where an egg is combined with sperm outside the body. It is a type of assisted reproductive technology used for infertility treatment and gestational surrogacy.
- The process involves monitoring and stimulating a female ovulatory process, removing an ovum or ova (egg or eggs) from the female ovaries and letting sperm fertilise them in a liquid in a laboratory.

### Metaverse : Facebook rebranded itself as Meta

- Facebook has rebranded itself with a new name to reflect its focus on building the metaverse. This will create 10,000 jobs in the European Union in the next five years to work on futuristic technology.

### Key Points:

- The term ‘metaverse’ was coined by American writer Neal Stephenson in his 1992 novel Snow Crash, where a 3D virtual world was inhabited by the avatars of real people.
- It is a broad term. It generally refers to shared virtual world environments which people can access via the internet.
- The metaverse is a digital reality that combines aspects of social media, online gaming, augmented reality (AR), virtual reality (VR), and cryptocurrencies to allow users to interact virtually.

- The definition of the metaverse is evolving, but today it refers to real-time 3D virtual spaces, where users can meet, create, socialise, work, buy goods and services and attend events with other people who are not in the same physical space.

### Trojan malware in news

- According to India's federal cyber security agency, CERT-In, A banking has been detected in Indian cyberspace attacks bank customers using Android phones and has already targeted those from more than 27 public and private sector banks.
- The phishing malware is posing as an "income tax refund". It can jeopardise the privacy of sensitive customer data and lead to large-scale attacks and financial frauds.
- Phishing is a social engineering computer virus attack to steal personal data.



#### Key Points:

- A trojan is any type of malicious program disguised as a legitimate one. Often, they are designed to steal sensitive information (login credentials, account numbers, financial information, credit card information, and the like) from users.
- Banking trojans are a specific kind of trojan malware. Once installed onto a client machine, banking trojans use a variety of techniques to create botnets, steal credentials, inject malicious code into browsers, or steal money.
- **Functioning:** It collects user information by abusing the Accessibility Service of Android and overlaying a fake screen on top of a genuine app. It uses Android DPC (Device Policy Controller) to provide access to other permissions.

### CSIR-CMERI developed Solar DC Cooking System

- CSIR-CMERI, handed over Solar DC Cooking System to the Asansol Braille Academy, West Bengal.

#### Key Points:

- This Solar DC Cooking System is a "Solar Energy based Cooking System" that comprises a solar PV panel, battery bank, charge controller and cooking oven.



- Technology provides a Clean Cooking Environment, fast & uniform heating and Inverter-Less Direct Operation.
- It has a potential to save 1 ton Carbon Dioxide emissions per year per household.
- This system has 20-25% better efficiency and is more Economical as compared to the Conventional Solar based Cooking Systems that loses efficiency owing to AC-DC conversion.

#### Significance:

- Solar DC Cooking System has 20-25% better efficiency and is more Economical in comparison with Conventional Solar based Cooking Systems which loses efficiency owing to AC-DC conversion.
- The system can also substantially curb carbon dioxide emissions, as even LPG usage emits CO<sub>2</sub>. It may help save 290 million tons of carbon dioxide emissions.

### PM Modi launched National Hydrogen Mission

PM Narendra Modi launched the National Hydrogen Mission on the occasion of India's 75th Independence Day. The Mission aims to aid the government in meeting its climate targets and making India a green hydrogen hub.



#### Key Points

- The mission seeks to make India a global hub for green hydrogen production and exports.
- On the occasion, PM stressed that, for India to progress and become self-reliant, it becomes important to become energy independent.
- In the line, India is considering making it mandatory for fertilizer plants and oil refineries to buy green hydrogen under its plans to cut dependence on fossil fuels.

#### Green Hydrogen

- Green hydrogen is produced by splitting water into hydrogen and oxygen with the help of electrolyzer which is powered by electricity from renewable energy sources like wind and solar.
- Hydrogen is a colourless, odourless gas found in Earth's atmosphere. It is used for industrial uses like petroleum refining, manufacturing of chemicals, steel, & ammonia fertilisers and aerospace applications.

## Gaganyaan: ISRO successfully conducted liquid fuel engine test

- Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) successfully conducted the third long-duration hot test of the liquid propellant Vikas Engine for the Gaganyaan Mission.

### Key Highlights

- The test of the liquid propellant Vikas engine was done for the core L110 liquid stage of the human rated GSLV Mk-III vehicle, as part of the engine qualification requirements for the Gaganyaan programme.
- The Vikas engine will be used in the second stage of the rocket.
- ISRO's GSLV Mk III, which successfully carried the Chandrayaan-2 mission to space in its first operational flight, has three stages – the two solid S200 boosters fired at the launch, the core L110 liquid stage, and the upper C-25 cryogenic stage.



## Gaganyaan in news

- As part of the human spaceflight programme 'Gaganyaan,' the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) plans to launch the first uncrewed mission in December.
- Two uncrewed flights are planned as part of Gaganyaan's mandate to evaluate the manned mission's end-to-end capability.
- The objective of the Gaganyaan programme is to demonstrate the capability to send humans to low earth orbit on board an Indian launch vehicle and bring them back to earth safely.
- Four Indian astronaut-candidates have already undergone generic space flight training in Russia as part of the Gaganyaan programme. ISRO's heavy-lift launcher GSLV Mk III has been identified for the mission.



## About Gaganyaan Mission

- Gaganyaan Mission is planned by Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO). Under the mission three flights will be sent into orbit.
- It will comprise two unmanned flights and one human spaceflight. Gaganyaan system module called Orbital Module will carry three Indian astronauts, including a woman.
- Spaceflight will move around the Earth for 5 to 7 days at low-earth-orbit at an altitude of 300-400 km from Earth.

## ZyCoV-D: World's first DNA-based Vaccine

- Indian pharmaceutical company Zydus Cadila is going to apply to the Central Drugs Regulator (DGCI) for emergency approval of the corona vaccine ZyCoV-D.

### Key Points:

- If approved, it will be the world's first DNA-based vaccine. With this, the number of vaccines available in the country will increase to 4. So far, Serum Institute's Covishield, Bharat Biotech's Covaxin and Russia's Sputnik-V are being used in India.

- ZyCoV-D is a needle free vaccine. This allows the vaccine to be injected into people's skin under high pressure.

### ZyCoV-D

- ZyCoV-D, a plasmid DNA vaccine, comes under the Vaccine Discovery Programme supported by the Department of Biotechnology under the National Biopharma Mission.
- Plasmids are circular deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) vectors that can be used as vaccines to prevent various types of diseases.
- The antibodies produced by the vaccine were able to neutralize the wild type virus indicating the protective potential of the vaccine candidate. No safety concerns were observed in repeat dose by both intramuscular (directly into muscles) and intradermal (superficial injection into skin) routes of administration.



## NISAR : NASA-ISRO joint Mission to be launched



- The NASA -ISRO Joint Mission NISAR (NASA-ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar) satellite, which aims to measure changes in the earth's surface globally using advanced radar images, is scheduled to be launched in early 2023.
- NISAR is a joint Earth observation mission between ISRO and NASA, used for global observation of the entire earth, including the polar cryosphere and the Indian Ocean region.
- This is a dual-band (L-band and S-band) radar imaging mission with full polarimetric and interferometric modes of operation for observing small changes in land, vegetation, and cryosphere.
- NASA is developing L-band SAR and related systems, while ISRO is developing S-band SAR, spacecraft bus, launch vehicle, and related launch services.

### Objectives of NISAR:

- The main scientific goal of this mission is to improve understanding of the effects of climate change on the planet's changing ecosystems, terrestrial and coastal processes, land deformation, and the cryosphere.
- Earlier, India and the United States agreed to this mission during then US President Barack Obama's visit to India in the year 2015.

## Union Cabinet approved BharatNet PPP model

- The Union Cabinet has approved the revised implementation strategy of BharatNet through Public-Private Partnership (PPP) mode in 16 States of the country.

### Key Points

- The revised BharatNet Project will be implemented through the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model with a total cost of ₹29,430 crores. Of this, the Government will provide the viability gap fund of ₹19,041 crores. Viability Gap Fund means a grant to support projects that are economically justified but not financially viable.

- The project which initially aims to connect all the gram panchayats of the country through optic fiber for providing broadband services; it will now have two new components:
  - The first will be that BharatNet will now extend up to all inhabited villages beyond the gram panchayats (GPs) in the 16 states.
  - Second, the project will also now include the creation, upgradation, operation, maintenance, and utilization of BharatNet by the private sector partner who will be selected by a competitive international bidding process.

### States covered:

- States covered under Cabinet approval include Kerala, Karnataka, Rajasthan, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, Meghalaya, Assam, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura and Arunachal Pradesh. About 3.61 lakh villages including Gram Panchayats will be covered.

### BharatNet PPP Model

- BharatNet Project was originally launched in 2011 as the National Optical Fibre Network (NOFN) and renamed as Bharat-Net in 2015.
- It seeks to provide connectivity to 2.5 lakh Gram Panchayats (GPs) through optical fibre.
- It is a flagship mission implemented by Bharat Broadband Network Ltd. (BBNL).
- The objective is to facilitate the delivery of e-governance, e-health, e-education, e-banking, Internet and other services to rural India.



## Cabinet approved Deep Ocean Mission



- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has approved the proposal of the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) on "Deep Ocean Mission".
- This Mission works to explore the deep ocean for resources and develop deep sea technologies for sustainable use of ocean resources.

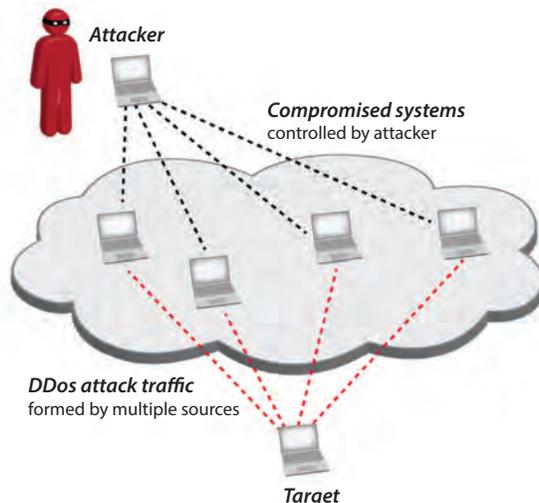
### Key Highlights

- The cost of the Mission has been estimated at Rs. 4,077 crore over a five-year period and will be implemented in phases. MoES will be the nodal ministry implementing this multi-institutional ambitious mission.
- It will be a mission mode project to support the Blue Economy Initiatives of the Government of India. Blue Economy is the sustainable use of ocean resources for economic growth, improved livelihoods and jobs, and ocean ecosystem health.
- The technology and expertise needed in such missions is now available with only five countries - US, Russia, France, Japan and China. India will now be the sixth country to have it.

### Deep Ocean Mission

- It is an Indian initiative to undertake deep ocean exploration. It focuses on India's exclusive economic zones and continental shelf.
- Mission consists of various manned and unmanned submersibles to explore the sea bed. Main aim of this mission is to explore & extract polymetallic nodules which are composed of minerals such as nickel, manganese, copper, cobalt and iron hydroxide.
- These metals are useful in manufacturing electronic devices, smartphones, solar panels and batteries.

### DDoS Attack in news



- Belgian government has restored its service after a massive distributed denial of service (DDoS) attack that cut off Internet access to numerous government, public, scientific and educational agencies.

### Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS):

- DDoS is a Distributed Denial of Service. It is a cyber threat that seeks to disrupt the normal traffic of a targeted server.

- A distributed denial-of-service (DDoS) attack is a malicious attempt to disrupt the normal traffic of a targeted server, service or network by overwhelming the target or its surrounding infrastructure with a flood of Internet traffic.
- DDoS attacks achieve effectiveness by utilizing multiple compromised computer systems as sources of attack traffic. Exploited machines can include computers and other networked resources such as IoT devices.
- From a high level, a DDoS attack is like an unexpected traffic jam clogging up the highway, preventing regular traffic from arriving at its destination.

### DRDO developed Isothermal Forging Technology

- The DRDO developed the critical near-isothermal forging technology to produce all the five stages of high-pressure compressor (HPC) discs. 
- This technological breakthrough, which involves developing complex titanium and nickel-based alloys that can withstand temperatures of more than 1,000 degrees Celsius, was achieved by the DRDO's premier metallurgical laboratory, the Hyderabad-based Defence Metallurgical Research Laboratory (DMRL).

### Key highlights of Isothermal Forging:

- Isothermal forging is a closed-die process in which the dies and the workpieces are heated to the same temperature, so that forming can take place without loss of temperature in the workpiece. 
- It's a preferred process for forming engineered parts, including jet-engine and other aerospace components in high-density lightweight alloys.
- In this process, the workpiece is formed to shape at a slow rate and at a temperature almost equal to that of the heated die.
- The long forging time, alongside forces exerted by the die, help to form an almost 'ready to use' component needing minimal supplementary machining. This is a crucial technology for establishing self-reliance in aeroengine technology.

## Indrajaal : India's first drone defence dome



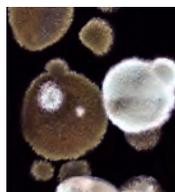
- Hyderabad-based technology R&D firm Grene Robotics has designed and developed India's first indigenous drone defence dome called "Indrajaal".

### Key points:

- The drone defence dome has the capability to autonomously protect an area of 1000-2000 sq km against the aerial threats by assessing and acting on aerial threats such as Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs), loitering munitions, and Low- Radar Cross Section (RCS) targets.
- The ANTI-UAV systems will not only provide protection to defence bases but it will be beneficial for linear infrastructures like international borders against advanced weaponry.
- The path-breaking development is imperative because manual weapons and point-based defence systems can't defend modern warfares, which are operated by Artificial Intelligence (AI) and robotics.
- The design principles of Indrajaal are based on delivering autonomy to the armed forces.
- The synergic combination of 9-10 modern technologies helmed by Artificial Intelligence (AI), cybersecurity and robotics.

## Mucormycosis-Black fungus infection in COVID patients

- As per reports, Mucormycosis is increasing among the COVID patients. A number of COVID-19 patients are developing a serious fungal infection known as Mucormycosis also called black fungus.



### Symptoms

- It causes redness around the eyes, nose.
- Also, the person suffers from headache, fever, bloody vomits, shortness of breath, altered mental status.
- Mucormycosis is suspected when a person suffers from sinusitis, local pain on cheekbone, blackish discoloration over bridge of nose, chest pain, thrombosis, pleural effusion, necrosis, blurred vision, etc.

## Black Fungus categorised as Notified Diseases

- Black Fungus has been categorised as a notified disease making it imperative that government authorities be informed about each case. This will allow for the tracking and management of any outbreak.
- It will help authorities to collect information of the spread of the disease, monitor the disease and set off early warnings.

### Notified Disease:

- A notified disease is any disease that is required by law to be reported to government authorities. The collation of information allows the authorities to monitor the disease, and provides early warning of possible outbreaks. The World Health Organization's International Health Regulations, 1969 require disease reporting to the WHO in order to help with its global surveillance and advisory role.
- Making a disease legally notifiable by doctors and health professionals allows for intervention to control the spread of highly infectious diseases.

### Notified Diseases in India:

- AIDS, Hepatitis B, Dengue Fever, Malaria, Whooping cough, Anaemia, Measles, Rabies, Vitamin A deficiency, typhoid, scarlet fever, polio, cerebro spinal fever, leprosy, hepatitis, Cholera, Iodine deficiency, malnutrition, tuberculosis, smallpox, plague, measles, influenza, diphtheria and chicken pox are categorised as the notified disease.

### About Mucormycosis

- Mucormycosis is a fungal infection recently in the news as it is being triggered by Covid-19.
- Sometimes also called zygomycosis, this disease is a serious and rare fungal infection caused by molds named mucormycetes.
- These fungi live throughout the environment. The places they are particularly found are Soil, Decaying organic matter, such as leaves, compost piles, or rotten wood.
- The lungs or sinuses of the recovering COVID patients get affected after they inhale fungal spores from the air.
- It is not a major threat to those with a healthy immune system.

## Merger of two Black Holes discovered

- Astronomers have detected the most massive collision of two black holes ever discovered.

### Key points:

- Earlier, the Gravitational waves from a collision between two black holes were detected in 2019 at the Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory (LIGO), United States and the detector Virgo (Italy).
- It was calculated to have come from roughly 17 billion light years away, and from a time when the universe was about half its age.
- It is the first "intermediate mass" black hole ever observed.

### Gravitational Waves

- Gravitational Waves are invisible ripples that form:
  - ♦ When a star explodes in a supernova
  - ♦ When two black holes merge
  - ♦ When two big stars orbit each other
- It travels at the speed of light and squeezes and stretches anything that comes in their path.
- Proposed by Albert Einstein in his General Theory of Relativity, the first gravitational wave was actually detected by LIGO in 2015.

### Black Hole

- A black hole is an object in space that is so dense and has such strong gravity that no matter or light can escape its pull. Because no light can escape, it is black and invisible.
- The Event Horizon Telescope - a planet-scale array of ground-based radio telescopes - obtained the first image of a supermassive black hole and its shadow in 2019.
- It was a central black hole of Messier 87, a massive galaxy in the Virgo cluster, which is more than 50 million light-years away.



## UDID card for Co-WIN registration

- For ensuring a smooth and effective COVID-19 vaccination drive, the Central Government has directed the states and UTs to include the Unique Disability Identification (UDID) Card as a Photo ID while registering on Co-WIN 2.0 platform.
- It will ensure a smooth and effective COVID-19 vaccination drive.



### Key Points:

- UDID was allowed with the aim of helping disabled persons to access COVID-19 vaccination. Earlier, as per guidelines for Co-WIN 2.0, seven prescribed Photo IDs were specified and prescribed for verification of beneficiaries for vaccination.
- Further, this card is issued to persons with disability by the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities under the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment comprising features like name, year of birth, gender and photograph. Thus, it meets the criteria for use of identification in COVID-19 vaccination.

### About Unique Disability Identification (UDID)

- The UDID project was implemented to create a National Database for persons with disabilities (PwDs). It issues a Unique Disability Identity Card to each PwDs.
- The UDID project has been under implementation since 2016.
- It will ensure complete digitization of certification of disability from 01.06.2021, besides providing a viable mechanism for cross-checking genuineness of the certificate to achieve pan-India validity, and simplifying the process for the benefit of Divyangjan.

## CEOS COAST: ISRO- NOAA Project endorsed

- Recently, the UN body has endorsed a multinational project called "Committee on Earth Observation Satellites Coastal Observations, Applications, Services, and Tools (CEOS COAST)".



**About CEOS COAST**

- The CEOS COAST program is co-led by ISRO and NOAA from America. The program aims to improve the accuracy of coastal data based on satellite and land-based observations.
- Its pilot projects are uniquely capable of using Earth observation technologies to meet many of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals specified by the United Nations for the Oceans Decade Initiative.

**Perseverance Rover arrived on Mars**

- NASA's Research Rover Perseverance has recently arrived on the Red Planet (Mars). This rover is the most sophisticated astrobiology experiment ever sent to another planet. It will first look at the remains of ancient microbial life on the planet.

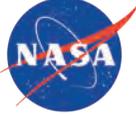
**Key Highlights:**

- The rover has been sailing across space for almost seven months.
- It travelled a total of 293 million miles or 472 million kilometres before entering the Martian atmosphere.
- It reached the MARS at a speed of 12,000 miles per hour or 19,000 kilometres per hour.
- The most challenging part of the robotic vehicle was its self-guided descent and landing during a complex series of maneuvers. It was called 'seven minutes of terror' by NASA.

**About Perseverance rover**

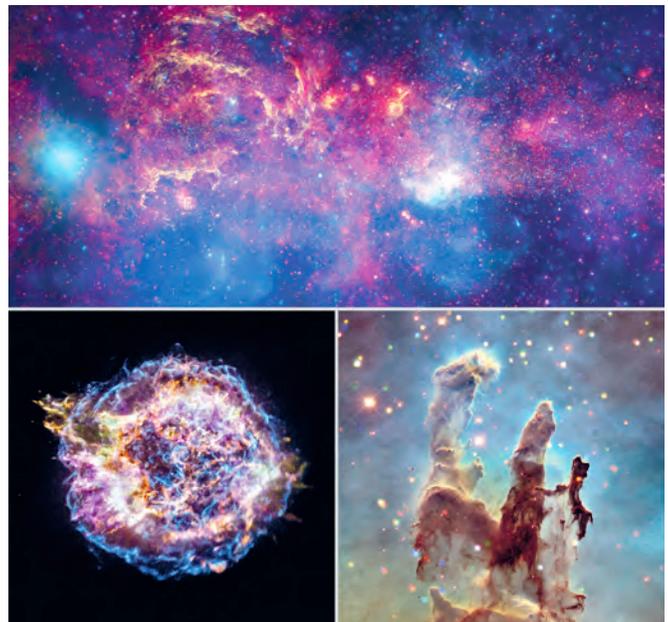
- The rover will observe the planet's astro-biologically important ancient climate. It will also take care of the surface geological processes and history.
- The rover would also determine historical habitability and the likelihood of past life on it. The nature of the rover is inspired by the rover of Curiosity.
- It uses components that have been already fabricated and tested. It comprises 19 cameras and two microphones. Thus, it will also record the audio of the environment on MARS.

**NASA launched Data Sonification Project**

- NASA's Universe of Learning (UoL) Programme in collaboration with Chandra X-ray Center, Cambridge, is working on the sonification project which aims to transform data from astronomical images into audio. 
- This project allows audiences including visually-impaired communities to experience space through data.

**Working:**

- NASA's distant telescopes in space collect inherently digital data, in the form of ones and zeroes, before converting them into images.
- The images are essentially visual representations of light and radiation of different wavelengths in space, that can't be seen by the human eye.
- The Sonification project has created a celestial concert of sorts by translating the same data into sound.
- Pitch and volume are used to denote the brightness and position of a celestial object or phenomenon.

**Data Sonification:**

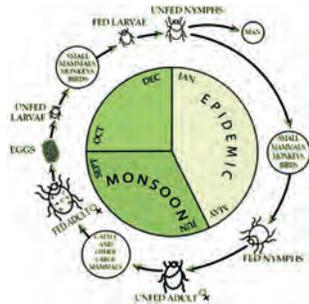
- Data Sonification refers to the use of sound values to represent real data. It is the auditory version of data visualisation.

**Significance:**

- With this project, users can now experience different phenomena captured in astronomical images as an aural experience.
- The birth of a star, a cloud of dust or even a black hole can now be 'heard' as a high- or low-pitched sound.

## Kyasanur Forest Disease: A new Health issue in India

- Recently, researchers found a new point-of-care test to be highly sensitive for rapid diagnosis of Kyasanur forest disease (KFD) which is emerging as a new public health problem & challenge in India.



### Point-of-care tests:

- It is developed by Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)-National Institute of Virology.
- It includes a battery-operated Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) analyser, which is a portable, lightweight and universal cartridge-based sample pre-treatment kit and nucleic acid extraction device that aid in sample processing at the point of care.
- It would be beneficial for the diagnosis of KFD as the outbreaks mainly happen in remote areas, where there is lack of well-equipped sample handling and laboratory testing facilities. Also, this would be useful in quick patient management and controlling further spread of the virus.

### About Kyasanur Forest Disease

The disease is tick-borne viral haemorrhagic fever which is endemic to South-western part of India. It is caused by a virus from the family Flaviviridae. Virus is transmitted to humans through bite of infected hard ticks, acting as a reservoir of KFD Virus.

## ITU released Global Cybersecurity Index (GCI) 2020

- The United Nations' specialised agency for information and communication technologies - International Telecommunication Union (ITU) has released the Global Cyber Security Index (GCI) 2020.



### Performance of India and its neighbours:

- India is placed on the 10th spot. In 2018, it was ranked on the 47th spot. It was ranked 47 in 2019.
- In the Asia-Pacific region India secured the 4th spot.
- Neighbours China and Pakistan were ranked at 33 and 79, respectively.

### Top 5 Countries:

- The US.
  - The UK and Saudi Arabia.
  - Estonia.
  - South Korea, Singapore and Spain.
  - Russia, United Arab Emirates and Malaysia.
- India is working on its first Cyber Security Strategy. Computer Emergency Response Teams or CERT is responsible for coordinating and supporting the response to computer security events or incidents on the national or government level.
  - A scheme for establishment of Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C) has been established to handle issues related to cybercrime in the country in a comprehensive and coordinated manner.
  - Establishment of National Critical Information Infrastructure Protection Centre (NCIIPC) for protection of critical information infrastructure in the country.

### About Global Cyber Security Index (GCI)

- The index is a trusted reference that measures the commitment of countries to cybersecurity at a global level.
- Countries are measured along five pillars, namely, legal measures, technical measures, organisational measures, capacity development, and cooperation to generate an overall score.

## 'Havana Syndrome' likely caused by directed microwaves

- The National Academy of Sciences has recently discovered that microwave radiation is the primary source of a peculiar neurological disease called Havana Syndrome.



- The Havana Syndrome has been infecting American diplomats and intelligence officials based in China, Cuba and other countries for more than four years.

### About Havana Syndrome

- In 2016, US diplomats and intelligence officials in Havana reported hearing strange sounds and physical sensations in their homes and hotel rooms.
- The strange physical sensations were followed by extreme headache, nausea, dizziness, exhaustion, hearing loss and sleep issues. Since then the disorder has come to be known as Havana Syndrome.

## Home Ministry enhances powers of BSF

- The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) enhanced the “arrest, search and seize” powers of the Border Security Force (BSF) up to 50 km from the international boundary within Assam, West Bengal and Punjab.

### Key points:

- The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) claims that recent drone droppings of weapons from across the border have prompted this expansion in the jurisdiction of the BSF.
- The decision is to extend the BSF's jurisdiction from 15 km to 50 km inside the international border along with Punjab, West Bengal and Assam. It is meant to improve operational efficiency and crackdown on smuggling rackets.
- But the move triggered furious reactions from Opposition-ruled Punjab and West Bengal, which described it as an irrational decision, a direct attack on federalism and an attempt to interfere through Central agencies.



BSF is India's border guarding force along the borders of Pakistan and Bangladesh. Its Administrative Control is by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA). It was raised in the wake of the 1965 War on 1 December 1965 as India's first line of defence for ensuring the security of the borders of India and for matters connected therewith.

## DDP approved Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX)

- The Department of Defence Production (DDP) has recently given its approval for 'Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX)', a central sector scheme, which has been allotted budgetary support of Rs. 498.80 crore for the next 5 years starting from 2021-22 to the year 2025-26.
- The primary aim of this scheme is to provide financial support to around 300 MSMEs, Start-ups, and individual innovators as well as around 20 partner incubators through the Defence Innovation Organisation (DIO).



### Criteria

- To avail grants as an iDEX Partner Incubator, certain eligibility criteria have to be followed:
  - The applicant must be registered in India as a legal entity in private, public or PPP mode. They should have received grant or establishment support from the Ministry of the Government of India.
  - The incubator must have been in operation for at least 3 years and should have experience of supporting minimum 25 start-ups.
  - In the past 3 years these incubators should have successfully graduated at least 5 start-ups.
  - The incubators should have experience of partnering with research and academia.

### Support for Prototype and Research Kickstart (SPARK)



- Individual innovators (research and academic institutions) are also encouraged to apply.

- To avail the grants of Support for Prototype and Research Kickstart (SPARK) under the mechanism of iDEX, some eligibility criteria will have to be followed.
- Any Indian company which has been incorporated under the Companies Act, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) which have been defined in the MSME Act, 2006, will be incorporated.

## Ministry of Defence implemented SPARSH



रक्षा लेखा प्रधान नियंत्रक (पेंशन)  
Principal Controller of Defence Accounts (Pension)

**S P A R S H**

[System for Pension Administration (Raksha)]

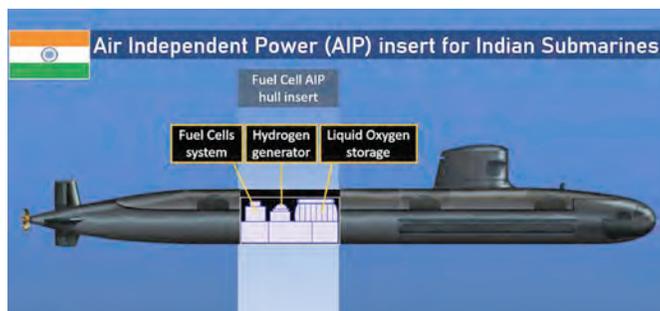


- The Ministry of Defence has implemented SPARSH [System for Pension Administration (Raksha)], an integrated system for automation of sanction and disbursement of defence pension.

### Key Points:

- This web-based system processes pension claims and credits pension directly into the bank accounts of defence pensioners without relying on any external intermediary.
- A Pensioner Portal is available for pensioners to view their pension related information, access services and register complaints for redressal of grievances, if any, relating to their pension matters.
- SPARSH envisages establishment of Service Centres to provide last mile connectivity to pensioners who may be unable to directly access the SPARSH portal for any reason.
- In addition to several offices of the Defence Accounts Department, which are already functioning as Service Centres for pensioners, the two largest banks dealing with defence pensioners – State Bank of India (SBI) and Punjab National Bank (PNB) – have been co-opted as Service Centres.

## DRDO tested new Air Independent Propulsion System



- The Defence Research Development Organisation recently achieved a milestone in the development of the Air Independent Propulsion system. The system was operated in endurance mode and max power mode. The operation was successful.

### Key Points:

- The Air Independent Propulsion System is being developed by Naval Materials Research Laboratory (NMRL) of DRDO.

- Air Independent Propulsion (AIP) has a force multiplier effect on the lethality of a diesel-electric submarine as it enhances the submerged endurance of the boat, several folds.
- Fuel cell-based AIP has merits in performance compared to other technologies.
- Operation of the land-based prototype engineered to the form-and-fit of a submarine
- In a fuel cell AIP, an electrolytic fuel cell releases energy by combining hydrogen and oxygen, with only water as the waste product.
- The cells are highly efficient, and do not have moving parts, thus ensuring that the submarine has a low acoustic signature.

## ARPIT: Airborne Rescue Pod developed by Indian Air Force



- The Indian Air Force developed the Airborne Rescue Pod for Isolated Transportation (ARPIT). The pod is to be used to evacuate critical patients that are suffering from COVID-19.
- The ARPIT uses HEPA, High frequency Particulate Air H 13 filters to support invasive ventilation. The machine also holds monitoring instruments such as pulse oximeter, defibrillator and infusion pumps. It also has space for long arm gloves and power packs.

### Key Highlights:

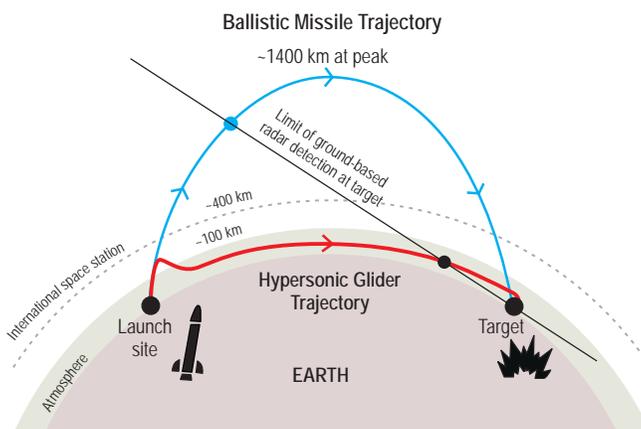
- The Indian Air Force identified the need for an air evacuation system that will prevent the spread of infectious aerosols from the COVID-19 patients during air travel. This has now been fulfilled by ARPIT.
- The Indian Air Force has used indigenous materials to develop ARPIT. This has been done in the intention of boosting Make in India initiative. The IAF has spent Rs 60,000 to develop the system. The system is also light weight as it was made from aviation certified material.

### China recently tested Hypersonic Weapons

- Recent developments have put the spotlight on hypersonic weapons development, especially the advancements made by China and Russia.

#### Key Points:

- China tested a nuclear-capable hypersonic missile in August 2021 that circled the globe before speeding towards its target. However, China has denied that it was nuclear-capable.
- In early October 2021, Russia had successfully test-launched a Tsirkon hypersonic cruise missile from a Severodvinsk submarine.
- While the U.S. has active hypersonic development programmes, it was lagging behind China and Russia because “most U.S. hypersonic weapons, in contrast to those in Russia and China, are not being designed for use with a nuclear warhead.



#### About Hypersonic Weapons

- They are maneuverable weapons that can fly at speeds in excess of Mach 5, five times the speed of sound.
- They are capable both of maneuvering and of flying faster than 5,000 km per hour, which would enable such missiles to penetrate most missile defences and to further compress the timelines for a response by a nation under attack.
- Most hypersonic vehicles primarily use scramjet technology.
- There are two classes of hypersonic weapons:
  - Hypersonic glide vehicles (HGV) and hypersonic cruise missiles (HCM). HGVs are launched from a rocket before gliding to a target while HCMs are powered by high-speed, air-breathing engines, or scramjets, after acquiring their target.

*In news*

## Defence Exercises

Defence Exercises / Operations	Descriptions
<p><b>Exercise Dosti</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The 15th edition of the biennial trilateral coast guard exercise ‘Dosti’ involving India, the Maldives and Sri Lanka held in the Maldives.</li> <li>Exercise Dosti was first launched in 1991. 2021 marks 30 years since these exercises were first launched. These exercises were bilateral, involving the Indian and the Maldives Coast Guards.</li> </ul>
<p><b>India-Indonesia CORPAT</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The 37th edition of India-Indonesia Coordinated Patrol (CORPAT) was conducted in the Indian Ocean region.</li> <li>India-Indonesia CORPAT witnessed the participation of Maritime Patrol Aircraft from both Nations. India and Indonesia have been carrying out Coordinated Patrols along the International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL) twice a year since 2002.</li> <li>It aims to keep the Indian Ocean Region safe and secure for commercial shipping, international trade and conduct of legitimate maritime activities.</li> </ul>

Defence Exercises / Operations	Descriptions
<p><b>Exercise SITMEX – 21</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Indian Naval Ship (INS) Karmuk, an indigenously built Missile Corvette participated in the 3rd edition of India, Singapore and Thailand Trilateral Maritime Exercise SITMEX–21, in the Andaman Sea.</li> <li>The first edition of SITMEX was hosted by the Indian Navy off Port Blair in September 2019.</li> <li>The Republic of Singapore Navy (RSN) hosted the second edition of the exercise in November 2020.</li> </ul>
<p><b>AUSINDEX</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>India and Australia recently participated in the fourth iteration of the biennial maritime series 'AUSINDEX'.</li> <li>This exercise allows the Royal Australian Navy and Indian Navy to strengthen their “interoperability” by sharing the best practices.</li> <li>AUSINDEX Maritime exercises are conducted in India and Australia alternatively. The 4th edition is being conducted in the Northern Australia Exercise Area.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Mitra Shakti 21 Exercise</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The 8th Edition of the “India Sri Lanka bilateral joint Exercise” called Mitra Shakti was conducted recently at Combat Training School, Ampara in Sri Lanka.</li> <li>The exercise aimed to train, share and rehearse tactical drills to undertake joint counter-terrorism operations in a semi-urban/rural environment under United Nations mandate.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Velyat Defence Drill</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Iranian army launched a massive military exercise near its border with Azerbaijan.</li> <li>In the annual manoeuvres called Velyat, both the army and the paramilitary Revolutionary Guard were taken earlier.</li> <li>Now, elite air force, air defense units and the Guard’s airspace division would participate in the drill.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Exercise Yudh Abhyas 2021</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>India and the United States started a 15-day mega military exercise in Alaska in a bid to further deepen bilateral military cooperation between both the countries. Year 2021 marks the 17th edition of the exercise “Yudh Abhyas”.</li> <li>It was carried with the aim of enhancing understanding, cooperation and interoperability between armies of India and USA.</li> <li>The primary aim of the exercise was to share tactical level drills and learn best practices from each other.</li> </ul>
<p><b>INDRA-2021</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The 12th Edition of Indo-Russia joint military Exercise INDRA 2021 was held at Volgograd, which is a city in southwest Russia on the western bank of the Volga River.</li> <li>In the military exercise 250 personnel from both nations took part in it.</li> <li>It involved the conduct of counter-terror operations under UN mandate by a joint force against international terror groups.</li> <li>Exercise INDRA 21 further strengthened mutual confidence and interoperability between the Indian and Russian Armies.</li> </ul>

Defence Exercises / Operations	Descriptions
<p><b>Konkan 2021 Exercise</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exercise Konkan 2021 was held in the English Channel in between INS Tabar and HMS Westminster.</li> <li>• Konkan exercise witnessed the participation of integral helicopters of two ships and Falcon Electronic Warfare aircraft.</li> <li>• The naval exercise Konkan is held between the navies of India and the United Kingdom. It is based on the long-term strategic relationship between them.</li> <li>• This exercise provides a platform for the Navies to periodically conduct exercises at sea and in harbour in order to build interoperability and share best practices.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Al-Mohed Al-Hindi 2021</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• India and Saudi Arabia recently conducted their first-ever naval exercise, in reflection of their growing defence and military cooperation.</li> <li>• This was the first edition of a bilateral naval exercise between India and Saudi Arabia.</li> <li>• It comprised several shore and sea-based drills between the two navies.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Malabar Naval Exercise 2021</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Quad countries India, the U.S., Australia and Japan, carried out the Malabar naval exercise off the coast of Guam amid mounting global concerns over China's growing military muscle-flexing in the Indo-Pacific region.</li> <li>• The sea drill was conducted off Guam island, which is a territory of the US. It is located 2,500 km east of the Philippines.</li> <li>• Indian stealth frigate INS Shivalik and anti-submarine warfare corvette INS Kadmat arrived in Guam, an island territory of the U.S. in the Western Pacific,</li> </ul>
<p><b>India-EU Joint Naval Exercise</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indian Navy and European Union Naval Force (EUNAVFOR) conducted their first ever exercise in the Gulf of Aden.</li> <li>• Indian Naval Ship Trikand participated in the exercise, which is currently deployed for anti-piracy operations.</li> <li>• The exercise was based on the scenario of an anti-piracy operation. It included cross-deck helicopter landings, complex tactical evolutions at sea, live firing, a night-time joint patrol and a naval parade in the high seas off the coast of Somalia.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Shared Destiny-2021 Defence Exercise</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Militaries of China, Mongolia, Thailand and Pakistan took part in a multinational peacekeeping exercise called "Shared Destiny-2021".</li> <li>• It was organised by the People's Liberation Army at the combined-arms tactical training base in central Henan province of China from September 6 to 15, 2021.</li> <li>• All the participating countries was dispatched about 1,000 troops to be the part of drills. 1000 troops involved units of infantry, security, fast response, engineering, helicopter, transportation and medical service.</li> </ul>
<p><b>CORPAT Exercise 2021</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• India and Thailand participated in 31st edition of Coordinated Patrols or CORPAT Exercise. It aimed to reinforce maritime links between two countries and to keep Indian Ocean safe and secure for international trade.</li> <li>• This was the first biannual exercise in which, an indigenously built Naval Offshore Patrol Vessel called Saryu from Indian Navy and His Majesty's Thailand Ship (HTMS) Krabi along with Dornier Maritime Patrol Aircraft from both navies were participating.</li> <li>• CORPAT biannual exercise builds up understanding and interoperability between both the navies.</li> </ul>

Defence Exercises / Operations	Descriptions
<p><b>ZAPAD 2021 Exercise</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A contingent of 200 Indian Army personnel participated in the multinational Exercise ZAPAD 2021 held at Nizhniy, Russia.</li> <li>• It was one of the theatre-level exercises of the Russian armed forces and focused primarily on operations against terrorists.</li> <li>• 17 countries were invited to participate in ZAPAD 2021, of which nine were participating countries while eight were observing countries. India too was a part of this military exercise with 200 Indian Army personnel contingent.</li> </ul>

*In news*

## Defence Equipments

Defence Equipments	Descriptions
<p><b>SMART</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recently, the DRDO has successfully test-fired a long-range Supersonic Missile Assisted Torpedo (SMART) off the coast of Balasore in Odisha.</li> <li>• The system has been designed to enhance anti-submarine warfare capability far beyond the conventional range of the torpedo.</li> <li>• The system is a next generation missile based standoff torpedo delivery system.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Agni Prime Missile</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New generation nuclear-capable ballistic missile Agni-P was successfully tested from Dr APJ Abdul Kalam island off the coast of Odisha.</li> <li>• This is the second test of the missile. The first test took place in June last.</li> <li>• Agni-P is a two-stage canisterised solid propellant missile with dual redundant navigation and guidance system.</li> <li>• It has a range of up to 2000 km.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Pinaka Missile</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Successful tests of Pinaka Extended Range (ER) multi-barrel rocket launcher system, Area Denial Munitions (ADM) and indigenously developed fuzes have been carried out at various test ranges.</li> <li>• The Pinaka-ER Multi Barrel Rocket Launcher System was successfully tested at the Pokhran range.</li> <li>• It is the upgraded version of the earlier Pinaka version which has been in service with the Indian Army for the last decade.</li> <li>• The system has been designed in the light of emerging requirements with advanced technologies enhancing the range.</li> </ul>

Defence Equipments	Descriptions
<p><b>Rustom-2 Indigenous UAV</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>India's indigenous Medium Altitude Long Endurance (MALE) Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) development programme (Rustom-II) achieved an important milestone by reaching an altitude of 25,000 feet and an endurance of 10 hours.</li> <li>Medium-Altitude Long-Endurance (MALE) refers to an Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) that flies at an altitude window of 10,000 to 30,000 feet for extended durations of time, typically 24 to 48 hours.</li> <li>Rustom-2 has been designed and developed by the Aeronautical Development Establishment (ADE), Bengaluru with production partners being Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd and Bharat Electronics Limited.</li> <li>It is also known as Tapas-BH (Tactical Airborne Platform for Aerial Surveillance-Beyond Horizon 201).</li> <li>It is being developed to carry out surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) roles and is capable of carrying different combinations of advanced payload and capable of auto-landing among others.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Mi-17V5 Chopper</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>General Bipin Rawat, his wife and 11 others on board a Mi-17V5 IAF helicopter were killed after it crashed in Tamil Nadu's Coonoor.</li> <li>It is a Russian-made helicopter which is produced by Kazan Helicopters.</li> <li>The helicopter has a maximum takeoff weight of 13,000kg. It can transport either 36 armed soldiers internally or 4,500kg of load on a sling.</li> <li>It can also be deployed in troop and arms transport, fire support, convoy escort, patrol, and search-and-rescue (SAR) missions.</li> <li>The helicopter can achieve a maximum speed of 250 km per hour.</li> </ul>
<p><b>BrahMos Missile</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recently, the Air version of BrahMos was test-fired from Sukhoi 30 MKI supersonic fighter aircraft.</li> <li>BRAHMOS is a joint venture between the Defence Research and Development Organisation of India (DRDO) and the NPOM of Russia.</li> <li>Brahmos is named for the rivers Brahmaputra and Moskva.</li> <li>It is a 2 stage missile with solid propellant (Stage 1) which gives it supersonic speed and liquid ramjet (Stage 2) increasing its speed to Mach 3 in the cruise phase.</li> <li>It has a flight range of 290 km.</li> </ul>
<p><b>VL-SRSAM</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO) tested recently the "vertical launch-short range surface-to-air missile".</li> <li>Vertical Launch Short Range Surface to Air Missile (VL-SRSAM) is indigenously developed by DRDO and designed for deployment onboard Indian Naval warships.</li> <li>It can engage targets at around 15 km.</li> <li>It is meant for neutralizing various aerial threats at close ranges, including sea-skimming targets, which are assets that fly as close as possible to the sea surface to avoid being detected by the radars onboard warships.</li> </ul>

Defence Equipments	Descriptions
<p><b>MBTs Arjun</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Ministry of Defence (MoD) placed an order with Heavy Vehicles Factory (HVF), Chennai for supply of 118 Main Battle Tanks (MBTs) Arjun Mk-1A for the Indian Army.</li> <li>• Defence ministry placed this order with Heavy Vehicles Factory (HVF), Chennai to supply the 118 Arjun Mk-1A tanks.</li> <li>• The state-of-the-art MBT Mk-1A is a new variant of the Arjun tank designed to enhance firepower, mobility and survivability.</li> </ul>
<p><b>INS Vela</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The fourth Scorpene class conventional submarine, INS Vela, was commissioned into the Navy. The Navy also issued the Request For Proposal for procurement of six advanced submarines under Project-75I.</li> <li>• Vela, being named after a type of Indian fish belonging to the stingray family, the crest depicts the fish swimming across the blue seas.</li> <li>• The submarine's mascot is the Sub-ray which is an amalgamation of the submarine and the stingray which symbolises the metamorphosis of the submarine's character with the qualities of a stingray.</li> </ul>
<p><b>INS Visakhapatnam</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recently, INS Visakhapatnam was commissioned at the Naval Dockyard in Mumbai.</li> <li>• INS Visakhapatnam is designed at the Directorate of Naval Design, the Indian Navy's in-house organisation, and built by the state-owned Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited, Mumbai.</li> <li>• It is the first of the stealth guided-missile destroyers being indigenously constructed under Project 15B.</li> <li>• The warship is equipped to fight under Nuclear, Biological and Chemical (NBC) warfare conditions.</li> </ul>
<p><b>S-400 Air Defence System</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Russia has started supplying S-400 air defence system to India, and the first division will be delivered by the end of 2021</li> <li>• The S-400 is known as Russia's most advanced long-range surface-to-air missile defence system.</li> <li>• It is capable of simultaneously tracking numerous incoming objects including aircraft, missiles and UAVs in a radius of a few hundred kilometres and launching appropriate missiles to neutralise them.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Agni-V</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• India has successfully test-fired its longest-range surface-to-surface ballistic missile, Agni-V.</li> <li>• It is the most advanced surface-to-surface indigenously built fire and forgets ballistic missile. which once fired cannot be stopped, except by an interceptor missile.</li> <li>• It was successfully launched from APJ Abdul Kalam Island, Odisha</li> <li>• The three-stage solid-fuelled engine missile is capable of striking targets at ranges up to 5,000 km. With a very high degree of accuracy and can reach most parts of China.</li> </ul>

Defence Equipments	Descriptions
<p><b>INS Vikrant</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>INS Vikrant, also known as IAC-1, is expected to be commissioned in the Indian Navy by 2022. The Defence Minister reviewed the progress of the construction of India's first indigenous aircraft carrier (IAC-1) INS Vikrant at the Cochin Shipyard, Kochi, Kerala.</li> <li>The IAC-1 boasts of nearly 75 per cent indigenous content; this includes the design, the steel used in the construction and key weapons, and sensors.</li> </ul>
<p><b>MH-60R Multi-role Helicopters</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Indian Navy has received two MH-60R multi-role helicopters from the U.S., in a boost to its combat capabilities.</li> <li>Indian Navy is procuring 24 of MH-60R helicopters manufactured by Lockheed Martin.</li> <li>These are being procured under foreign military sales from the US at an estimated cost of USD 2.4 billion.</li> <li>These are all-weather helicopters designed to support multiple missions with state of the art avionics and sensors.</li> </ul>
<p><b>New Generation Akash Missile</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Defence Research &amp; Development Organisation (DRDO) successfully flight-tested the New Generation Akash Missile (Akash-NG) and the Man Portable Anti-Tank Guided Missile (MPATGM).</li> <li>The missile system has been developed by Defence Research and Development Laboratory (DRDL), Hyderabad in collaboration with other DRDO laboratories.</li> <li>It is a New Generation surface-to-air Missile. The missile has high manoeuvrability to neutralise aerial threats.</li> </ul>
<p><b>AK-103 rifles</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>India and Russia have recently signed a deal to procure AK-103 Rifles.</li> <li>This deal was inked as a part of mega infantry modernisation programme.</li> <li>The AK-103 will be bulk produced by the Ordnance Factory Board (OFB) with technology transfer.</li> </ul>



## Awards and Honours

### Nobel Prize, 2021

- The Nobel Prize is given to people who "have conferred the greatest benefit to humankind" by a foundation established by Swedish inventor Alfred Nobel in his will, read in Stockholm on 30 December 1896.
- Fields considered for the awards include physiology or medicine, physics, chemistry, literature, peace work, and economic science.
- The prestigious award comes with a gold medal and 10 million Swedish kronor (over \$1.14 million).



Category	Recipients	Given for (in the words of Nobel Foundation)
Physiology or Medicine	David Julius and Ardem Patapoutian	Discoveries of receptors for temperature and touch.
Physics	Syukuro Manabe, Klaus Hasselmann and Giorgio Parisi	Groundbreaking contributions to our understanding of complex systems of Earth's Climate.
Chemistry	Benjamin List and David MacMillan	Development of asymmetric organocatalysis.
Literature	Abdulrazak Gurnah	For his uncompromising and compassionate penetration of the effects of colonialism and the fate of the refugee in the gulf between cultures and continents.
Peace Prize	Maria Ressa and Dmitry Muratov	For their efforts to safeguard freedom of expression, which is a precondition for democracy and lasting peace
Economics	David Card	For his empirical contributions to labour economics.
	Joshua D. Angrist and Guido W. Imbens	For their methodological contributions to the analysis of causal relationships

### Miss Universe, 2021

- 21 years after Lara Dutta won the title of Miss Universe, Harnaaz Sandhu from India has become the new Miss Universe 2021. The 70th Miss Universe 2021 was held in Eilat, Israel.
- Before Ms Sandhu, only two Indians have won the title of Miss Universe: Sushmita Sen in 1994 and Lara Dutta in 2000.
- Miss Universe is an annual international beauty pageant. It is run by the United States-based Miss Universe Organization.
- This pageant is one of the most watched pageants worldwide, with an estimated audience of 500 million viewers across 190 territories.
- Apart from Miss World; Miss International, Miss Earth and Miss Universe are among Big Four international beauty pageants.



## Order of the Druk Gyalpo

- PM Narendra Modi was honored with Bhutan's highest civilian award "Order of the Druk Gyalpo".



### Key Points:

- It was conferred with the award on the occasion of Bhutan's National Day (December 17).
- It marks the crowning of Ugyen Wangchuck as the first Druk Gyalpo of modern Bhutan.

### Druk Gyalpo

- He is the head of state of Bhutan. Bhutan is also known as Drukyl, in the Dzongkha language.
- It translates to "The Land of Thunder Dragon". Kings of Bhutan are called Druk Gyalpo (Dragon King) while, Bhutanese people call themselves Drukpa (people of Druk).

## Jnanpith Award, 2021

- Konkani novelist Damodar Mauzo won the Jnanpith Award for the year 2021. It was 57th Jnanpith Award.
- It is the highest literary award in India and is given annually for the best creative literary writing to writers in any of the 22 "scheduled languages" recognized in the Indian Constitution.
- It is sponsored by the cultural organization Bharatiya Jnanpith.
- It was instituted in 1961, and the first award was given in 1965.
- The prize carries a cash award, a citation, and a bronze replica of Vagdevi (Saraswati), the goddess of learning.



## Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, 2021

- Pratham, a pioneering civil society organisation has been awarded the Indira Gandhi Peace Prize 2021.
- It is awarded for its pioneering work over more than a quarter-century in seeking to ensure that every child has access to quality education, for its innovative use of digital technology to deliver education, for its programmes to provide skills to young adults.



### Key Points:

- Pratham was set up in 1995 by Mrs Farida Lambay and Dr Madhav Chavan in Mumbai.
- Pratham began its work in slum areas by setting up community-based pre-schools and by offering remedial education to students who lagged behind in their classes.

### About Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace

- The Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament and Development was instituted in 1986. It consists of a monetary award of Rs 25 lakh along with a citation.
- The award is given to individuals or organisations who work towards ensuring international peace and development, ensuring that scientific discoveries are used to further the scope of freedom and better humanity, and creating a new international economic order.

## Gallantry Awards, 2021

- The President of India presented Gallantry Awards and Distinguished Service decorations in a defence investiture ceremony for the year 2021.
- Group Captain Abhinandan Varthaman was awarded Vir Chakra which is a wartime gallantry award.



### Gallantry Award and Category:

- Gallantry Award is presented to honour the acts of bravery and sacrifice of the officers/personnel of the Armed Forces, other lawfully constituted forces and civilians.
- The Ministry of Defence invites recommendations twice a year from the Armed Forces and Union Ministry of Home Affairs for gallantry awards.
- Gallantry Award classified into two Categories:**
  - Wartime Gallantry Awards:** Param Vir Chakra (PVC), Mahavir Chakra (MVC), Vir Chakra.
  - Peacetime Gallantry Awards:** Ashok Chakra, Kirti Chakra, Shaurya Chakra.

## National Sports Awards, 2021

- The National Sports Awards for the year 2021 were announced by the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports.
- National Sports Awards are given every year to recognize and reward excellence in sports.
- It is announced by the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports.

### Key Highlights:

- **Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award 2021:** It is given for the spectacular and most outstanding performance in the field of sports by a sportsperson over a period of the previous four years. This year, it will be given to 12 Sportspersons.

**The winners are:** Neeraj Chopra (Athletics), Ravi Kumar Dahiya (Freestyle wrestling), Lovlina Borgohain (Boxing), P. R. Sreejesh (Hockey), Avani Lekhara (Paralympic shooting), Sumit Antil (Para-athletics), Pramod Bhagat (Para-badminton), Krishna Nagar (Para-badminton), Manish Narwal (Paralympic shooting), Mithali Raj (Cricket), Sunil Chhetri (Football) and Manpreet Singh (Hockey).

**Note :** Earlier, this award was known as "Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award".

- **Arjuna Awards 2021:** It is given for good performance over a period of the previous four years and showing qualities of leadership, sportsmanship and a sense of discipline. This year, 35 Sportspersons will receive this award.



- **Dronacharya Award 2021:** It is given to coaches for doing outstanding and meritorious work on a consistent basis and enabling sportspersons to excel in International events.



- **Dhyan Chand Award for Lifetime Achievement:**

It is given to honour sportspersons who have contributed to sports by their performance and continue to contribute to the promotion of sports events after their retirement.



- **Rashtriya Khel Protsahan Puruskar:** It is given to corporate entities (both in the private and public sector), sports control boards, NGOs including sports bodies at the State and National level who have played a visible role in the area of sports promotion and development.

- **Maulana Abul Kalam Azad (MAKA) Trophy:** Overall top performing university in inter-university tournaments is given this award.

## Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Award 2021

- Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Prize for science and technology 2021, were announced during the 80th foundation day of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR).
- The Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar (SSB) award has been named after the founder & Director of CSIR, Dr Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar. It is given to scientists for their outstanding contributions to science and technology, every year.



### Recipients of award in 2021

- **Biological Sciences category:** Dr Amit Singh and Dr Arun Kumar Shukla
- **Chemical sciences category:** Dr Kanishka Biswas and Dr T Govindaraju
- **Earth, Atmosphere, Ocean and Planetary Sciences category:** Dr Binoy Kumar Saikia
- **Engineering sciences category:** Dr Debdeep Mukhopadhyay
- **Mathematical sciences category:** Dr Anish Ghosh and Dr Saket Saurabh
- **Medical sciences:** Dr Jeemon Panniyammakal and Dr Rohit Srivastava
- **Physical sciences:** Dr Kanak Saha

### SSB Award:

- The award is named after the Founder-Director of the Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR) India, the late Dr (Sir) Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar and is known as the 'Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar (SSB) Prize for Science and Technology'.
- The Prize is given each year by CSIR in the fields namely, Biological Sciences, Chemical Sciences, Earth, Atmosphere, Engineering Sciences, Mathematical Sciences, Medical Sciences, and Physical Sciences.
- It is the most coveted national recognition bestowed upon young scientists and engineers to honour their research and developmental work in India.

## Dadasaheb Phalke Award 2019

- The Actor Rajinikanth has conferred the Dadasaheb Phalke Award at a National Film Awards ceremony by the Vice-President of India.



### Key Points

- The Government of India started it in 1969 to commemorate Dadasaheb Phalke, known as the 'Father of Indian Cinema'. He made India's first full-length feature film Raja Harishchandra in 1913.

- It is the highest honour for an artist in Indian cinema.
- It is presented annually at the National Films Awards ceremony by the Directorate of Film Festivals, an organisation set up by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.
- The recipients are honoured for their "outstanding contribution to the growth and development of Indian cinema."
- The award comprises a Swarna Kamal (Golden Lotus) medallion, a shawl, and a cash prize of Rs. 10 lakh.

## Earthshot Prize 2021

- Two Indians (Vinisha and Vidyut) among 15 finalists were selected for the first ever Earthshot Prize 2021, which will be held in London.
- Vinisha - a 14-year-old Tamil Nadu schoolgirl's solar-powered ironing cart, and Vidyut - a Delhi entrepreneur's agricultural waste recycling concept were named among finalists.



### Key Points

- One of the selected projects is- Solar-Powered Ironing Cart project that has been designed by a 14-year-old Tamil Nadu schoolgirl.
- Second project is- Agricultural Waste Recycling Concept developed by an entrepreneur from Delhi.
- Total of 15 finalists have been selected out of hundreds of nominations from across the world for the Environmental Prize.
- The prize was launched by Britain's Prince William in October 2020 in order to search for inspiring and innovative solutions to problems facing the planet.
- The prize is inspired by US President John F Kennedy's "Moonshot" programme, which resulted in the US Apollo lunar launches and the first man setting foot on the Moon in 1969.

## Ramanujan Prize, 2021

- Professor Neena Gupta, a mathematician, has been awarded the 2021 Ramanujan Prize for Young Mathematicians from developing countries.
- She is awarded for her outstanding work in affine algebraic geometry and commutative algebra.
- Ramanujan Prize was first awarded in 2005.



- It is administered by the Abdus Salam International Center for Theoretical Physics (ICTP) jointly with the Department of Science and Technology (DST) Government of India and the International Mathematical Union (IMU).
- It is given annually to an eminent Mathematician who is less than 45 years of age on 31 December of the year of the award.
- The DST-ICTP-IMU Ramanujan Prize committee, composed of eminent mathematicians from around the world.

## Ramon Magsaysay Award 2021

- The Ramon Magsaysay Award 2021 was presented in a formal ceremony in Manila, the capital of the Philippines on 31st August each year.
- Bangladesh's Dr. Firdausi Qadri (Affordable Vaccine Champion), Pakistan's Muhammad Amjad Saqib (Poverty Alleviation Visionary), Filipino fisher and community environmentalist Roberto Ballon, American Steven Muncy for humanitarian work and refugee assistance and Indonesian torch bearer for investigative journalism, Watchdoc.



### Key Points:

- Dr Qadri is an emeritus scientist at the International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh (icDDR).
- She is also a laureate of the 2020 L'Oréal-Unesco for Women in Science Award which was presented to her for her advocacy of early diagnoses and global vaccination & her work on understanding and preventing infectious diseases affecting children across developing countries.
- The Ramon Magsaysay Award is the highest honour in Asia. It was established in April 1957 and is widely regarded as the equivalent of the Nobel Prize in Asia.
- The award is presented to individuals who have made extraordinary contributions in eradication of poverty and development of the society in Asia.

## Best Director award at Oscar 2021

- Chinese-born filmmaker Chloe Zhao has become the first Asian woman and only the second woman ever to win Best Director at the Academy Awards.
- She won the award for her film Nomadland.

### Academy Awards:

- The Academy Awards are often referred to as the Oscars. They are given for creative and technological excellence in the film industry. They are regarded as the world's most coveted trophies.



- As a reward, the winners get a replica of a Golden Statuette. The award is formally known as the "Academy Award of Merit."
- The award was designed by Cedric Gibbons and sculpted by George Stanley.
- It was first presented in 1929.

### Note

Bhanu Athaiya was the first Indian to win an Oscar in 1982. She won the award for Best Costume Design for the movie Gandhi.

## Golden Peacock Environment Management Award

- **Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL)** has received the Golden Peacock Environment Management award for the steel industry for the year 2020.
- The award was given for its efforts in adopting various environmental measures like upgrading pollution control facilities, treatment and recirculation of wastewater from individual units and outfalls, enhancement in green cover and efficient solid waste management. SAIL has received the award for two consecutive years.
- The World Environment Foundation created the Golden Peacock Environment Management Award in 1998. It is a coveted award.
- The award helps businesses to improve their environmental efficiency.



## UNDP Equator Prize 2021

- Two Indian organisations have won Equator Prize 2021, for their exceptional achievement in showcasing innovative, local, nature-based solutions for tackling biodiversity loss and climate change and achieving their local development goals.



### Key Points:

- 2021 Equator Prize awarded to 10 Indigenous and local solutions for people and planet.
- Two communities from India bagged this year's prestigious UNDP Equator Prize, for their exceptional achievement in showcasing local, innovative, nature-based solutions for

tackling biodiversity loss and climate change and achieving their local development goals.

### The two winning organizations:

- **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.
- **Snehakunja Trust:** Snehakunja Trust has protected sensitive wetland and coastal ecosystems in the Western Ghats and the Karnataka coast for 45 years. Restoring 375 hectares of mangroves, Snehakunja Trust is currently piloting the first blue carbon project in India.

## Padma Awards 2021

- On the evening of the 72nd Republic Day, India awarded the Padma Awards to 119 people from different fields.

### Key Highlights:

- The President of India bestows these honors at ceremonial function at Rashtrapati Bhawan.
- The President has accepted the confirmation of 119 Padma Awards for the year 2021.
- There are seven Padma Vibhushan, ten Padma Bhushan, and 102 Padma Shri Awards on the record.
- There are 29 female awardees.
- It also includes 10 persons from the category of Foreigners or NRI or PIO or OCI, 16 Posthumous awardees and 1 transgender awardee.



### Padma Awards:

- It is one of the country's top civilian honors.
- Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan, and Padma Shri are the three categories of this award.
- It is awarded in a variety of disciplines and fields of operation, such as architecture, public relations, social work, trade and business, science and engineering, nursing, writing, culture, athletics, and civil service.

## Sports in News

### Australia Open 2021

- The 2021 Australian Open was a Grand Slam tennis tournament that took place at Melbourne Park in February 2021.
- It was the 109th edition of the Australian Open, the 53rd in the Open Era, and the first Major tournament of the year.
- The tournament consists of events for professional players in singles, doubles, and mixed doubles.

Category	Winner	Runner-up
Men's Singles	Novak Djokovic (Serbia)	Daniil Medvedev (Russia)
Women's Singles	Naomi Osaka (Japan)	Jennifer Brady (America)
Men's Doubles	Ivan Dodig (Croatia) and Filip Polášek (Slovakia)	Rajeev Ram (America) and Joe Salisbury (UK)
Women's Doubles	Elise Mertens (Belgium) and Aryna Sabalenka (Belarus)	Barbora Krejčíková (Czech Republic) and Kateřina Siniaková (Czech Republic)
Mixed Doubles	Barbora Krejčíková (Czech Republic) and Rajeev Ram (America)	Samantha Stosur (Australia) and Matthew Ebden (Australia)

### French Open 2021

- The 2021 French Open was a Grand Slam level tennis tournament played on outdoor clay courts. It was held at the Stade Roland Garros in Paris, France in June 2021.
- Rafael Nadal was the four-time defending champion in men's singles, and Iga Swiatek was the defending champion in women's singles.
- It was the 125th edition of the French Open and the second Grand Slam event of 2021.

Category	Winner	Runner-up
Men's Singles	Novak Djokovic (Serbia)	Stefanos Tsitsipas (Greece)
Women's Singles	Barbora Krejčíková (Czech Republic)	Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova (Russia)
Men's Doubles	Pierre-Hugues Herbert (France) and Nicolas Mahut (France)	Alexander Bublik (Kazakhstan) and Andrey Golubev (Kazakhstan)
Women's Doubles	Barbora Krejčíková (Czech Republic) and Kateřina Siniaková (Czech Republic)	Bethanie Mattek-Sands (America) and Iga Swiatek (Poland)
Mixed Doubles	Desirae Krawczyk (America) and Joe Salisbury (UK)	Elena Vesnina (Russia) and Aslan Karatsev (Russia)

## Wimbledon, 2021

- The Wimbledon Championships is a Grand Slam tennis tournament that took place at the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club in Wimbledon, London, United Kingdom, since 1877.
- Wimbledon is one of the four Grand Slam tennis tournaments, which also includes the Australian Open, the French Open and the US Open.

Category	Winner	Runner-up
Men's Singles	Novak Djokovic (Serbia)	Matteo Berrettini (Italy)
Women's Singles	Ashleigh Barty (Australia)	Karolína Plíšková (Czech Republic)
Men's Doubles	Nikola Pietrangeli and Mate Pavić	Marcel Granollers and Horacio Zeballos
Women's Doubles title	Hsieh Su-wei and Elise Mertens	Veronika Kudermetova and Elena Vesnina
Mixed Doubles title	Neal Skupski and Desirae Krawczyk	Joe Salisbury and Harriet Dart

## US Open, 2021

- The 2021 US Open was the 141st edition of US Open and the fourth and final Grand Slam event of the year. It was held on outdoor hard courts at the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center in New York City.

Category	Winner	Runner-up
Men's Singles	Daniil Medvedev (Russia)	Novak Djokovic (Serbia)
Women's Singles	Emma Raducanu (England)	Leylah Annie Fernandez (Canada)
Men's Doubles	Rajeev Ram and Joe Salisbury	Jamie Murray and Bruno Soares
Women's Doubles title	Samantha Stosur and Zhang Shuai	Coco Gauff and Caty McNally
Mixed Doubles title	Desirae Krawczyk and Joe Salisbury	Giuliana Olmos and Marcelo Arevalo

## T20 World Cup, 2021

- Australia won their maiden T20 World Cup title as they defeated New Zealand in the final by 8 wickets.
- ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2021 had begun on 17th October 2021 at the Oman Cricket Academy Ground, the final match commenced on 14th November in Dubai when the tournament's two best teams Australia and New Zealand met in a decider.
- The event which was to be held in India shifted to UAE and Oman due to the COVID-19 situation in India. BCCI, however, continued to be the host of the event.
- Mitchell Marsh was named as the player of the match.



## Davis Cup 2021



- The Davis Cup 2021 was won by the Russian Tennis Federation. The Davis Cup finals was held between Daniil Medvedev and Andrey Rublev of Russia. Daniil Medvedev won the match bringing victory to the Russian Tennis Federation. Andrey Rublev was named the Most Valuable Player.
- The Davis Cup is also called the World Cup of Tennis. It is an international team event in men's tennis. The women's equivalent of the Davis Cup is the Billie Jean King Cup.
- It is conducted by the International Tennis Federation.
- It was first held in 1900 as a challenge between the US and Britain. By 2016, there were 135 countries participating in the competition.
- The most successful countries in the Davis cup are the USA, Australia, and New Zealand. USA has so far won the Davis Title 32 times, Australia has won 28 times.

## BWF World Tour 2021

- PV Sindhu won the BWF World Tour 2021 silver medal. The final was held between PV Sindhu of India and Seyoung of Korea.
- In Men's Singles of the BWF World Tour 2021, Viktor Axelsen won the cup.



### Key Points:

- The BWF World Tour is a Grade 2 Badminton tournament series. It is held by the BWF, Badminton World Federation. It is held among the top world ranked players in singles (men and women) and doubles (men, women and mixed).  
There are six levels in the BWF World Tour. They are as follows:
  - World Tour Finals
  - Super 1000

- Super 750
- Super 500
- Super 300
- BWF Tour Super 100 level

## Woman of the Year Award from World Athletics

- The Indian Athlete Anju Bobby George has won the Woman of the Year Award from World Athletics. She has won the award for grooming young girls to take up sports.
- Anju was a gold medallist in 2005 IAAF World Athletics Finals. She was the first Indian athlete to win a bronze medal in long jump at the World Championships in Athletics held in 2013 in Paris.
- Currently, Anju is the Chairperson of TOPS (Target Olympic Podium Scheme) and also the Executive member of Khelo India project.



## Formula One world title

- Max Verstappen won his first "Formula One (F1) world title", leaving behind Lewis Hamilton, at Abu Dhabi Grand Prix.
- At the 2021 Abu Dhabi Grand Prix, he became the first Dutch driver to win the Formula One Championship. He has become the 34th Formula One World Drivers' Champion.
- Max Emilian Verstappen is a Belgian-Dutch racing driver, who is currently competing in Formula One with Red Bull Racing, under the Dutch flag.



### Formula One:

- Formula one is the highest class of international auto racing, organized for single-seater formula racing cars. It is sanctioned by the Federation Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA).
- FIA Formula One World Championship was earlier known as World Drivers' Championship, till 1981. It has been one of the premier forms of racing worldwide, since its first season in 1950.

## BWF World Championships, 2021

- Shuttler Kidambi Srikanth became the first Indian man to win a silver medal at BWF World Championships. In the final, he was defeated by Singapore's Loh Kean Yew by 21-15, 22-20.
- 2021 BWF World Championships is officially known as "Total Energies BWF World Championships 2021" for sponsorship purposes.
- Srikanth Kidambi is an Indian badminton player, who trains at Gopichand Badminton Academy in Hyderabad. In April 2018, he was ranked as world number 1, at the BWF ranking.



## Denmark Open 2021

- The 2021 Denmark Open (Victor Denmark Open 2021) was a badminton tournament which took place at the Odense Sports Park in Odense, Denmark, from 19 to 24 October 2021 and had a total prize of US\$850,000.
- The tournament which originally was a Super 750 event later got upgraded to a Super 1000 event in 2021.
- This tournament was organized by Badminton Denmark with sanction from the BWF.



Category	Winner
Mens' single	Viktor Axelsen (Denmark)
Womens' single	Akane Yamaguchi (Japan)
Men's double	Takuro Hoki and Yugo Kobayashi (Japan)
Women's double	Huang Dongping and Zheng Yu (China)
Mixed double	Yuta Watanabe and Arisa Higashino (Japan)

## World Wrestling Championships 2021

- Anshu Malik became the first Indian woman wrestler to reach the final of 2021 World Wrestling Championships.

- She created this history after outclassing junior European champion Solomiia Vynnyk.
- The 19-year-old wrestler from India and reigning Asian champion, Anshu, controlled the semi-final from the beginning. She won by technical superiority in the 57 kg category. India has only one world Champion, named Sushil Kumar.

### About Anshu Malik

- Anshu Malik made his international debut after just four years of training and immediately established his name in wrestling by winning a silver medal at the 2016 Asian Cadet Championship. After this won the bronze medal in the World Cadet Championship.
- Anshu Malik has three medals (one gold, two bronze) in the World Cadet Championship. Along with this, a gold medal in Asian Junior Championship and a silver medal in the World Junior Wrestling Championship is also included.



## Russian Grand Prix, 2021

- Lewis Hamilton became the first Formula One (F1) driver to win 100 races after finishing first in the 2021 Russian Grand Prix to retake the championship lead from Max Verstappen.



### Key Points:

- Lewis Hamilton, the seven-time World Champion, overtook the long-time race leader Lando Norris late on.
- Lewis Hamilton on September 26, 2021, became the first Formula One (F1) driver to win 100 races after finishing first in the 2021 Russian Grand Prix to retake the championship lead from Max Verstappen.

- Sir Lewis Carl Davidson Hamilton is a British racing driver and currently competes in Formula One for Mercedes. He has previously driven for McLaren from 2007 to 2012. Hamilton has won the joint-record seven World Drivers' Championship titles in Formula One.

### Pankaj Advani win 6-Reds World Cup 2021

- Pankaj Advani has won 24th World title at the IBSF 6-Red Snooker World Cup with a victory over Pakistan's Babar Masih in the final.
- This is Advani's 11th gold medal at the Asian level of cue sports. His continental billiards title tally has gone up to 7, in addition to the back-to-back Asian Games gold medals in 2006 and 2010, one 6-red snooker title and a snooker team gold.



### India's Raja Rithvik becomes 70th Grandmaster

- Raja Rithvik has become India's 70th and latest chess Grandmaster, achieving his third and final Grandmaster norm during a competition in Hungary.
- He won the GM title at the Vezerkepzo Grandmaster Chess Tournament in Budapest, Hungary. In this way he became the 70th Grandmaster of the country.
- Viswanathan Anand became the first grandmaster from India in 1988.
- Grandmaster is a title awarded to chess players by the world chess organization FIDE. Apart from World Champion, Grandmaster is the highest title a chess player can attain. Once achieved, the title is generally held for life, though exceptionally it may be revoked for cheating.



### Javelin Throw Day : 7th August

- The Athletics Federation of India has decided that javelin throw day will be on 7th August every year in honour of Olympic gold medalist Neeraj Chopra.

- The 23-year-old Neeraj is India's second individual Olympic gold medalist after Abhinav Bindra. Neeraj bagged the gold medal in men's javelin throw at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics on 7th August 2021.
- Neeraj has scripted history at the Olympic Stadium in Tokyo when he threw the javelin to a distance of 87.58m to end India's medal drought in athletics at the Olympics.
- This is India's first-ever gold medal in athletics in the history of the Olympics. AFI's bid to name August 7 as Javelin Throw Day is an attempt to attract more youth towards the sport.

### IOC Suspended North Korea from Beijing Olympics

- North Korea was formally suspended from the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) on 10th September as punishment for refusing to send a team to the Tokyo Games citing the COVID-19 pandemic.
- North Korea did not send a delegation to the Tokyo Games, saying it wanted to protect its athletes from COVID-19.
- At Rio Olympics 2016, North Korea had won two Golds, three Silvers and two Bronzes.
- The International Olympic Committee is a non-governmental sports organisation based in Lausanne, Switzerland. It is constituted in the form of an association under the Swiss Civil Code.
- **Headquarters:** Lausanne, Switzerland
- **President:** Thomas Bach



### India to host 2026 World Badminton Championships

- The Badminton World Federation has allotted the BWF World Championships to India for 2026.
- The 2026 BWF World Championships will be the 30th edition of the prestigious badminton tournament of BWF held annually.
- This will be the second time that India will host the premier tournament, which is held every year except for the Olympic year. India had hosted the BWF World Championships in Hyderabad in 2009.



# TOKYO 2020



*The 2020 Summer Olympics, officially the Games of the XXXII Olympiad and branded as Tokyo 2020 was an international multi-sport event held from 23 July to 8 August 2021 in Tokyo, Japan. Originally scheduled to take place from 24 July to 9 August 2020, the event was postponed to 2021 in March 2020 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.*

*The medal tally was topped by the U.S. followed by China and Japan being in Top 3. India was ranked at 48th position with 1 Gold, 2 Silver and 4 Bronze medals; totalling 7 medals, India's best Olympic performance so far.*

## Neeraj Chopra

Neeraj Chopra took the country's first Tokyo Olympics gold medal in the individual category and finished first in the table with a javelin throw of 87.58 m in his second attempt.

### Key Points

- It is also the country's second individual gold medal in its Olympic history after Abhinav Bindra's heroics in Beijing 2008.
- The Javelin thrower was born on December 24, 1997, and hails from Khandra village in Haryana's Panipat. Neeraj, who was initially interested in cricket, took up the sport in 2011 as he was inspired by watching people throw javelin in Haryana. No Indian had won a medal in athletics since 1920 when India started taking part in the Olympics in 1920 in Antwerp, Belgium.
- He has become the first track and field athlete to win an Olympic gold medal for India and second Olympic athletics to win for India after Norman Pritchard, who won two silver medals at the 1900 Summer Olympics for India.



## Mirabai Chanu

Mirabai Chanu of India has clinched a silver medal in weightlifting. This is the 1st medal in the 49kg category in the Tokyo 2020 Olympics.

### Key Highlights

- She has lifted a total of 202kg (87kg+115kg) to win the silver medal
- She has broken the record of Karnam Malleswari who had won a bronze medal in the 2000 Sydney Olympics.
- China's Hou Zhihui who lifted a total of 210kg won the gold medal and also Indonesia's Aisah Windy Cantika won the bronze medal with a total of 194kg.
- This is the 1st attempt of Mirabai Chanu, who attempted the 84kg category.
- Gold medal winner Zhihui created a new Olympic record with an effort of 94kg. The Chinese lifter also holds the world record with 96kg in this category.



## Ravi Kumar Dahiya

Ravi Kumar Dahiya is Indian freestyle wrestler who won a silver medal at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics in the 57 kg category. Dahiya is also a bronze medalist from 2019 World Wrestling Championships and a two-time Asian champion.

### Key Highlights

- He won the silver medal at the 2018 World U23 Wrestling Championship in Bucharest, India's only medal at the competition, in the 57 kg category.
- The 2020 Summer Olympics, Dahiya won his first two bouts on technical superiority.
- Dahiya became the second Indian wrestler to win an Olympic silver after Sushil Kumar.
- Dahiya started wrestling in his early teens and won the silver medal in the 2015 Junior World Wrestling Championships at Salvador de Bahia in the 55kg freestyle category.





## PV Sindhu

PV Sindhu, a 26-year-old badminton player, has become the first Indian woman to win two Olympic medals after defeating 'He Bingjiao' of China.

### Key Highlights

- PV Sindhu won a bronze medal in the ongoing Tokyo Olympics and became the first Indian woman to win two Olympic medals.
- She met with Chief Minister Jagan at the state secretariat in Amaravati. Later, sports officials her over a cash reward of ₹30 lakhs as per the state policy for winning the medal.
- Sindhu has become the 4th athlete to win multiple medals in women's singles badminton at Olympic Games.
- She has joined South Korea's Bang Soo-Hyun who won silver at Barcelona Games in 1992 as well as gold medal in women's singles badminton category at 1996 Atlanta Games.



## Lovlina Borgohain

Lovlina Borgohain has become the second Indian female boxer, after MC Mary Kom, to win an Olympic bronze.

### Key Highlights

- Lovlina Borgohain is the third Indian boxer to win Olympic bronze following legendary boxers Mary Kom and Vijender Singh.
- Lovlina had won a gold medal at International Boing Championship in February 2018 in welterweight category. She also won bronze at Asian Boxing Championships in Vietnam in 2017.
- At the President's cup in Astana in June 2017, she won bronze and in June 2018, a silver medal at Ulaanbaatar Cup in Mongolia.
- At 13th International Silesian Championship in Poland in September 2018, she won bronze.
- She also represented India at 2018 AIBA Women's World Boxing Championship in New Delhi and won bronze medal in 69 kg category.



## Bajrang Punia

Bajrang Punia is an Indian freestyle wrestler hailing from Haryana. He is currently ranked number 2 in the 65 kg weight category.

### Key Highlights

- He is the only Indian wrestler to have won three medals at the World Wrestling Championship.
- He added an Olympic medal to his list after winning the bronze medal match at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.
- He defeated his opponent 8-0 in the play-off to secure his first Olympic medal.
- In 2015, Punia has won three medals at the World Wrestling Championships.



## Indian Men's Hockey Team

- In an historical win, Indian men's hockey team won the bronze medal in Tokyo Olympics 2020.
- It is the first Olympic medal win of Indian men's hockey team in the last 41 years which they secured with a 5-4 win over Germany in an interesting bronze medal match.
- It is the first Olympic medal win of Indian men's hockey team in the last 41 years which they secured with a 5-4 win over Germany in an interesting bronze medal match



# TOKYO 2020 PARALYMPIC GAMES



The 2020 Summer Paralympics, branded as the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games, was an international multi-sport para-sports event held from 24 August to 5 September 2021 in Tokyo, Japan.

China topped the medal table with 96 golds, Great Britain finished second with 41 golds and the United States finished third with 37 golds.

It was India's most successful Paralympic event with 5 golds, 8 silvers and 6 bronzes (total 19 medals).

## Avani Lekhara

- Avani Lekhara is an Indian Paralympian and rifle shooter.
- She won a gold medal in 10m air rifle standing and a bronze medal in 50m air rifle standing at Tokyo 2020 Paralympics.
- Lekhara is currently World No 5 in Women's 10m Air Rifle standing SH1 and has competed in the 2018 Asian Para Games.



## Krishna Nagar

- Krishna Nagar is an Indian para-badminton player from Rajasthan.
- He had been ranked world number 2 in para-badminton men's Singles SH6. He has won a gold medal at the 2020 Summer Paralympics.
- Krishna Nagar beats Man Kai Chu in badminton SH6 final to bag the gold medal at Paralympics 2020.



## Sumit Antil

- India's Sumit Antil has won the gold medal in the men's javelin throw F64 final event at the Tokyo Paralympics, and in the process set a new world record throw of 68.55m. The 23-year-old Sumit hails from Sonapat in Haryana.
- Michal Burian of Australia won the silver medal (66.29m), while Sri Lanka's Dulan Kodithuwakku won the bronze medal.



## Bhavina Patel

- Bhavina Hasmukhbhai Patel is an Indian para athlete and table tennis player from Mehsana, Gujarat. She won a silver medal in Class 4 Table tennis at the 2020 Summer Paralympics in Tokyo.
- Bhavina Patel defeated China's Miao Zhang to enter the gold medal match in table tennis.



## Manish Narwal

- Indian shooter Manish Narwal clinched the gold in the P4 – Mixed 50m at Asaka Shooting Range. The 19-year-old Manish created the Paralympic record as he amassed 218.2 points to clinch the gold.
- Manish Narwal is an Indian Para Pistol Shooter. He ranks fourth in the world in Men's 10m Air Pistol SH1 according to the World Shooting Para Sport Rankings. Manish is also supported by GoSports Foundation through the Para Champions Programme.



## Nishad Kumar

- India's Nishad Kumar has clinched a silver medal in the men's high jump T47 event at the Tokyo Paralympics 2020.
- The 23-year-old Nishad made a jump of 2.06m, and in doing so created an Asian record. He also equalled his jump with USA's Dallas Wise, who also took home silver.
- American Roderick Townsend won the gold with a world record jump of 2.15m.



## Pramod Bhagat

- Pramod Bhagat is an Indian professional Para-badminton player from Vaishali district, Bihar.
- He is currently ranked world number one in para-badminton men's singles SL3, and won a gold medal at the 2020 Summer Paralympics in Men's singles SL3.



## Yogesh Kathuniya

- India's discus thrower Yogesh Kathuniya has clinched the silver medal at the ongoing Tokyo Paralympics in the men's Discus Throw F56 final event.
- Yogesh claimed the second spot with a throw of 44.38m. Batista dos Santos from Brazil won gold, setting a Paralympic record with a throw of 45.59m. L. Diaz Aldana from Cuba bagged bronze.



## Suhas Lalinakere Yathiraj

- Suhas Lalinakere Yathiraj is an Indian professional Para-Badminton player currently ranked world No. 2 in Men's Singles and Silver Medalist in SL-4 category in Tokyo Paralympics 2021.
- The Indian shuttler defeated Fredy Setiawan of Indonesia 21-9, 21-15 to seal the match in 31 minutes.



## Devendra Jhajharia

- At the ongoing Tokyo Paralympics 2020, India's greatest paralympian, Devendra Jhajharia won the silver medal in the men's javelin throw – F46 final event on August 30, 2021. The 40-year-old Devendra performed his best throw of 64.35, for the silver.
- In the same event, Sundar Singh Gurjar won the bronze medal, with his best throw of 64.01.



## Mariyappan Thangavelu

- India's Mariyappan Thangavelu has won the silver medal in the men's high jump (T63) at the Tokyo Paralympics. He cleared the 1.86m mark to take home silver.
- In the same event, Sharad Kumar won the bronze medal, clearing the 1.83m mark. Sam Grewe of the United States won the gold medal after he cleared the 1.88m mark.



## Praveen Kumar

- Praveen Kumar became India's fourth medallist in men's high jump and 11th medallist overall at the Tokyo Paralympics 2020 as he won silver with an Asian record jump of 2.07m.
- Praveen is India's fourth medallist in men's high jump at Tokyo Games after Nishad Kumar, Mariyappan Thangavelu, and Sharad Kumar.



## Singhraj Adhana

- Singhraj Adhana is an Indian paralympian and shooter. He won a silver medal in the Mixed 50m pistol SH1 and a bronze medal in the Men's P1 10 metre air pistol



SH1 at the 2020 Summer Paralympics.

- China dominated the finals with defending champion Chao Yang (237.9 - Paralympic record) and Huang Xing (237.5) winning the gold and silver medals respectively.

## Sundar Singh Gurjar

- Sundar Singh Gurjar is an Indian Paralympic javelin thrower, shot putter and discus thrower competing in F46 events. He won a bronze medal at the Tokyo 2020 Paralympics in the men's javelin F46 event.
- He set a world record at the 16th Para Athletics National Championship in Panchkula holding three gold medals in three events.



## Sharad Kumar

- Sharad Kumar is an Indian para high jumper and a former world no. 1. Born in Muzaffarpur, he made his International debut at the 2010 Asian Para Games.
- At the 2014 Asian Para Games, he won the gold medal in the high jump, breaking a 12-year Asian Games record, and reclaimed the world no. 1 position.



## Harvinder Singh

- India's ace archer Harvinder Singh has won the bronze medal in the men's individual recurve open. The 31-year old has become India's first-ever archer to win a medal in the Paralympics.
- Harvinder defeated South Korea's Kim Min Su. Earlier, United States of America's (USA) Kevin Mather defeated Harvinder 6-4 in the semi-final.



## Manoj Sarkar

- Manoj Sarkar is the current World no.1 Para-badminton player in the SL-3 Classification. He has won a silver medal in the BWF Para-Badminton World championships, 2017 in the singles event.
- He is supported by the GoSports Foundation through the Para Champions Programme.



## Persons in News

### CDS Gen. Bipin Rawat

- Chief of Defence Staff General Bipin Rawat, his wife Madhulika Rawat, an Army Brigadier, and 10 others were killed in helicopter crash.
- He was an Indian military officer and a four-star general of the Indian Army. He was appointed as the first Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) of the Indian Armed Forces and he served as CDS from January 2020 until his death in December 2021.
- Before CDS, he served as 57th and last Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee and 26th Chief of Army Staff of the Indian Army.



### Sunil Arora

- Sunil Arora joined the board of advisers of the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA).
- He has been selected as he brings rich leadership experience, skills and knowledge to contribute significantly towards working of the international institute.
- IDEA is an inter-governmental organisation, based in Stockholm. IDEA is assisted by a 15-member board of advisers who are eminent experts or personalities from a wide variety of backgrounds.
- It works with a mission to support sustainable democracy across the world. It currently has 34 member countries, including large, small, older and newer democracies from across the globe.



### Vivek Johri

- Senior bureaucrat Vivek Johri was appointed as the chairman of Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC).
- Vivek Johri is a 1985-batch Indian Revenue Service (Customs and Indirect Taxes) officer.
- He is currently working as a member of the CBIC. His appointment was approved by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet.
- CBIC is the nodal national agency to administer GST, Customs, Central Excise, Service Tax and Narcotics in India.



### Catherine Russell

- Antonio Guterres has appointed Catherine Russell as the head of UN children's agency UNICEF.
- Catherine Russell is an assistant to US President Joe Biden. She also heads the White House Office of Presidential Personnel.
- UNICEF is also known as "United Nations Children's Fund". It is a United Nations agency, which is responsible for providing humanitarian and developmental aid to children across the world.



### Najla Bouden Romdhane

- Najla Bouden Romdhane has become the first female Prime Minister of Tunisia.
- Romdhane is a professor of geology at the National School of Engineers in Tunis. She was born in the year 1958 in Tunisia's central Kairouan province.
- Before being appointed as prime minister, she was assigned to implement programmes with the World Bank, by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research.
- Tunisia is the northernmost country of Africa. It is bordered by Algeria, Libya and the Mediterranean Sea.



### Rani Gaidinliu

- Recently, the Ministry of Home Affairs laid the foundation stone for the 'Rani Gaidinliu Tribal Freedom Fighters Museum' in Manipur's Tamenglong district.
- It would help in preserving and exhibiting artefacts related to the tribal freedom fighters those involved in different stages of the fight against the British colonial rule.
- She was born on January 26, 1915, in the present-day Tamenglong district of Manipur and died in 1993.
- She was the Naga spiritual and political leader who belonged to the Rongmei tribe (also known as Kabui).
- She led an armed uprising against the British in Manipur, Nagaland and Assam
- In 1927, at the age of 13, Gaidinliu, along with her cousin Haipou Jadonang, joined the Heraka movement, which aimed at the revival of the Naga tribal religion and establish self-rule of the Nagas (Naga Raj) ending the British rule.



- She passed away on February 17, 1993, at her native village Luangkao.
- Jawaharlal Nehru called her the “Daughter of the Hills” and gave her the title “Rani” or queen acknowledging her role in the struggle against the British,

### Dilip Kumar

- Legendary actor Dilip Kumar recently died in Mumbai after a long and protracted illness in Mumbai. He was 98.
- The legendary actor played prominent roles in several classic Hindi language films in the 1950s and 1960s. Some of these films include Mughal-E-Azam, Devdas, Naya Daur, Ganga Jumna, Ram aur Shyam, and others.
- Apart from Padma Bhushan, Padma Vibhushan, he was also awarded Nishan-e-Imtiaz - Pakistan's highest civilian award.



### VR Chaudhari

- Vice Chief of the Indian Air Force Air Marshal, Vivek Ram Chaudhari has been appointed as the next Chief of Air Staff.
- Chaudhari had taken over as the vice chief on July 1 this year, after Air Marshal HS Arora retired.
- He is a recipient of the Param Vishisht Seva Medal, Ati Vishisht Seva Medal and the Vayu Sena Medals.



### Iqbal Singh Lalpura

- Former IPS officer Iqbal Singh Lalpura has been appointed chairman of the National Commission for Minorities.
- He hails from Punjab and has authored several books on Sikh philosophy. He has also won several awards such as the president's police medal, police medal for meritorious services, Shiromani Sikh Sahitkar Award and Sikh scholar award.
- Lalpura, during his tenure as IPS officer, served as SSP Amritsar, SSP Tarantaran, and Additional inspector general CID Amritsar.



### Anup Chandra Pandey

- The Union government appointed 1984-batch IAS officer Anup Chandra Pandey, the former chief secretary of Uttar Pradesh, as an election commissioner, taking the Election Commission of India to its full strength.
- He was appointed to the position after the retirement of former Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sunil Arora.
- He retired from civil services in August 2019. He had served as Chief Secretary of Uttar Pradesh under Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. He also worked as the Infrastructure and Industrial Development Commissioner of UP.



### Justice Venugopal

- Justice M. Venugopal has been named as the new Acting Chairperson of the appellate tribunal, National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT).
- He is a former judge of the High Court of Madras. He had joined as a Sub-Judge in Tamil Nadu State Judicial Service on June 5, 1997, and later was elevated to Madras High Court in November 2007, where he had served for eleven-and-a-half years.
- The NCLAT was constituted under Section 410 of the Companies Act, 2013 for hearing appeals against the orders of the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT).



### Bashar Al-Assad

- Bashar al-Assad was re-elected as President for a fourth term in war-ravaged Syria, amid accusations that polls were “neither free nor fair”.
- Assad got 95.1 percent of votes cast. In the last multi-candidate poll of 2014, he had won 88 percent of the vote.
- Bashar al-Assad is a Syrian politician, who is the 19th president of Syria since 2000, succeeding his father who served from 1971 to 2000. He also served as commander-in-chief of Syrian Armed Forces and regional secretary of Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party in Syria. He started to work as a doctor in Syrian Army.



## Books &amp; Authors

Name of the Book	Name of the Author
Contested Lands: India, China and The Boundary Dispute	Maroof Raza
Cooking to Save Your Life	Abhijit Banerjee
Laal Saalm: A Noval	Smriti Irani
Resolved: Uniting Nations in a Divided World	Ban ki Moon
Sunrise over Ayodhya: Nationhood in Our Times	Salman Khurshid
Economist Gandhi	Jerry Rao
The Custodian of Trust: A Banker's Memory	Rajnish Kumar
Writing of My Life	Ruskin Bond
400 Days	Chetan Bhagat
Human Rights and Terrorism in India	Subramanian Swamy
Jungle Nama	Amitav Ghosh
Languages of Truth: Essays 2003-2020	Salman Rushdie
All Roads Lead North: Nepal's Turn To China	Amish Raj Mulmi
Home in the World	Amartya Sen
It's a Wonderful Life	Ruskin Bond
Kashmiri Century: Portrait of a Society in Flux	Khemplata Wakhlu
The Bench	Meghan Markle
Elephant in the Womb	Kalki Koechlin
All Time Favorites for Children	Ruskin Bond
Buddha in Gandhara	Sunita Dwivedi
Stargazing: The Players in my Life	Ravi Shastri
Savarkar: A Contested Legacy (1924-1966)	Vikram Sampath
The Christmas Pig	JK Rowling
The Green Queens of India- A Nation's Pride	Prakash Javadekar
Baanjh: Incomplete Lives of Complete Women	Susmita Mukherjee
My Life in Full: Work, Family and Our Future	Indra Nooyi
Beautiful Things' A Memoir	Hunter Biden (Son of US President Joe Biden)

**GAURAV K. VERMA**

Civil Engineering

**AIR-1 : CE**

Father's Name	Panna Lal
Department Preferred	CPWD
College (B. Tech) with address	IIT-BHU

Subject	Marks Obtained
Prelims: Paper-I	100.66
Prelims: Paper-II	192.66
Mains: Paper-I	246
Mains: Paper-II	247
Interview	120
Final Total Marks	906

**Ques:** To whom would you give the credit of your success?

**Student:** I would like to give credit for my success to my family members, my roommate and faculties of Made Easy who provided me clear path and guided me to achieve my goals.

**Ques:** What was your experience in ESE Preparation and from where you received support during this journey?

**Student :** I did my B.Tech. in 2019, and then I came to Delhi for ESE preparation. I joined Made Easy for prelims, mains and subsequently interview guidance batch. Made

Easy helped me a lot during preparation phase.

**Ques:** In your opinion, physical classes are better or online classes?

**Student :** In my point of view, physical or classroom classes are much better than online classes because in online classes, we can't feel the environment of class and we sometimes procrastinate and become less serious in studies.

**Ques:** What is the role of Test series in ESE preparation and how did it help you?

**Student :** Test series played great role in my preparation, and even during COVID-19 lockdown, I attended Made Easy online Mains test series which played vital role in my success. The level of difficulty of Made Easy test series was higher than ESE paper which helped me to boost my confidence while getting good marks in test series. Test series makes you prepare for exam and introspect where you are getting wrong, so that we won't repeat same mistakes.

**Ques:** What is the importance of previous year ESE prelims and mains papers, and how many years' papers one should follow?

**Student :** According to me, one should follow papers from 2005 onwards as the level and pattern of questions changed. But, I attempted all questions irrespective of year asked. I had divided questions based on their difficulty levels and I used to give more focus on difficult areas.

**Ques:** Can you recall some questions asked in UPSC ESE interview, and how was scenario there?

**Student :** My interview was based on technical questions. They did not ask questions from DAF. In technical, questions were from soil, irrigation, highway, etc. They also told me to draw some diagrams related to reinforcement. My interview was not very well, therefore, I did not expect AIR-1, and it was a big surprise for me.

**Ques:** Did you find any similarity between UPSC ESE interview and Made Easy ESE interview guidance programme?

**Student :** Yes. The atmosphere given by Made Easy interview guidance was same as the UPSC. It was great experience and was based on real UPSC interview.



**SALUNKHE  
CHARUDATTA  
MOHANRAO**

Mechanical Engineering

**AIR-1 : ME**

Father's Name	Mohanrao Shripati Salunkhe
Department Preferred	IDSE
College (B. Tech) with address	College of Engg., Pune

Subject	Marks Obtained
Prelims: Paper-I	107.34
Prelims: Paper-II	210
Mains: Paper-I	218
Mains: Paper-II	212
Interview	110
Final Total Marks	857

**Ques:** To whom would you give the credit of your success?

**Student :** My family members supported me in ESE preparation whole-heartedly. Besides, I would like to thank faculties of Made Easy without whom I could not have achieved this feat.

**Ques:** What was your experience in ESE Preparation and from where you received support during this journey?

**Student :** I was always determined to be in IES. I am already working in BARC, but getting selected in ESE

was my sole aim. I had joined Made Easy batch in Pune, and it helped me getting this result.

**Ques:** How did you continue your preparation during COVID -19 times?

**Student :** I never let my preparation at halt in any circumstances. I used to prepare all the time during lockdown and Made Easy gave me full support in this.

**Ques:** Do you have further plan for Civil Services preparation?

**Student :** I had no such plan earlier, but ESE result boosts my confidence. Therefore, I will prepare for it.

**Ques:** In your opinion, physical classes are better or online classes?

**Student :** Physical classes are much better than online classes because in online classes we generally don't be disciplined and focused.

**Ques:** What is the role of Test series in ESE preparation and how did it help you?

**Student :** Test series has very importance in ESE preparation. A serious aspirant should not miss Prelims and Mains test series conducted by Made Easy. It does

not matter whether you have confidence in that subject or not, but one should attend tests to improve the knowledge. I found Made Easy test series very helpful and above the level of ESE which helped me to prepare well.

**Ques:** What is the importance of previous year ESE prelims and mains papers, and how many years' papers one should follow?

**Student :** An aspirant should follow atleast 10 years papers. I did follow previous four years papers before 15 days of exam.

**Ques:** Can you recall some questions asked in UPSC ESE interview, and how was scenario there?

**Student :** My interview was on expected lines. The board asked me questions related to DAFs like hobby. In technical segment, questions from material science and production were asked. They also asked some questions on nuclear technology due to my job profile. The level of questions was medium, and number of questions was more.



**SHASHANK  
GAUR**

Electrical Engineering

**AIR-1 : EE**

Father's Name	Indra Mohan Gaur
Department Preferred	CEMES
College (B. Tech) with address	MNIT - Jaipur

Subject	Marks Obtained
Prelims: Paper-I	67.34
Prelims: Paper-II	184
Mains: Paper-I	240
Mains: Paper-II	224
Interview	96
Final Total Marks	811

**Ques :** To whom would you give the credit of your success?

**Student :** I would like to give credit for my success to my family members who kept motivating me all the time especially during COVID time. They had faith in me to get succeed in this examination.

**Ques :** What was your experience in ESE Preparation and from where you received support during this journey?

**Student :** I did start my preparation in 6th semester. I had appeared in GATE 2019. I did not get good result

due to self-study. Therefore, I joined Made Easy batch at Jaipur centre. After clearing prelims, I came to Delhi to join Made Easy Mains batch. Due to lockdown, I joined ESE Mains Online batch at Made Easy, and then further interview guidance batch there.

**Ques :** In your opinion, physical classes are better or online classes?

**Student :** Offline classes are better because in the class you only think about studies unlike in online classes. I joined Made Easy online classes for Mains due to lockdown, and used to revise and re-watch the videos of topics in which I had doubt.

**Ques :** What is the role of Test series in ESE preparation and how did it help you?

**Student :** I had attended Made Easy test series for both ESE 2019 and ESE 2020, and it benefitted me a lot. I took test series to do practice.

**Ques :** What is the importance of previous year ESE prelims and mains papers, and how many years' papers one should follow?

**Student :** I did solve previous years ESE papers from the year 2001

which was given in Made Easy book. Apart from that, I solved questions from E&T branch as well for common subjects and topics.

**Ques :** Can you recall some questions asked in UPSC ESE interview, and how was scenario there?

**Student :** My interview was in Sujata ma'am board. The questions were technical, mainly from power system, machine, etc. and some applications and industries based. They started asking questions from basic and then level of questions enhanced.

**Ques :** Did you find any similarity between UPSC ESE interview and Made Easy ESE interview guidance programme?

**Student :** The pattern of Made Easy interview guidance was same as the UPSC, and it helped me to get this feat.

**Ques :** Were you expecting AIR-1 in ESE?

**Student :** Based on solutions provided by Made Easy for ESE Mains paper, I was expecting top 20 to 30 rank, but Rank 1 was quite surprise for me



**TAPAN  
PRAKASH JHA**  
Electronics &  
Telecommunication  
Engineering

**AIR-1 : E&T**

Father's Name	Neelamber Jha
Department Preferred	ITS
College (B. Tech) with address	Yeshwantrao Chavan College of Engg., Nagpur

Subject	Marks Obtained
Prelims: Paper-I	91.34
Prelims: Paper-II	209.34
Mains: Paper-I	159
Mains: Paper-II	187
Interview	125
Final Total Marks	772

**Ques :** To whom would you give the credit of your success?

**Student :** I would like to thank my parents, without their support I could not have achieved this success. Apart from this, Made Easy paved a path for me to realise my dream to be in Engineering Services. I would like to thank my friends also.

**Ques :** What was your experience in ESE Preparation and from where you received support during this journey?

**Student :** I had joined Made Easy batch in 2018 at Lado Sarai (Delhi), and in 2019, I appeared in ESE interview but could not get shortlisted, but because of guidance provided by Made Easy, I

got selected in DRDO as scientist and it gave a boost to my confidence for ESE.

**Ques :** In your opinion, physical classes are better or online classes?

**Student :** Physical classes are best because students are more attentive in this. Physical classes also provide student-teacher interaction in great extent, study environment, which are not possible in online classes.

**Ques :** What is the role of Test series in ESE preparation and how did it help you?

**Student :** Attending test series is very important for ESE preparation. An aspirant should give priority to both Prelims and Mains test series. I used to solve questions from previous test series and current test series so that I can have more practice of new questions, because UPSC these days ask new questions in E&T branch.

**Ques :** What is the importance of previous year ESE prelims and mains papers, and how many years' papers one should follow?

**Student :** ESE Previous years papers are very important to analyse the pattern and level of questions. I had solved all questions provided in Made Easy ESE previous years questions booklet. It has great importance.

**Ques :** In E&T branch, many aspirants opt for M.Tech. or research field. Did you appear in GATE?

**Student :** I was always determined to be in IES. Even though, I had appeared in GATE 2019 and got Rank 316, I did not join any IIT or NIT. So, my preparation was based on ESE only.

**Ques :** Can you recall some questions asked in UPSC ESE interview, and how was scenario there?

**Student :** My interview was very cordial. They first relaxed me and then asked questions about DRDO and its projects, and I was confident with my answers. They were quite happy with my answers.

**Ques :** Did you find any similarity between UPSC ESE interview and Made Easy ESE interview guidance programme?

**Student :** Definitely, my interview in UPSC was good due to interview guidance provided by Made Easy only. I found quite similar environment at UPSC as well.

**Ques :** Do you have plans for Civil Services preparation?

**Student :** Yes. I was waiting for ESE result and it has boosted my confidence. I will now start preparation for Civil Services simultaneously.

# Current Affairs QUESTIONS

- Debtor Reporting System (DRS) was developed by which of the following organizations?
  - International Monetary Fund (IMF)
  - World Bank (WB)
  - New Development Bank (NDB)
  - Asian Development Bank (ADB)
- Consider the following statements regarding Counter-cyclical Fiscal Policy:
  - Counter-cyclical fiscal policy becomes critical during an economic crisis.
  - Counter-cyclical fiscal policy is the one wherein fiscal policy reinforces the business cycle by being expansionary during good times and contractionary during recessions.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

  - 1 only
  - 2 only
  - Both 1 and 2
  - Neither 1 nor 2
- Rajiv Gandhi Kisan Nyay Yojana (RGKNY) was recently launched by which of the following states?
  - Rajasthan
  - Karnataka
  - Chhattisgarh
  - Maharashtra
- Which of the following statements is/are correct regarding 'DigiSaksham'?
  - It is a digital skills programme to enhance the employability of youth.
  - It was launched by the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship.

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

  - 1 only
  - 2 only
  - Both 1 and 2
  - Neither 1 nor 2
- Gross Domestic Capital Formation (GDCF) refers to:
  - Creation of Infrastructure or durable economic assets
  - Capitalization of Public sector Banks
  - Direct Retail Investment in manufacturing goods sector
  - Money circulation in public hands
- Consider the following statements:
  - RBI's Retail Direct Scheme allows retail investors to buy and sell government securities (G-Sec) online, both in the primary and secondary markets.
  - This scheme will help in improving the grievance redress mechanism for resolving customer complaints against RBI's regulated entities.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

  - 1 only
  - 2 only
  - Both 1 and 2
  - Neither 1 nor 2
- 'SAROD-Ports' which was recently is in news, is a:
  - Dispute redressal mechanism for the maritime sector.
  - Maritime program to counter piracy activities in the Indian Ocean.
  - Programme of the Ministry of Shipping to promote port-led development by modernizing India's ports.
  - None of the above
- Consider the following statements.
  - In 2021, it was the first time the climate scientists were awarded the Nobel Prize in Physics.
  - For the Citizens of India / Indian origin/foreign origin who were residents in India when they became recipients of the Nobel Prize, maximum Nobel Prizes have been awarded in the category of Peace.
  - The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) was earlier awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for its efforts in creating awareness for the fight against climate change.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

  - 1 and 2 only
  - 1 and 3 only
  - 2 and 3 only
  - 1, 2 and 3

## ANSWERS

1. (b)    2. (a)    3. (c)    4. (a)    5. (a)    6. (c)    7. (a)    8. (d)

9. INS Airavat was sent Vietnam in August 2021, as a part of Mission: (a) ABHIMANYU (b) VAAYU (c) SAGAR (d) GARUDA
10. 'Global Inequality Crisis Report' is released by which of the following organizations? (a) World Bank (b) International Monetary Fund (c) Oxfam International (d) World Economic Forum
11. Consider the following statements:  
1. Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban 2.0 aims to make cities garbage-free.  
2. Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT 2.0) aims to make cities water secure.  
Which of the statements given above is/are correct?  
(a) 1 only  
(b) 2 only  
(c) Both 1 and 2  
(d) Neither 1 nor 2
12. Which of the following statements is/are correct regarding Tax Inspectors Without Borders (TIWB)?  
1. It is a joint initiative of the World Bank and IMF.  
2. It is a cross border cooperation drive to curb funding to terrorists.  
Choose the correct option from the codes given below  
(a) 1 only  
(b) 2 only  
(c) Both 1 and 2  
(d) Neither 1 nor 2
13. Which among the following countries has introduced the concept of 'Vaccinated Travel Lane (VTL)'?  
(a) Singapore  
(b) Canada  
(c) United States of America  
(d) Germany
14. With reference to Kayakave Kailasa, which of the statements is incorrect?  
(a) It is launched in the Union Budget 2020-2021.  
(b) The launching Ministry is the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas.  
(c) It will enable SC/ST entrepreneurs in providing bulk LPG transportation.  
(d) State run energy firms are also part of it.
15. UAE, Uruguay and Bangladesh have been recently admitted to which among the following global institutions?  
(a) International Monetary Fund  
(b) New Development Bank (NDB)  
(c) Asian Development Bank  
(d) None of these
16. Which among the following is the first Asian country who has recently launched a 'Plastics pact'?  
(a) Bhutan (b) Nepal  
(c) India (d) Pakistan
17. India has signed an agreement with which country for development of Air-launched unmanned aerial vehicle (ALUAV)?  
(a) Canada (b) USA  
(c) Israel (d) Germany
18. Consider the following statements regarding the Global Methane Pledge:  
1. The Global Methane Pledge was launched at the UN COP26 climate conference.  
2. It aims to achieve net zero methane emissions by the year 2050.  
Which of the statements given above is/are correct?  
(a) 1 only  
(b) 2 only  
(c) Both 1 and 2  
(d) Neither 1 nor 2
19. RTS, S vaccines recently seen in the news, are related to which of the following diseases?  
(a) Malaria  
(b) Tuberculosis (TB)  
(c) Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS)  
(d) Dengue
20. What is the name of the campaign which was recently launched by Ayush Ministry to distribute medicinal plant saplings?  
(a) Ayush Aapke Dwar  
(b) Ayush Hamare Saath  
(c) Har Ghar Hara Ped  
(d) Haath Se Haath Ayush Ke Saath
21. The 'Great Reset Dialogues' is associated with which of the following organizations?  
(a) World Economic Forum  
(b) International Monetary Fund  
(c) UNFCCC  
(d) World Wide Fund for Nature
22. Exercise AJEYA WARRIOR recently commenced between which of the following countries?  
(a) India and United Kingdom  
(b) Australia and India  
(c) Russia and Nepal  
(d) Bangladesh and Sri Lanka
23. Javan Gibbon is in the news recently, International Union for Conservation of Nature Red List of Threatened Species classifies it as:  
(a) Critically Endangered (CR)  
(b) Near Threatened (NT)  
(c) Endangered (EN)  
(d) Extinct (EX)

## ANSWERS

- |         |         |         |         |         |         |         |         |         |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 9. (c)  | 10. (c) | 11. (c) | 12. (d) | 13. (a) | 14. (a) | 15. (b) | 16. (c) | 17. (b) |
| 18. (a) | 19. (a) | 20. (a) | 21. (a) | 22. (a) | 23. (c) |         |         |         |

24. Which ministry has recently launched the PM-DAKSH Portal and mobile application which aim to make the skill development schemes accessible to the target groups?  
 (a) Ministry of Education  
 (b) Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment  
 (c) Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship  
 (d) None of these
25. India announced which of the following climate targets at the COP-26 Summit in Glasgow?  
 1. Meet 50% of energy requirements from renewables by 2030.  
 2. Enhancement of installed renewable capacity to 500 GW by 2030.  
 3. Reduce India's carbon emissions intensity by 33 to 35 per cent by the year 2030 compared to 2005 levels.  
 Select the correct answer using the code given below.  
 (a) 1 only (b) 1 and 2 only  
 (c) 2 and 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3
26. Recently, Lucy Mission was seen in the news, the objective of the Mission is to:  
 (a) Study Solar Coronal Mass Ejection  
 (b) Study Trojan asteroids  
 (c) Explore the Exoplanets  
 (d) Study of Planet Venus
27. The author of the book 'Human Rights and Terrorism in India' is:  
 (a) Raghuram Rajan  
 (b) Subramanian Swamy  
 (c) Shaktikanta Das  
 (d) Shashi Tharoor
28. The term 'Ophiocordyceps' which was recently seen in the news, is a:  
 (a) Algae (b) Virus  
 (c) Bacteria (d) Fungi
29. Consider the following statements regarding One Sun One World One Grid (OSOWOG) project.  
 1. It was launched on the sidelines of the UNFCCC COP26 summit.  
 2. The project aims to connect energy grids across borders between different countries to facilitate a faster transition to the use of renewable energy.  
 3. OSOWOG is also aimed at addressing the issue of high cost of energy storage.  
 Which of the statements given above is/are correct?  
 (a) 1 and 2 only (b) 3 only  
 (c) 1 and 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3
30. Who has become India's 70th Grandmaster in Chess in 2021?  
 (a) Raja Rithvik  
 (b) Tania Sachdev  
 (c) Surya Shekhar Ganguly  
 (d) None of these
31. Which of the following schemes deals with collecting milk from lactating mothers and storing it for infants in need?  
 (a) Surakshit Matritva Aashwasan Scheme  
 (b) Pradhan Mantri Matritva Vandana Yojana  
 (c) Pradhan Mantri Vaya Vandana Yojana  
 (d) Vatsalya Maatri Amrit Kosh
32. YUVA which was recently launched by Department of Higher Education, is related to:  
 (a) Skill development program  
 (b) Author Mentorship programme  
 (c) National Scheme of Incentive to Girls for Secondary Education  
 (d) None of the above
33. Which among the following ministries implements the PRASHAD Scheme?  
 (a) Ministry of Tourism  
 (b) Ministry of Culture  
 (c) Ministry of Home Affairs  
 (d) None of the above
34. Regarding the net zero targets recently in the news, consider the following statements.  
 1. Net-zero means to stop the carbon emissions and bring them to zero.  
 2. "India: Transforming to a Net-Zero Emissions Energy System" report was released by NITI Aayog.  
 Which of the statements given above is/are correct?  
 (a) 1 only (b) 2 only  
 (c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2
35. Consider the following statements regarding 'PM GatiShakti'.  
 1. PM Gati Shakti aims to institutionalize holistic planning for major infrastructure projects.  
 2. It is intended to break departmental silos and connect different ministries for the execution of infrastructure projects.  
 Which of the statements given above is/are correct?  
 (a) 1 only  
 (b) 2 only  
 (c) Both 1 and 2  
 (d) Neither 1 nor 2
36. Virtual maritime exercise 'Exercise Shield', which was conducted recently between India and which countries?  
 (a) Sri Lanka and Maldives  
 (b) Nepal and Indonesia  
 (c) Russia and Australia  
 (d) USA and Japan

## ANSWERS

- |         |         |         |         |         |         |         |         |         |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 24. (b) | 25. (b) | 26. (b) | 27. (b) | 28. (d) | 29. (d) | 30. (a) | 31. (d) | 32. (b) |
| 33. (a) | 34. (d) | 35. (c) | 36. (a) |         |         |         |         |         |

37. Which of the following statements correctly explains the term 'Broad money'?
- The unaccounted money that is concealed from the tax administrator
  - Currencies of other countries in the Indian economy
  - The total stock of money that is circulating in the economy
  - None of the above
38. What is the name of the operation launched by the Indian Navy to protect Indian vessels in the Gulf region?
- Operation Samadhan
  - Operation Sankalp
  - Operation Raksha
  - Operation Takht
39. UNICEF India has partnered with which organization to launch a one-year joint initiative on ending violence against children?
- Facebook
  - Apple
  - Amazon
  - Google
40. "Dharma Guardian" is a bilateral annual military exercise between:
- India and Japan
  - India and the U.S.
  - India, Japan, Australia and the U.S.
  - India, Japan and the U.S.
41. Which among the following institutions has launched a new scheme named 'FASTER' (Fast and Secure Transmission of Electronic Records)?
- Reserve Bank of India
  - Supreme Court of India
  - Election Commission of India
  - NITI Aayog
42. The Pradhan Mantri Kisan SAMPADA Yojana is under which of the following ministries?
- Ministry of Food Processing Industries
  - Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare
  - Ministry of Commerce and Industry
  - None of the above
43. With reference to Pradhan Mantri Atma Nirbhar Swasth Bharat Yojana, consider the following statements:
- Under this, critical care services will be made available in all districts that have a population of over 5 lakh.
  - The scheme is primarily focussing on rural areas.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- 1 only
  - 2 only
  - Both 1 and 2
  - Neither 1 nor 2
44. In which state/UT, Indian Air Force has built one of the world's highest mobile air traffic control towers?
- Jammu Kashmir
  - Ladakh
  - Uttarakhand
  - Arunachal Pradesh
45. Project 75 "I" is related to:
- Submarine construction
  - 75<sup>th</sup> Independence Day celebration
  - ISRO's manned mission to space
  - None of the above
46. Which of the following statements is/are correct about 'Istanbul Convention'?
- It is a Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence.
  - Only European countries have signed this convention.
  - Turkey was the first country to ratify the Convention.
- Select the correct answer using the code given below:
- 1 and 3 only
  - 2 only
  - 3 only
  - 1, 2 and 3
47. Which city is to host the 2032 Olympic Games?
- New Delhi
  - Brisbane
  - New York
  - Tokyo
48. 'Birbal Nath committee' which was recently in the news, was associated with which of the following?
- Formation of Special Protection Group (SPG)
  - Privatization Indian Railways
  - Western Ghats
  - Bad Loan redressal mechanism

## ANSWERS

- |         |         |         |         |         |         |         |         |         |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 37. (c) | 38. (b) | 39. (a) | 40. (a) | 41. (b) | 42. (a) | 43. (a) | 44. (b) | 45. (a) |
| 46. (d) | 47. (b) | 48. (a) |         |         |         |         |         |         |

49. Which is the first country to approve genetically modified 'Golden rice'?
- (a) Canada  
(b) Philippines  
(c) China  
(d) Japan
50. Which of the following statements is correct regarding "Operation Safed Sagar"?
- (a) The code name was assigned to the Indian Air Force's strike to support the ground troops during the Kargil War of 1999.  
(b) The world's largest dairy development program and a landmark project of India's National Dairy Development Board.  
(c) Campaign launched for popularizing White Revolution in India.  
(d) None of these
51. With reference to NIPUN Bharat, consider the following statements:
1. It has been launched under the aegis of the central sector scheme of Samagra Shiksha.
  2. It aims to cover the learning needs of children in the age group of 6 to 18 years.
- Which of the statements given above are correct?
- (a) 1 only (b) 2 only  
(c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2
52. Consider the following statements regarding the recently launched SACRED Portal.
1. SACRED portal is an electronic employment exchange for senior citizens.
  2. It connects the able senior citizens with job providers in the private and public sector enterprises.
  3. It is the initiative of the Ministry of Labour and Employment.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- (a) 1 only (b) 1 and 2 only  
(c) 1 and 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3
53. The 'MyGov-Meri Sarkar' Portal has recently launched to receive feedback from the public on government schemes by which of the following states?
- (a) Rajasthan  
(b) Uttar Pradesh  
(c) West Bengal  
(d) Madhya Pradesh
54. Which global body approved its first-ever "Vision for Everyone" Resolution?
- (a) World Bank  
(b) United Nations General Assembly  
(c) UNESCO  
(d) International Monetary Fund
55. "PRAGYATA Guidelines" refer to the recently released guidelines regarding:
- (a) MSME loans  
(b) Digital education  
(c) Cases of sexual harassment  
(d) Coal blocks bidding
56. 'Lake Tahoe' was recently seen in the news, it is situated in which of the following countries?
- (a) Australia  
(b) United States of America  
(c) Japan  
(d) South Africa
57. The Raveendran Committee recently in the news is related to:
- (a) Setting up a CERT-In facility in Bangalore.  
(b) Investigate allegations of surveillance using the Pegasus spyware  
(c) Effect of Red Echo attacks on Indian Infrastructures  
(d) Recommend steps for free data flow with trust.
58. Which two countries have hosted the Indo-Pacific Business Forum in October 2021?
- (a) France and India  
(b) India and Germany  
(c) India and USA  
(d) India and Indonesia
59. Which state/UT has launched 'Carbon Watch', a mobile app to assess the carbon footprint?
- (a) Chandigarh (b) Delhi  
(c) Maharashtra (d) Gujarat
60. Which organization has manufactured the world's first plasmid DNA-based vaccine?
- (a) Zydus Cadila  
(b) Moderna  
(c) Pfizer  
(d) Serum Institute of India

## ANSWERS

49. (b)    50. (a)    51. (a)    52. (b)    53. (b)    54. (b)    55. (b)    56. (b)    57. (b)  
58. (c)    59. (a)    60. (a)

61. Who released the report titled "Health Insurance for India's Missing Middle"?
- (a) Ministry of Health and Family Welfare  
(b) NITI Aayog  
(c) Ministry of Women and Child Development  
(d) Tata Institute of Social Sciences
62. Which of the following statements is correct about 'Labour Force Participation Rate'?
- (a) Section of the working population in the age group of 16-64 in the economy currently employed or seeking employment.  
(b) Section of the working population in the age group of 16-60 in the economy currently employed.  
(c) Section of the working population in the age group of 18-60 in the economy currently employed or seeking employment.  
(d) None of the above
63. The Tribunals Reforms Act, 2021 seeks to dissolve which of the following?
- The Airport Appellate Tribunal
  - Appellate Board established under the Trade Marks Act, 1999
  - The Authority of Advance Ruling
  - The Film Certification Appellate Authority
- Select the correct answer using the code given below:
- (a) 1, 2 and 3 only  
(b) 2, 3 and 4 only
- (c) 2 and 4 only  
(d) 1, 2, 3 and 4
64. Project Sampurna, that has resulted in the reduction of malnutrition in children, has been implemented in:
- (a) Tamil Nadu (b) Assam  
(c) Uttar Pradesh (d) Kerala
65. Which of the following ministries has launched the 'SUJALAM campaign'?
- (a) Ministry of Health and Family Welfare  
(b) Ministry of Jal Shakti  
(c) Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship  
(d) Ministry of Rural Development
66. Recently in the news, UN Resolution 2593 is related to which of the following?
- (a) Minimum wages for workers  
(b) Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts.  
(c) US troops departure from Afghanistan  
(d) Afghan land not to be used for terrorist activities
67. What are the possible benefits of the vehicle scrappage policy?
- Help mitigate vehicular pollution
  - Reduce import dependency
  - Helps save forex reserves
  - Enhance government revenue
- Select the correct answer using the code given below:
- (a) 1, 2 and 3 only  
(b) 2, 3 and 4 only
- (c) 1, 2 and 4 only  
(d) 1, 2, 3 and 4
68. Which of the following is/are correct about the Ramappa Temple?
- It was built during the Kakatiya period by a Kakatiya general Recharla Rudra under Ganapati Deva.
  - It was selected as a World Heritage Site by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 2021.
- Select the correct answer using the code given below:
- (a) 1 only  
(b) 2 only  
(c) Both 1 and 2  
(d) Neither 1 nor 2
69. 'Blue Straggler' recently seen in the news, is related to which of the following?
- (a) Missile System  
(b) Supercomputer  
(c) Class of stars  
(d) Animal Species
70. 'Payments Infrastructure Development Fund' Scheme is the initiative of which institution?
- (a) NPCI  
(b) RBI  
(c) Ministry of Finance  
(d) NABARD
71. The BRICS Agricultural Research Platform has been set up in which country?
- (a) Brazil (b) Russia  
(c) India (d) South Africa

## ANSWERS

61. (b)    62. (a)    63. (d)    64. (b)    65. (b)    66. (d)    67. (d)    68. (c)    69. (c)  
70. (b)    71. (c)

72. Consider the following statements regarding PM MITRA Parks.

1. The scheme is to develop an integrated large-scale industrial infrastructure facility for the entire value-chain of the textile industry.
2. These parks will be set up at Greenfield / Brownfield sites located in different states.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

73. Air-Launched Unmanned Aerial Vehicle is a Project Agreement between India and:

- (a) U.S.
- (b) Russia
- (c) Israel
- (d) Australia

74. 'My Pad My Right' (MPMR) Project, an initiative of NABARD, was launched recently in which state?

- (a) Assam
- (b) Tripura
- (c) Bihar
- (d) Maharashtra

75. Komodo Dragon is recently seen in the news, The International Union for Conservation of Nature Red List of Threatened Species classifies it as:

- (a) Data Deficient
- (b) Least Concern
- (c) Endangered
- (d) Near Threatened

76. Consider the following statements regarding Norovirus.

1. Norovirus is a bug similar to the diarrhea-inducing rotavirus.

2. Norovirus is highly contagious, and can be transmitted through contaminated food, water, and surfaces.

3. The virus gets killed by steaming food and chlorinating water.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 1 and 2 only
- (c) 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

77. Which of the following statements is/are correct with respect to UMANG App?

1. It is a common unified platform for the delivery of services of various Government Departments through the mobile platform.
2. It was developed by the National e-Governance Division (NeG(d), Ministry of Electronics and IT (MeitY).

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

78. Pithampur, where Asia's longest high-speed test track NATRAX has been inaugurated, is located in which state/UT?

- (a) Madhya Pradesh
- (b) Uttar Pradesh
- (c) Delhi
- (d) Maharashtra

79. Which of the following countries is /are part of a collaboration for 'INSPIRESat-1'?

1. Singapore
2. United States of America
3. Taiwan
4. India

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 3 only
- (c) 1, 3 and 4 only
- (d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

80. With reference to the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), consider the following statements:

1. CDS acts as the permanent Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee.
2. The Department of Military Affairs is headed by the Chief of Defence Staff.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

81. Consider the following statements about 'Dholavira':

1. Dholavira is located on the island of Khadir.
2. It is the 40<sup>th</sup> site from India to get the UNESCO's World Heritage tag.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

## ANSWERS

72. (c)    73. (a)    74. (b)    75. (c)    76. (b)    77. (d)    78. (a)    79. (d)    80. (c)  
81. (c)

82. PMFME recently completed one year after establishment. What does F stand for in PMFME?
- (a) Finance  
(b) Fund  
(c) Financial  
(d) Formalization
83. Consider the following statements regarding 'Metaverse':
1. Metaverse is a parallel, virtual, world where users can have different identities, possessions and characters.
  2. Facebook is the only company which has built a metaverse.
  3. Interoperability is key to the success of metaverse.
- Which of the above statements is/are correct?
- (a) 1 only  
(b) 1 and 3 only  
(c) 2 and 3 only  
(d) 1, 2 and 3
84. With reference to C-295MW aircraft, consider the following statements:
1. It is a transport aircraft of 5-10 tonne capacity with contemporary technology
  2. The first 16 of these aircraft will be delivered in flyaway condition by Russia.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- (a) 1 only  
(b) 2 only  
(c) Both 1 and 2  
(d) Neither 1 nor 2
85. In which of the following cities, the President of India laid the foundation stone of Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar Cultural Center?
- (a) Nagpur (b) Lucknow  
(c) Jaipur (d) Gurugram
86. With reference to the Medium Range Surface to Air Missile (MRSAM) System, consider the following statements:
1. It is capable of engaging multiple targets at ranges up to 70 km.
  2. It is developed jointly by India and France.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- (a) 1 only  
(b) 2 only  
(c) Both 1 and 2  
(d) Neither 1 nor 2
87. Niranjanpur wetland is situated in which of the following states?
- (a) Rajasthan  
(b) Maharashtra  
(c) Uttarakhand  
(d) Bihar
88. Bagram Airfield is the key base of US Military troops in which of the following countries?
- (a) Pakistan (b) Afghanistan  
(c) Iran (d) Iraq
89. Which country's ambitious Mars mission is otherwise called 'Hope'?
- (a) Russia (b) UAE  
(c) China (d) Germany
90. WazirX, Coinswitch Kuber and CoinDCX are the examples of
- (a) Central Bank Digital Currencies  
(b) Crypto Exchanges  
(c) Cryptocurrency  
(d) Digital Wallets
91. Consider the following statements:
1. Both India and Europe are facing heatwaves and floods due to climate change.
  2. The EU Green Deal has set the target of Gross Zero Emissions by 2070.
  3. Germany is India's largest trading partner in Europe.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- (a) 2 only (b) 1 and 3 only  
(c) 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3
92. With reference to Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA), consider the following statements:
1. Only the President can declare the whole State or Union Territory as a disturbed area.
  2. It gives the Army powers to search premises and make arrests without warrants.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- (a) 1 only  
(b) 2 only  
(c) Both 1 and 2  
(d) Neither 1 nor 2
93. International Lunar Research Station (ILRS) project is a planned project by
- (a) United States of America  
(b) China  
(c) India  
(d) European Union

## ANSWERS

82. (d) 83. (b) 84. (a) 85. (b) 86. (a) 87. (c) 88. (b) 89. (b) 90. (b)  
91. (b) 92. (b) 93. (b)

- 94.** Which of the following organizations declared the first Thursday of November as the International Day against Violence and Bullying at School Including Cyberbullying?
- (a) Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)  
(b) European Union  
(c) UNESCO  
(d) Amnesty International
- 95.** 'Shoonya' Programme is related to which of the following?
- (a) Upliftment of Social infrastructure  
(b) Achieving the goal of net zero emission  
(c) Adoption of electric vehicles (EVs)  
(d) Manned mission of ISRO
- 96.** With reference to the BEAMS flagship program, consider the following statements:
1. It is undertaken by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.
  2. Its aim is to protect and conserve the pristine coastal and marine ecosystems through holistic management of resources.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- (a) 1 only  
(b) 2 only  
(c) Both 1 and 2  
(d) Neither 1 nor 2
- 97.** Build Back Better World (B3W) is the initiative undertaken by
- (a) G20 Countries  
(b) G7 Countries  
(c) OECD  
(d) ASEAN
- 98.** Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, sometimes seen in news was between
- (a) Iran and Azerbaijan  
(b) Russia and Azerbaijan  
(c) Armenia and Azerbaijan  
(d) Armenia and Georgia
- 99.** With reference to PM-KUSUM, consider the following statements:
1. The PM KUSUM Scheme was launched in 2020.
  2. It was launched by the Ministry of Power.
- Which of the statements given above is/are incorrect?
- (a) 1 only  
(b) 2 only  
(c) Both 1 and 2  
(d) Neither 1 nor 2
- 100.** With reference to the PM POSHAN scheme, consider the following statements.
1. It will replace the existing mid-day meal.
  2. It will also include the preschool students.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- (a) 1 only (b) 2 only  
(c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2
- 101.** 'Evergrande Crisis', recently in news pertains to
- (a) United States of America  
(b) Russia  
(c) China  
(d) Japan
- 102.** 'Kunming Declaration' was seen in the news recently, it is related to:
- (a) Refugee Crisis  
(b) Drug Trafficking  
(c) International Organized Crime  
(d) Biodiversity Conservation
- 103.** Double 10, recently seen in the news, is related to
- (a) Taiwan's national day  
(b) New weighing unit for atoms  
(c) Increasing population to food ratio  
(d) Energy transfer rule across trophic levels
- 104.** Consider the following statements about 'e-RUPI':
1. It is a prepaid UPI e-voucher that can be redeemed either by the QR code or by an SMS string.
  2. It is person-specific and purpose-specific, which means it can be used only for the intended purpose.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- (a) 1 only (b) 2 only  
(c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2
- 105.** Which Indian organization has recently won UNESCO King Sejong Literacy Prize 2021?
- (a) National Institute of Open Schooling  
(b) Indira Gandhi National Open University  
(c) National Council of Educational Research and Training  
(d) Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE)

## ANSWERS

- 94. (c) 95. (c) 96. (c) 97. (b) 98. (c) 99. (c) 100. (a) 101. (c) 102. (d)**  
**103. (a) 104. (c) 105. (a)**

- 106.** Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve (TATR), recently seen in news, is located in:  
 (a) Gujarat  
 (b) Rajasthan  
 (c) Maharashtra  
 (d) Andhra Pradesh
- 107.** Consider the following statements with reference to the e-Shram portal:  
 1. It will maintain a database of both organized and unorganized sector workers.  
 2. It is launched by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation.  
 Which of the statements given above is/are correct?  
 (a) 1 only  
 (b) 2 only  
 (c) Both 1 and 2  
 (d) Neither 1 nor 2
- 108.** Consider the following statements about the WTO Agreement on Agriculture (AoA):  
 1. The focus of the AoA is the elimination of what are called "trade-distorting" agricultural subsidies.  
 2. It does not cover forestry and fishery products.  
 Which of the statements given above is/are correct?  
 (a) 1 only  
 (b) 2 only  
 (c) Both 1 and 2  
 (d) Neither 1 nor 2
- 109.** Who has been appointed as the first Union Minister of the new 'Ministry of Cooperation'?  
 (a) Nitin Gadkari  
 (b) Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore  
 (c) Jyotiraditya Scidhia  
 (d) Amit Shah
- 110.** Which of the following countries has published a draft agreement to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) to ensure security?  
 (a) USA (b) China  
 (c) Russia (d) Canada
- 111.** VIHANGAM, an internet-based platform, is associated with:  
 (a) Food Processing  
 (b) Agriculture  
 (c) Child Labour  
 (d) Mining
- 112.** Avani Lekhara, who took the 'Best Female Debut' at Paralympic Sport Awards, is associated with which sports?  
 (a) Cycling (b) Boxing  
 (c) Shooting (d) Wrestling
- 113.** Which organization released the 'State of the world's land and water resources for food and agriculture (SOLAW 2021) report?  
 (a) WHO (b) FAO  
 (c) UNFCCC (d) WEF
- 114.** Catherine Russell, who has been seen in the news recently, is the new head of which global institution?  
 (a) World Bank  
 (b) World Economic Forum  
 (c) UNGA  
 (d) UNICEF
- 115.** Which Union Ministry is implementing the umbrella scheme named 'Atal Vayo Abhyudaya Yojana (AVYAY)?  
 (a) Ministry of Finance  
 (b) Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment  
 (c) Ministry of Education  
 (d) Ministry of Minority Affairs
- 116.** Lunar Polar Exploration Mission (LUPEX) is a joint mission to the Moon, with India and:  
 (a) Germany  
 (b) Israel  
 (c) Japan  
 (d) Canada

## ANSWERS

106. (c)    107. (d)    108. (c)    109. (d)    110. (c)    111. (d)    112. (c)    113. (b)    114. (d)  
 115. (b)    116. (c)

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