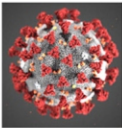


ENGINEERS' EXCLUSIVE Current Affairs MADE EASY

UPSC Engineering Services Examination, State PSCs and other examinations



COVID-19

"Second wave of COVID-19
hugely impacted India"



Chenab bridge

"World's highest railway
bridge gets completed"



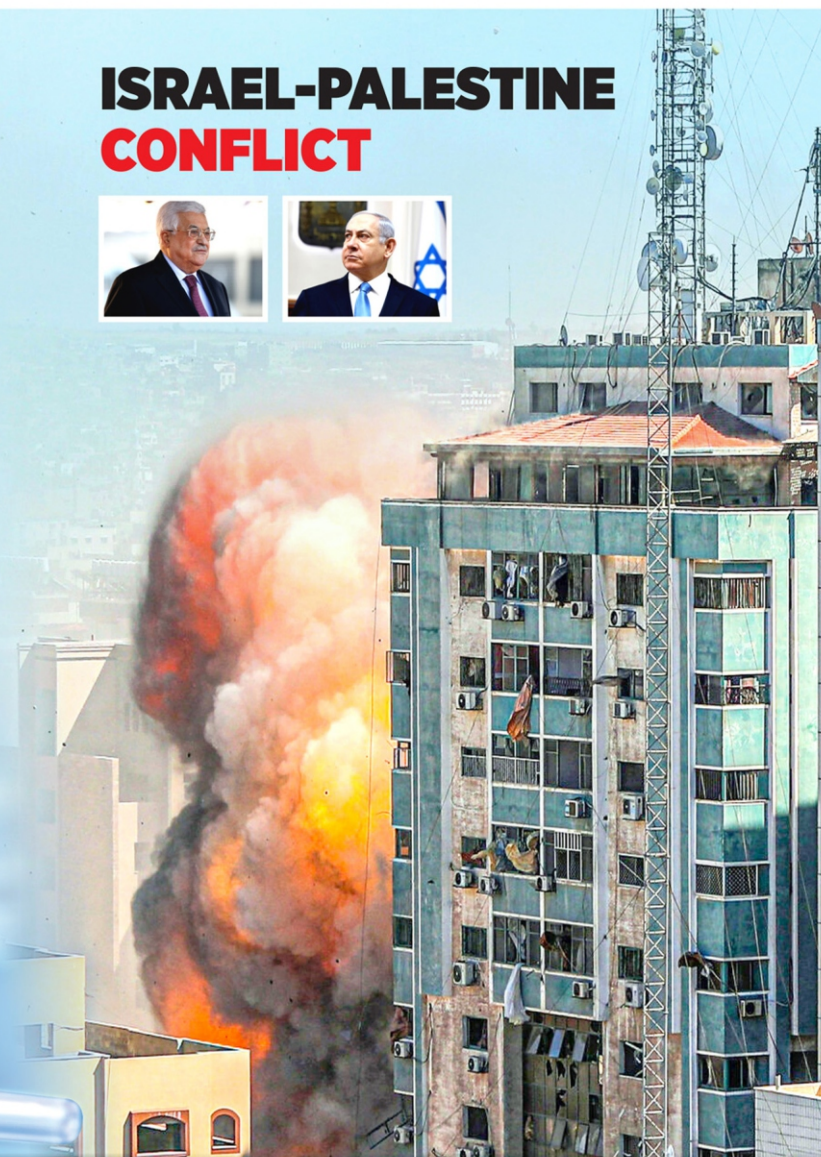
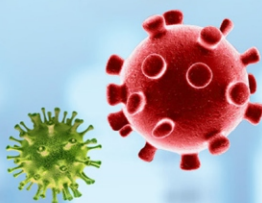
Suez canal crisis

"Blockade caused significant
loss in trade"

C  **VID-19**
↓ ↓ ↓ ↓
CORONA VIRUS DISEASE 2019



ISRAEL-PALESTINE CONFLICT



Central Vista
redevelopment project

Quadrilateral framework
(QUAD) meeting

Recent current affairs
questions



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Current Affairs

MADE EASY

Annual Edition
— *for* —
ESE 2021
Preliminary Examination



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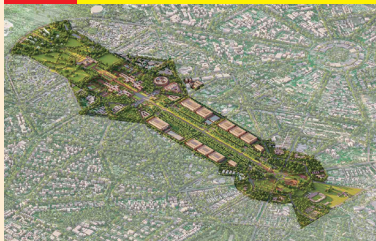
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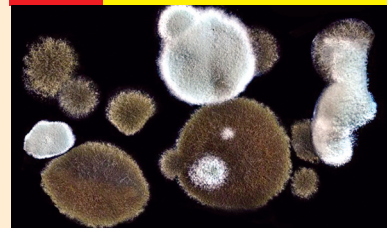
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MADE EASY Classroom Students Top in Engineering Service Exam 2020

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



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

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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
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Postal Course, Test Series

12

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Surendra Prajapat
Classroom Course,
IGP

13

AIR

Gyan Chand
Classroom Course,
Test Series, IGP

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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

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Ankita Bansal
Classroom Course,
IGP

19

AIR

Prem Sukh Nain
Interview Guidance
Program

20

AIR

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Test Series,
IGP

21

AIR

Aba Lawate
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Test Series, IGP

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Hanuman Suman
Classroom Course,
IGP

23

AIR

Saroj Kumari
Classroom Course,
IGP

24

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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

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AIR

Rahul Bachkhetti
Classroom Course,
IGP

29

AIR

Ram Kumar
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Program

30

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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

Nikil Rohin
Classroom Course,
IGP

43

AIR

Parmar Sunny Mukesh Kumar
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. Kadeela
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 Kannoja
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
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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
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Interview Guidance Program

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AIR

Kurkute Sanmati Sharadrao
Test Series,
IGP

3
AIR

Suraj Kumar Shaw
Classroom Course,
Test Series, IGP

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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, TestSeries

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

22 AIR

Mohd Bilal Khan
Interview Guidance
Program

23 AIR

Kottam V.
Classroom Course,
Test Series, IGP

24 AIR

Mayank Shekhar
Classroom Course,
IGP

25 AIR

Varun Varshney
Test Series,
IGP

26 AIR

Adfar Aaghaz Mir
Test Series,
IGP

27 AIR

Richa Kumari
Classroom Course,
IGP

28 AIR

Shubham Arora
Test Series,
IGP

29 AIR

Rajeev Ranjan
Classroom Course,
IGP

30 AIR

Shubham Maurya
Classroom Course,
Postal Package, IGP

31 AIR

Nirmal Nayak
Test Series

32 AIR

Bharat Kumar Sharma
Classroom Course,
Test Series, IGP

33 AIR

Himanshu Rajput
Test Series,
IGP

34 AIR

Chiluka Shashi Kalyan
Interview Guidance
Program

35 AIR

Soham Chattopadhyay
Classroom Course,
IGP

36 AIR

Shivam Prajapati
Classroom Course,
Test Series

37 AIR

Jyotiranjana Sahoo
Interview Guidance
Program

38 AIR

Abhinav Kumar Singh
Classroom Course,
Test Series

39 AIR

Vikash Yadav
Classroom Course,
Test Series, IGP

40 AIR

Amarjeet Singh
Classroom Course,
IGP

41 AIR

Shubham Agrawal
Test Series,
IGP

42 AIR

Arjun Sharma
Classroom Course,
IGP

43 AIR

Navlesh Kumar
Classroom Course,
Test Series

44 AIR

Birbal Ram
Classroom Course,
Test Series

45 AIR

Ritesh Yadav
Classroom Course,
Test Series

46 AIR

Manas Tripathi
Test Series,
IGP

47 AIR

Shashwat Rai
Classroom Course,
Test Series, IGP

48 AIR

Sunil Godara
Interview Guidance
Program

49 AIR

Manish Kumar
Classroom Course,
Test Series, IGP

50 AIR

Satish
Test Series

51 AIR

Tanmaya Santosh Naik
Test Series,
IGP

52 AIR

Ravi Kumar
Classroom Course,
Test Series, IGP

53 AIR

Nazim Khan
Test Series,
IGP

54 AIR

Akash Verma
Classroom Course,
Test Series

55 AIR

Tushar Mangal
ESE Offline
Test Series, IGP

56 AIR

Varsha Kushwaha
Test Series,
IGP

57 AIR

Prashant Patel
Classroom Course,
Test Series, IGP

58 AIR

Dheeraj Kr. Meena
Classroom Course,
Postal Package, IGP

59 AIR

Pranshu Jangid
Test Series,
IGP

60 AIR

Saravanakumar M
Interview Guidance
Program

61 AIR

Purkha Ram
Classroom Course,
IGP

62 AIR

Mohd. Arshad Ansari
Test Series,
IGP

63 AIR

Madan Lal Meena
Classroom Course,
Test Series, IGP

64 AIR

Tanmay Mahajan
Interview Guidance
Program

65 AIR

Shubham Yadav
Classroom Course,
Test Series, IGP

MADE EASY Classroom Students Top in Engineering Service Exam 2020

Civil Engineering



66
AIR
Vipul Prajapat
Test Series,
IGP



67
AIR
Sudhanshu Suman
Test Series



68
AIR
Anurag Verma
Test Series,
IGP



69
AIR
Narender Kumar
Classroom Course,
Test Series, IGP



70
AIR
Rahul Tasiwal
Classroom Course,
IGP



71
AIR
Manish Kumar Gupta
Classroom Course,
Test Series, IGP



72
AIR
Kritika Lila
Classroom Course,
Test Series, IGP



73
AIR
Ramnivas Yadav
Classroom Course,
Test Series, IGP



74
AIR
Varun Tiwari
Classroom Course,
Test Series, IGP



75
AIR
Komal Pratap Singh
Postal Package,
Test Series, IGP



76
AIR
Abhi Sahu
Test Series,
IGP



77
AIR
Narendra Sarswat
Classroom Course,
Test Series, IGP



78
AIR
Ashish Saini
Classroom Course,
IGP



79
AIR
Abhinav Kumar
Classroom Course,
IGP



80
AIR
Sonu Verma
Classroom Course,
IGP



81
AIR
Ankit Yadav
Classroom Course,
IGP



82
AIR
Ashutosh Kumar
Classroom Course,
IGP



83
AIR
Rajkumar Maurya
Test Series,
IGP



84
AIR
V Chandra Sekhar
Interview Guidance
Program



85
AIR
Prince Kumar Mall
Classroom Course,
IGP



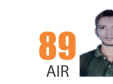
86
AIR
Mangesh Tapare
Classroom Course,
IGP



87
AIR
Shailesh Mishra
Classroom Course,
IGP



88
AIR
Manoj Kumar
Classroom Course,
IGP



89
AIR
Ram Prabhat Kumar
Classroom Course,
Test Series, IGP



90
AIR
Aman Singh
Classroom Course,
IGP



91
AIR
Rakesh
Test Series



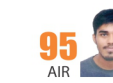
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108
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109
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Deepak Swaroop
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113
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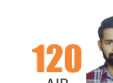
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119
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Swatantra Gaurav
Classroom Course, IGP
Postal Package, Test Series



120
AIR
Shubham Singh
Classroom Course,
IGP



121
AIR
Amit Prabhat
Interview Guidance
Program



122
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Abhishek Pratap Singh
Classroom Course,
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Dakey Sushma
Test Series,
IGP



124
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Ajit Kumar Gupta
Classroom Course



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Nitish Dhanraj
Classroom Course,
Test Series, IGP



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Tejas Anil Bhamare
Test Series

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.

MARUTI SUZUKI

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



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.

Green Tax on Vehicles

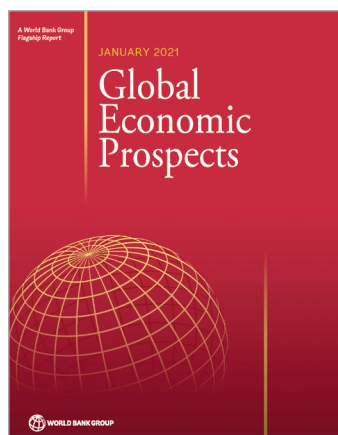
- The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways announced a green tax on a certain category of vehicles starting from April 1, 2022.
- The government has proposed that a green tax could be levied on personal vehicles at the time of renewal of registration certificate. It will be levied after 15 years equivalent 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.



Green tax is also called the pollution tax or environmental tax. The tax is an excise duty on goods that results into the environmental pollutants.

World Bank released Global Economic Prospects Report

- The World Bank recently released the Global Economic Prospects report.



Key findings:

- According to the report, the Indian economy is projected to decline by 9.6% in 2020-21. The Indian economy is set to rebound 5.4% in 2021-22.
- The contraction in the Indian economy would mainly be due to a rapid fall in household consumption and private investment. The informal sector, which accounts for four-fifths of the country's jobs, has been seriously affected.
- On the other hand, the world economy is to expand by 4% in 2021.
- The services and manufacturing sector are gaining Momentum.
- According to the World Bank, India is facing its first technical recessionary phase.

About Technical Recessionary Phase

- When the GDP growth is negative for two consecutive quarters or more than the period it is called the technical recessionary phase.
- In India, the Gross Domestic Product declined by 23.9 percent between April and June quarter. The Gross Domestic Product growth rate contracted by 7.5 % during the July and September quarter.

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.

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.

Govt. notified HSN Code

- The Ministry of Finance announced that the businesses with annual turnover of more than Rs 5 crores will have to furnish six-digit HSN code on their tax invoices.

HSN Code

- The HSN Code is a six-digit identification code. The World Customs Organization (WCO) developed this code in 1988.
- It is an international nomenclature for the classification of products. It allows participating countries to classify traded goods on a common basis for customs purposes.
- The code, also called the universal economic language for goods, is a multipurpose international product nomenclature.
- The HSN code currently comprises around 5,000 commodity groups. Each Code is a unique six-digit code that has numbers arranged in a legal and logical structure. There are well-defined rules to achieve uniform classification.
- Of the six digits, the first two denote the HS Chapter, the next two give the HS heading, and the last two give the HS subheading.



Significance:

- More than 200 countries are using the HSN codes to gather international trade statistics, make trade policies and to monitor goods. Thus, the HSN system helps to maintain a harmonized trade procedure all over the world. It also helps to reduce the costs in international trade.

Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code Amendment Ordinance, 2021 promulgated

- The President of India promulgated the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (Amendment) Ordinance, 2021.
- The ordinance introduces a pre-packaged insolvency resolution process for corporate persons classified as MSMEs under the MSME Development Act, 2006.

Key Features:

- Chapter III-A has been introduced to the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016 under the amendment. It explains the initiation of resolution, duties of resolution professionals and eligibility to take the benefits of pre-packaged insolvency resolution processes, etc.
- The ordinance aims to provide an efficient alternative insolvency resolution process for the corporate persons classified as MSMEs.
- The ordinance allows the corporate debtor to submit a "base resolution plan" to the resolution professional.

- The new pre-pack framework is applicable to MSMEs with a maximum default value of Rs 1 crore. A PIRP cannot run in parallel to a CIRP. CIRP is Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process.

Note

PIRP is applicable only to MSMEs. On the other hand, IBC is applicable to all the corporate debtors. PIRP has a default threshold of Rs 1 crore. IBC deals with a threshold greater than Rs 1 crore.

RoDTEP Scheme to be extended to all goods

- The Government of India announced that the benefits of RoDTEP (Remission of Duties and Taxes on Exported Products) scheme is to be extended to all goods.

Key points:

- The RoDTEP scheme was introduced in 2020 to improve India's exports to foreign markets. A system for refund of levies, taxes or duties at federal, state and local level would be set up under the scheme. No refunds were made under any process previous to the scheme. The MEIS was not WTO compatible.
- The RoDTEP Scheme will coordinate with the World Trade Organization to reduce the post production transaction costs for the exporters. In order to achieve this, the RoDTEP Scheme implementation measures must provide production-oriented processes.

Benefits:

- Under the RoDTEP Scheme, the exporters of India will meet international standards for exports. This will boost the value of Indian products in the international market.
- It is being achieved through certification and affordable testing that will be provided under the scheme rather than relying on international organizations.

RBI announced operational guidelines for Payment Infrastructure Development Funds

- The Reserve Bank of India recently announced operational guidelines to Payment Infrastructure Development Funds. The main aim of the funds is to deploy more digital payment infrastructure across tier-3 to tier-6 centres and in the North-eastern states.

Guidelines:

- The RBI has constituted an advisory council under the chairmanship of B.P. Kanungo. The advisory council will basically govern the funds. On the other hand, the funds will be administered and managed by RBI.

- The fund is to be operational for two years, 2021 and 2022.
- The fund has a corpus of 345 crores of rupees. Of this, 250 crores will be contributed by RBI and 95 crores of rupees by card networks operating in India.

Function of the advisory council:

- The advisory council will plan a transparent mechanism to acquire banks, non-banks in different locations. This will help to increase the banking infrastructure of the country.

About Acceptance Development Fund

The Acceptance Development Fund was proposed by the RBI in 2019 to develop card acceptance infrastructure such as swipe machines in Tier III and Tier IV cities.

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.



Off-Budget Borrowings to reduce Fiscal Deficit

- The Government of India presented the Union Budget 2021 on February 1, 2021. This year, the focus of the budget was on off-budget borrowings so as to reduce the Fiscal Deficit.

About Off-budget borrowings

- The loans that are taken by any public institution and not by the Centre directly are called the "Off-Budget Borrowings". The public institution borrows on the directions of the Central Government.
- These borrowings are used to fulfil the expenditure needs of the government.
- Under such borrowing norms, the Centre used to finance its expenditures while keeping the debt off the books. Thus, the debt is not counted while calculating the fiscal deficit.
- The liability of the loan is not formally on the Centre and is not included in the national fiscal deficit. Thus, it helps in keeping the fiscal deficit of the country within acceptable limits.

Note

- Government can raise the borrowings by asking the implementing agency to raise the required funds from the market by loans or by issuing bonds.
- The borrowings can also be raised through the Public Sector Banks (PSBs) where the PSBs can be asked to fund off-budget expenses.

Receivables Exchange of India in news

- RXIL (Receivables Exchange of India) has become the first TReDS platform that crossed the monthly transaction volumes of Rs 1,000 crore in March.
- This shows economic recovery in the country. Also, it shows that the MSME sector that was badly hit during COVID-19 is getting revived.
- RXIL was incorporated in 2016. It is a joint venture between Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) and National Stock Exchange of India Limited. It operates TReDS.
- It was the first entity to receive approval from RBI to launch the first TReDS Exchange of India.



Note

- TReDS is an electronic platform that facilitates financing of MSMEs through multiple financiers.
- The main three participants in the TReDS are MSMEs (sellers), financiers and Corporate entities (buyers). According to RBI, only MSMEs can participate as sellers in TReDS.

RBI to buy G-Secs

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has declared that it will buy four government securities (G-Secs) worth 20,000 crore.

Key Highlights

- This move was announced in the wake of yields that have recently moved up to an intra-day high of 6.1634%.
- Following the announcement of the acquisition of the OMO, the yield on the 10-year G-Sec benchmark slowed by 3-4 basis points.



OPEN MARKET OPERATIONS

- Open Market Operations are the acquisition and selling by RBI of government securities (G-Secs) from and to the market.
- Open market operations are carried out with the goal of changing the conditions of the rupee's liquidity in the economy.
- In such operations, when RBI sells the government security in the market banks use to purchase them. When the banks purchase the Government securities, their ability to lend money to the industries, households and other commercial sectors gets reduced.

Government securities are liability instruments issued by the government to borrow funds. It is divided into two categories:

- Treasury bills that are short-term instruments. They become mature in 91 days, 182 days, or 364 days.
- Dated securities that are long-term instruments. They become mature in between 5 years and 40 years.

Significant Economic Presence (SEP) principle notified

- India released notified a revenue threshold of Rs 2 crore and a limit of 300,000 users for non-resident technology firms such as Google, Facebook, Netflix, to pay tax in India under new or revised bilateral tax pacts.
- This is part of the Significant Economic Presence (SEP) principle, which was introduced in the Finance Bill 2018-19.
- This threshold was notified for non-resident technology firms such as Netflix, Facebook, Google, to pay tax in India. The principle was first introduced in the Finance Bill 2018-19.

About SEP

The concept of Significant Economic Presence ('SEP') was introduced in the Income-Tax Act, 1961 ('the Act') from April 1, 2018 i.e. A.Y. 2019-20 to tax the income of the non-resident arising from transactions relating to any goods, services or property in India, including allowing download of data or software or carrying on business activities in India through digital means.

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.

What is Non-Fungible Token?

- 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 announced G-sec acquisition programme

- In its recent monetary policy briefing, the RBI announced a Rs one lakh crore Government Securities Acquisition programme (G-SAP 1.0.). The first purchase of Rs 25,000 crore is to be made on April 15, 2021.

About GSAP 1.0

- 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.'

Note

- A Government Security (G-Sec) is a tradable instrument issued by the Central Government or the State Governments.
- It acknowledges the Government's debt obligation. Such securities are short term (usually called treasury bills, with original maturities of less than one year- presently issued in three tenors, namely, 91 day, 182 day and 364 day) or long term (usually called Government bonds or dated securities with original maturity of one year or more).

India's GDP Growth collapsed in first quarter of FY 2020-21

- As per data released by National Statistical Organisation (NSO), India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) collapsed to -23.9% for first quarter (April-June) of the financial year 2020-21.

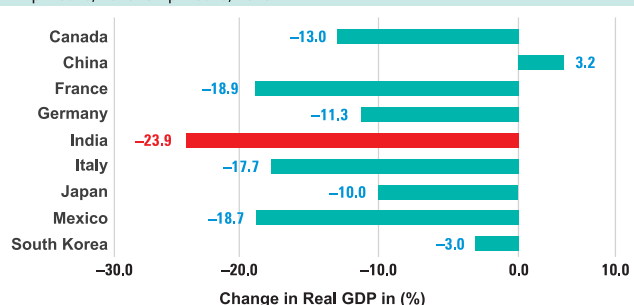
Major Highlights

- GDP slumped to - 23.9% compared with growth of 3.1% in the previous (January-March 2020) quarter.
- Among major economies, India's contraction was the sharpest. Globally, India is close to the UK's contraction of 20.4% in the second quarter.
- Agriculture is the only sector which saw growth of an annual 3.4% in the June quarter compared with a growth of 3% in the June quarter of 2019-20.
- The manufacturing sector fell 39.3% in the April-June quarter.
- Construction sector collapsed to 50.3% during the three-month period.

- Trade, hotels, transport and communications sector declined to 47%.
- The services sector slumped 20.6% in the June quarter.
- Private consumption witnessed a sharp decline of 24.5%.
- However, Government consumption saw a 20.2% increase in the April-June quarter compared with the 9.5% growth in the same quarter of the previous year.

Change in Quarterly Real GDP (%)

April-June, 2019 to April-June, 2020



Reasons of GDP Contraction

- In any economy, the total demand for goods and services, i.e. GDP, is generated from four parameters of growth.
- The Biggest parameter is consumption demand from private individuals. This accounted for 56.4% of all GDP before this quarter.
- The second biggest parameter is the demand generated by private sector businesses. This accounted for 32% of all GDP in India.
- The third parameter is the demand for goods and services generated by the government. It accounted for 11% of India's GDP.

The last parameter is the net demand on GDP after we subtract imports from India's exports. In India's case, it is the smallest engine and, since India typically imports more than it exports, its effect is negative on the GDP.

About GDP

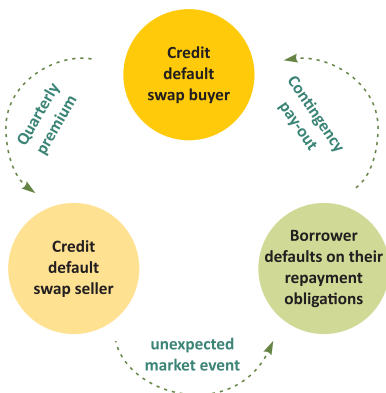
- GDP is the total market value of all the finished goods and services produced within a country's borders in a specific time period.
- It functions as a comprehensive scorecard of the country's economic health.
- It is usually calculated on quarterly as well as annual basis.

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.

United States included India in currency manipulation monitoring list

- The United States has again included India in its currency monitoring list. These countries have the possibility of 'Currency Manipulation' and 'Questionable Foreign Exchange Policies.'



Other Countries:

- The other countries on the chart are China, Germany, Korea, Japan, Italy, Malaysia and Singapore.
- India was added to the Currency Watchdog list earlier in 2018. It was, however, withdrawn from the list in 2019. If a nation is included on the ranking, it will stay on the list for the next two successive reports.

About Currency Manipulator

- The US Government labels a nation as a currency manipulator if it suspects that it is involved in unfair trading practises.
- According to the United States, the government is intentionally devaluing the currency against the dollar. Simply put, the nation is artificially decreasing its worth in order to achieve an unfair advantage over the US.

RBI agreed on expansion of Liquidity Adjustment Facility

- Recently, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has agreed to expand the Liquidity Adjustment Facility (LAF) to Regional Rural Banks (RRB) in order to make liquidity management more effective.
- The LAF was implemented in RBI in 1998 on the basis of the recommendations of the Narasimham Banking Sector Reform Committee.
- It is a monetary policy instrument that allows banks to address transient cash shortages by repurchase or rest agreements. It can also provide RBI loans by reverse-repos to collect funds.

Tools used by RBI to control liquidity:

- RBI is using four instruments to monitor the flow of liquidity in the region. This includes Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR), Liquidity Modification Facilities (including repo rate and repo rate), Legislative Liquidity Ratio and Open Market Operations.

Government to set-up Development Finance Institution (DFI)

- The Finance Minister of India announced that the Union Cabinet cleared the proposal of setting up of the "Development Finance Institution (DFI) with the capital infusion of rupees 20,000 crore.

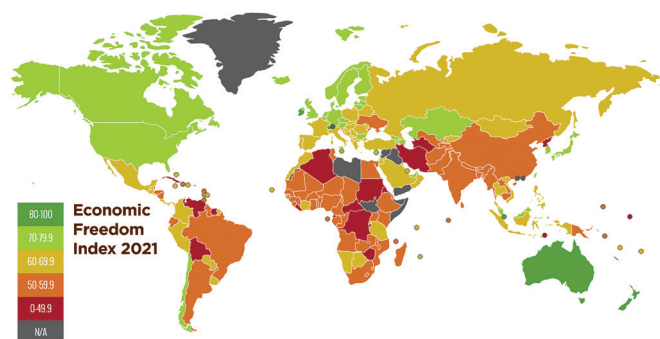
Key Points:

- Initially, DFI will be owned solely by the Government of India. In a few years, it will be eventually reduced to 26%.
- It would fund social and economic development programs listed in the National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP).
- The government would exclude funds deposited in the DFI from paying taxes for ten years. Long-term investors, such as insurers and mutual plans, may be drawn in.
- The government also plans to sell shares to DFI, which would continue to lower the cost of funds. This will allow the organization to access its initial resources to raise funds from a variety of sources.

About DFI

The Development Finance Institution (DFI) are organizations which are either owned by the government or by charitable institutions to finance infrastructure projects that are of national importance but may or may not meet commercial return standards.

Economic Freedom Index 2021 released



- The Heritage Foundation, a US-based think-tank, recently launched the "Economic Freedom Index".
- The index was prepared by covering 184 countries this time for the period of July 2019 to June 2020.

Major Highlights

- In the index, Singapore topped the global ranking for the second consecutive year.

- The second place was obtained by New Zealand with its score of 83.9 points. Australia has obtained the third position with 82.4 points. Switzerland has scored 81.9 points and acquired the fourth position. While, Ireland obtained the fifth position with 81.4 points.
- India has obtained a score of 56.5 this year which is ranked at the middle among Asia-Pacific countries that is 26th out of 40 Asia-Pacific countries.

Index of Economic Freedom

- Index of Economic Freedom is an annual index and ranking which was created in the year 1995 by the conservative think-tank called The Heritage Foundation and The Wall Street Journal.
- It measures the degree of economic freedom among the world's nations.

Central Govt. revamped Viability Gap Funding

- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs approved the extension and revision of the Public Private Partnership Financial Assistance System for Infrastructure Viability Gap Funding till 2024-25.

Key highlights:

- The goal of this scheme is to encourage public private collaborations in the social and economic infrastructure for the efficient development, proper operation and conservation of assets and to make economically and socially vital projects commercially viable.
- The grant would cater to social sectors such as water management, wastewater disposal, sanitation and education.

About Viability Gap Funding:

- The lack of a means of funding is a big problem facing the infrastructure sector in India. Certain infrastructure programmes can not be commercially feasible, but they are politically justified. These ventures are usually long-term and development-oriented.
- The support for Feasibility Gap was planned to effectively execute such initiatives. Viability Gap Financing funds initiatives that are politically justified but not financially feasible.



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

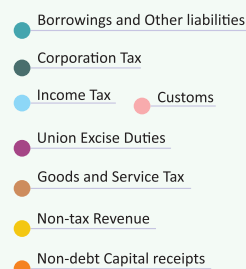
- ₹50,000 crore earmarked over five years for the creation of a National Research Foundation (NRF) - an umbrella body that is expected to fund research across a range of disciplines, from science and technology to humanities.

Railways

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

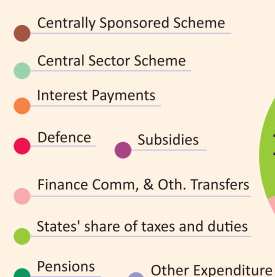
UNION BUDGET 2021-22 (in Paise)

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.

CLMV Countries : India invites to join ISA

- The sixth India-CLMV Market Conclave 2020 was held recently. India welcomed the CLMV countries to join the International Solar Partnership and the Resilient Supply Chain Project during the conclave.
- The Conclave took place yesterday under the theme "Building Bridges for Constructive Development."
- During the conclave, India stated that it was able to share the COVID-19 vaccine with CLMV countries. This is vital to the leading economy in order to avoid nationalism from being vaccinated.



About CLMV Countries

- Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam are the CLMV countries. The CLMV countries have a special role in the field of SouthEast Asia.
- Countries serve as a gateway to market entry to the European Union and China, as well as to other countries, through numerous trade agreements.
- Four countries have rich natural resources such as gold, oil, natural gas, gemstones and teak.

India's interest in CLMV countries:

- India aims to expand its trade and investment in these countries as they benefit from free trade deals with countries such as China. India's trade with China via this road is going to be much cheaper.
- In other words, India will invest in these countries and make a profit by selling its return to China.

India-CLMV:

- India has provided medication and medical supplies to the CLMV area. In addition, India has qualified medical staff from the region under the I-TEC programme.
- India has set up a CLMV project finance fund with a corpus of Rs 500 crores.
- That includes the development of the Kaladan Multimodal Transit-Transport Network.

RBI formed Committee for structuring of loans

- The Reserve Bank of India has formed a five-member committee under the chairmanship of KV Kamath, the former ICICI Bank CEO, to make recommendations regarding the financial parameters to be considered in the structuring of loans impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The committee will recommend a list of financial parameters such as leverage, liquidity, debt serviceability, etc.
- It is a need of the hour as during this COVID-19 pandemic, most of the business activities have stopped and RBI has already granted moratorium for all loan accounts in the country.

Helicopter Money being suggested by World Experts

- With the increasing economic crisis, Helicopter Money is a solution being suggested by economic specialists all over the world.



- Helicopter Money was the term framed by an American Economist Milton Friedman. Helicopter Money is the monetary policy tool used for Quantitative Easing. It aims to dump money into a struggling economy.

Key Points:

- Helicopter Money in simple terms is extension of non-repayable money towards state and central governments from the central bank. The policy intends to make more money available for the people to nudge them to spend more.
- In India, Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao has suggested the concept for the state governments to revive economic growth. He asked the RBI to release 5% of GDP as Helicopter money.
- Apart from the Telangana CM, CII has also recommended similar arrangement. CII has also recommended direct cash transfer of Rs 5000 to all the account holders whose annual income is below Rs 5 lakh. The Confederation of Indian Industries (CII) has recommended money transfer as one time action.

Bharat Bond ETF scheduled for subscription

- The Second Tranche of Bharat Bond ETF will be open for subscription from 14th July to 17th July 2020.

Key Points:

- Bharat Bond is India's first Corporate Bond Exchange-Traded Fund (ETF). The Fund provides additional source of money for Central Public Sector Undertakings (CPSUs), Central Public Financial Institutions (CPFIs) and other Government organizations to meet their borrowing requirements, apart from bank financing.
- An Exchange-Traded Fund (ETF) is a basket of securities that trade on an exchange, just like a stock. It reflects the composition of an Index, like BSE Sensex. Its trading value is based on the Net Asset Value (NAV) of the underlying stocks (such as shares) that it represents.
- ETF share prices fluctuate all day as it is bought and sold. This is different from mutual funds that only trade once a day after the market closes.

- The Reserve Bank of India is increasing liquidity flow in capital markets as COVID-19 has imposed liquidity strains on mutual funds.
- The Special Liquidity Facility for Mutual Funds (SLF-MF) is to conduct repo operations for 90 days. Under the scheme, the banks shall submit their bids on any days between Monday and Friday.

Key Highlights:

- The Funds are to be used by the banks exclusively to meet the following liquidity requirements
- To extend the loan period
- To undertake purchases of investment-grade corporate bonds, debentures and certificates of Deposit. A debenture is a long-term security that yields a fixed rate of interest secured against assets.
- Under the scheme, the liquidity support even when exceeds 25% of total investment is to be permitted to be included as Held to Maturity.


Maturity

The Held to Maturity are debt securities that are acquired to hold it till maturity. It is usually recorded as amortized cost in the financial statements of a company.


BHARAT BOND ETF

Cabinet approves launch of India's first corporate bond ETF


FEATURES




Fund to help CPSEs raise funds from debt markets




ETF units will be listed on the exchanges




Each ETF to have fixed maturity date




Small unit size ₹1,000




Transparent NAV (Periodic live NAV during the day)




ETF will track underlying Index on risk replication basis




3-tr abd 10-yr plan



Transparent Portfolio (Daily disclosure on website)



Low cost (0.0005%)



Edelweiss AMC will be the firm issuing the Bharat Bond ETF

Note

The plan for the Bharat Bond ETF of India was announced by the Union Finance Minister during the Union Budget 2018-19.

RBI announced Special Liquidity Mutual Funds

- The Reserve Bank of India announced the special liquidity facility for mutual funds of Rs 50,000 crores.



World Bank to allot fund under STARS Programme

- The World Bank Group has announced that a loan of USD 500 million (approx Rs 3700 crore) has been approved by its Board of Executives for improving the quality and governance of school education system in India. The loan was approved as a part of the STARS Programme.
- The loan approved will benefit 10 million teachers and 250 million school students across 1.5 million schools in 6 states of India. The 6 Indian States are Rajasthan, Odisha, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, and Maharashtra.

About STARS Programme

- The STARS programme builds on the long partnership between India and the World Bank (since 1994), for strengthening public school education and to support the country's goal of providing 'Education for All'.
- The Government of India has made significant strides in its vision over the years as the number of students going to school has increased to 248 million from 219 million between the 2004-05 to 2018-19 period.
- STARS stands for Strengthening Teaching-Learning and Results for States programme.

Union Government has approved asset monetization under InvIT Model

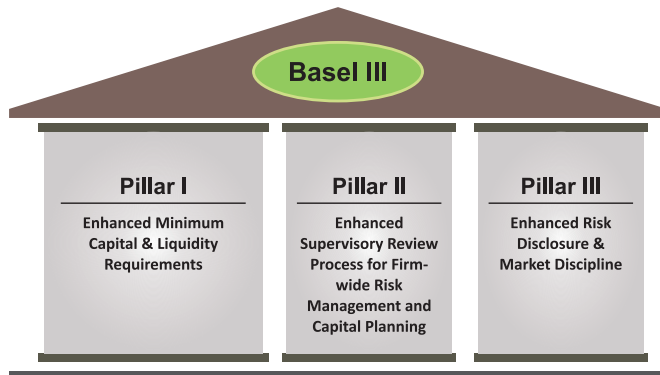
- The Union Government has approved asset monetization of subsidiaries of Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (PGCIL) through infrastructure investment trust model.



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.

SBI raised Basel III Compliant Bonds



- State Bank of India, India's largest lender has raised ₹7,000 crore by issuing Basel III compliant bonds.

Key Highlights:

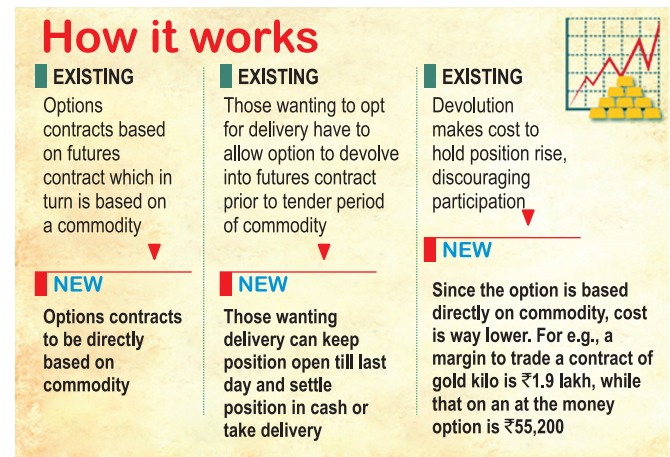
- Basel III bonds have both higher capital requirement and loss-absorption features compared with Basel-II.
- The complaint bonds qualify as tier II capital of the bank, and have a face value of ₹10 lakh each, bearing coupon rate of 6.24% per annum payable annually for a tenor of 10 years.
- Under the globally accepted Basel-III capital regulations, banks need to improve and strengthen their capital planning processes.

Basel Guidelines:

- Basel guidelines or Basel accords are the international banking regulations issued by the Basel Committee on Banking Supervision.
- The purpose of the accords is to ensure that financial institutions have enough capital on account to meet obligations and absorb unexpected losses.

INR-USD Futures and Options Contracts launched

- The Union Finance Minister Smt Nirmala Sitaraman launched the INR-USD Futures and Options contracts in the BSE and NSE platforms.
- They were launched at the GIFT International Financial Service Centre (IFSC) in Gandhinagar, Gujarat through video conference.



- The contracts have been launched to increase economic activity and employment in the country. A significant market share of India has moved to other International financial Centres in the last decade. The move will help to bring back those businesses back to India.

About Future and Option

- Future and Options are financial products that allow investors to buy or sell shares at a specific price by a specific date.
- Options contracts give the right to buy or sell the shares at any time till the validity of the contract exists. Under Futures contract, a buyer and seller can buy or sell only on a specific future date.
- There are two types of Option. The Call Option is used to buy a stock at the strike price and the put option is used to sell a stock at a specific price.

Amendment approved to bring Cooperative Banks under RBI Regulation

Green Signal

BANKING LAWS AMENDED

- Reserve bank to have control over cooperative banks
- Move to ensure better professionalism, corporate governance
- RBI can supersede management if cooperative bank falls
- Will protect interest of depositors
- Coop banks to be audited as per RBI rules
- Prior nod from RBI required for CEO appointment



- The Union Cabinet approved the regulation of cooperative banks under the Reserve Bank of India. In order to achieve this, the Cabinet approved amendments to the Banking regulation act.

Key Highlights

- The cooperative banks will now be required to fulfill regulatory requirements that have been set for scheduled commercial banks.
- The move will provide the RBI with official regulatory command over the cooperative banks.
- The cooperative banks will now be required to conduct regular audits as per the RBI mandate and take the apex bank's approval for the appointment of its CEO.
- The announcement has been made in the wake of the PMC bank crisis.

Background

- The Reserve Bank of India had imposed restrictions on the operation of the Punjab and Maharashtra Co-operative (PMC) bank in September 2019. The PMC bank was no longer allowed to issue loans or open fixed deposit accounts.
- The apex bank had also capped the initial withdrawal limit to Rs 1000. The withdrawal limit was later raised to Rs 50,000 to ease the distress of the bank's customers. The PMC bank was also prohibited from making any type of investment and accepting fresh deposits without approval from the RBI.
- The restrictions were imposed after some irregularities were revealed to the RBI.

Finance Ministry launched instant Aadhaar based E-KYC

- The Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitaraman launched instant Aadhaar based E-KYC.



Key Highlights:

- The facility will be available for PAN applicants that possess valid Aadhaar numbers.
- They should also have a mobile number registered with Aadhaar. The process of allotting PAN is paperless and is also free of cost.
- The instant Aadhaar based E-KYC was introduced by the Finance Minister in the Union Budget 2020-21. She announced that a system will be brought in that will instantly provide PAN without the requirement of filling up the application form.

Note

- PAN is Permanent Account Number. It is a 10-digit alphanumeric number that is issued by the Income Tax Department.
- It enables the income tax department to link the transaction of the person with the department.
- The transactions include TDS, TCS, tax payments, income returns, correspondence, specified transactions, etc.

Gol amended General Financial Rules

- The Government of India amended General Financial Rules to make sure the goods and services that are of value less than Rs 200 crores are procured from domestic firms.

Key Highlights:

- The GFR 2017 (General Financial Rules) have been amended by the Central Government. Under the new amendment, global tenders henceforth will be disallowed in government procurement that are of value Rs 200 crores. This was announced in Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan.
- The GFR are a set of rules that deal with matters that involve public finances. They were first issued in 1947 bringing together all the existing orders. They are instructions that pertain to financial matters.
- The GFRs were modified in 1963 and 2005.

Global Tender:

- Tendering is a process where bids for a project are accepted. Now, global tendering is tenders from foreign countries or through foreign investment. "Disallowing Global Tenders" is stopping foreign investments to a particular threshold to boost indigenous companies.

Govt. launched Agriculture Infrastructure Fund

- Prime Minister of India has launched 'Agriculture Infrastructure Fund' as a part of the Atmanirbhar Bharat package.
- Rs 1128 crores of new loans have been disbursed to over 2200 cooperative societies in the country as part of the inaugural meet of this scheme.
- Under the scheme, the financial support of up to Rs. 1 lakh crore will be provided as loans through the banks and financial institutions to the agricultural sectors such as Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs), Start-ups, Primary Agricultural Credit Societies, Agri-entrepreneurs, etc.



Key Highlights:

- The duration of the scheme is for 10 years, i.e. from the financial year 2020-21 to 2029-30.
- Management Information System (MIS) platform will be used for managing and monitoring the Agriculture Infrastructure Fund.
- Out of Rs. 1 lakh crore loan, an amount of Rs 10,000 crore will be sanctioned and disbursed in the current 2020-21 financial year while Rs 30,000 crore will be granted in each of next three upcoming financial years.
- The rate of interest will be 3 percent per annum. This rate of interest will be applicable for a loan of up to Rs 2 crore.
- The moratorium for repayment of the loan will vary from a maximum of 2 years to a minimum of 6 months.
- Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises (CGTMSE) will provide credit guarantee coverage to eligible borrowers. The credit guarantee coverage will be provided for loans of up to Rs 2 crore.

LTRO 2.0 : RBI granted fund of Rs 50,000 crores

- The Reserve Bank of India announced a slew of measures to fight economy crisis due to COVID-19 pandemic.
- The central bank has announced Rs 50,000 crore for Long Term Repo Operation (LTRO), which is tool in which RBI offers money to banks for a period of 1-3 years at the prevailing Repo Rate.
- Currently, Repo rate and reverse repo rate are 4.00% and 3.35% respectively.
- RBI has eased the Liquidity Coverage Ratio from 100% to 80%. The LCR is the assets held by the banks to make sure its ongoing ability to meet short-term obligations are fulfilled.

LTRO 2.0:

- This time the LTRO has been named LTRO 2.0 because, this time the LTRO is to focus on liquidity needs of microfinances and NBFC. Earlier the LTRO went largely to the public sector undertakings and larger corporations.

RBI syncs Financial Year with the Fiscal Year

- The board of Reserve Bank of India (RBI) decided to sync the Financial year of the bank with the Fiscal Year.

- The Fiscal Year begins in April and ends in March and the Financial year is between July and June

Key Highlights

- The Central Board of Directors of RBI at the 582 nd meeting recommended aligning Fiscal and financial years. The alignment would change 8-decade practice of RBI.
- The Centre had been demanding an interim dividend (between April to August) as its final balance sheet was prepared in August. This was mainly because RBI had a different accounting year.

About Jalan Committee

- The alignment was recommended by an expert committee led by Bimal Jalan. According to the committee, the central bank will be able to provide estimates of the surplus transfers better after the alignment. This will reduce the interim dividend that the RBI has to pay to the
- Government. However, the interim dividend will be restricted to extraordinary circumstances. It will also bring in cohesiveness with the reports and policy projections made by the RBI.

Goa Institution for Future Transformation (GIFT)

- On the model of NITI Ayog, the Goa government founded the "Goa Institution for Future Transformation (GIFT)."

About GIFT

- GIFT will operate similarly to NITI Aayog. It will help, advise, and lead the government in the formulation and execution of policies.
- It will also aid in the monitoring of long-term development goals and the evaluation of various development plans, programs, and schemes.
- The Directorate of Planning, Statistics and Evaluation issued the notification.
- It will be backed up under Article 309 of Constitution of India to attain autonomy.

India's GDP contracts 7.3% in FY21

- The Central Statistics Office (CSO) of India has issued GDP figures for the January-March quarter of fiscal year 2020-21. According to it, the Indian economy is expected to develop in a favorable direction beginning in the December quarter.

Key Highlights

- Prior to the second wave of Covid-19, India's GDP increased by 1.6% in the fourth quarter of 2020-21 (January-March).
- However, GDP decreased to 7.3 percent for the entire quarter. Because of a strong increase in government spending, this improved from an earlier projection of an 8% decline in February's second advance estimates.
- Improvement in the fourth quarter was driven by the manufacturing sector even when services were comparatively sluggish.
- Agricultural growth slowed to 3.1 percent in January-March from 4.5 per cent growth in October-December.

EASE 3.0: Govt. launched to enhance Ease of Banking

- Union Ministry of Finance has launched Enhanced Access and Service Excellence (EASE 3.0). It was launched along with the annual report of EASE 2.0 at a function organized by Indian Banks' Association.

Key Highlights

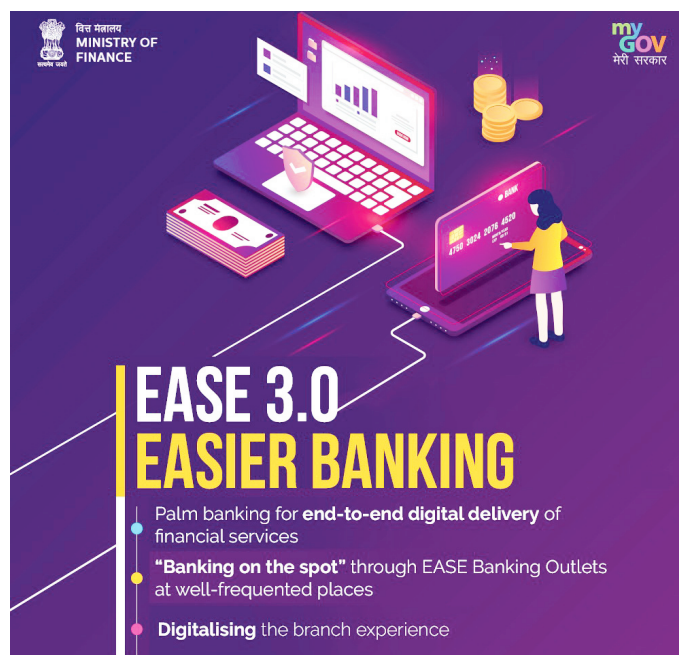
- The main aim of EASE 3.0 is to make public sector banking technology enabled and smart. By this the initiative intends to achieve ease of banking for customers.
- Along with its launch, the GoI has also warned about the over reliance of the state-run banks on credit rating agencies while sanctioning loans.

Significance

- The initiative will enhance paperless, digital banking. It will also support other GoI initiatives such as Udyami Mitra, credit take-off, Dial-a-loan and credit at a click. EASE will increase the reach of all these initiatives and improve the standards of the banking sector.

About EASE

EASE is a set of technology-based banking reforms. It aims at improvising the banking sector with technology. It ensures wider financial inclusion, better banking experience and easier credit distribution.



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.

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 (CACP), 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.

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.

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 Sectors

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

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.

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.

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.

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.

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).

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.

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.

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 decide 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.

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.

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.

Reports & Indices

Financial Stability Report 2020

- The Reserve Bank of India released Financial Stability Report. This is the 22nd issue of the Financial Stability Report. It is published twice a year.



Key Findings:

- The gross non-performing asset ratio of the scheduled commercial banks is projected to rise to 13.5 per cent by September 2021.
- The net NPA and GNPA levels are starting to fall. The GNPA ratio stood at 7.5% in September 2020. On the other hand, the NNPA ratio stood at 2.1% in September 2020 and 3% in March 2020.
- According to the report, the GNPA might increase to 13.5% by September 2021 under baseline scenario. Under severe stress scenario, the GNPA ratio might increase to 14.8% by September 2021.

The RBI Financial Stability Report is released by the Financial Stability and Development Council. The idea of the council was mooted by the Raghuram Rajan Committee in 2008.

State of the Economy Report

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) released its 'State of the Economy Report 2020' in which it has stated that the shape of the economic recovery in FY 2021-22 will be V-shaped.
- According to the report, this is the slowest pace of growth in the six months as record-high retail prices have hit the consumption.

Key Findings:

- Regular purchases of diesel by the State refiners declined by 5.3 per cent in the month of February 2021.
- Diesel sales are closely linked to economic growth and account for about 40% of the country's total sales of refined petrol.
- This decline has become the biggest decline in three months.
- As per the report, gasoline and gasoil prices in India have increased to its record highs. This increase is mirroring the global markets.
- Taxes of the retail gasoline prices accounts for about 61% while for the diesel prices it accounts for 56%.

V-shaped recovery is witnessed when an economy suffers a sharp economic decline followed by a strong recovery.

Digital Payments Index

- The Reserve Bank of India recently released the Digital Payments Index to measure the growth in cashless transactions in India.

Key Points:

- The Digital Payments Index consists of five large parameters. These metrics have different weights for calculating the penetration of digital payments in the region. The criteria and penetration of the Digital Payments Index are as follows:
- Payment Enablers:** 25%
- Payment Infrastructure-Demand Side Factors:** 10%
- Payment Infrastructure-Supply Side Factors:** 15%
- Payment Performance:** 45%
- Consumer Centricity:** 5%

Sub-parameters:

- The payment enablers of the Digital Payments Index include internet, bank account, merchants and participants.

The Reserve Bank of India has set the base year of Digital Payments Index as 2018.

Report on Currency and Finance 2020-21

- A Report on Currency and Finance (RCF) by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) was released recently. It has recommended that the time span that was considered to measure whether monetary policy-setting panel has failed in achieving its objectives or not should be of four quarters rather than the current time period of three-quarter.

Key Findings

- The report further suggests that the provisions of the six-member Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) be carried out to the members in order to moderate the political impact at the time of the new appointments for a fixed period.
- The recommendations in the study have come after a time when the inflation rate has been consistently on the upper edge of the 6 per cent headline inflation target for many months.
- The expert also points out that the Monetary Policy Committee should clarify the lack of adequate field visits to the data during the lockdown in this respect.
- The study points out that the concept of MPC loss needs to be updated from the existing three-quarter horizon.
- According to the report, the failure can be redefined as inflation overshooting or inflation undershooting the upper and lower tolerance bands around the set target for a time span of four consecutive quarters.

2

Environment & Wildlife

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.

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.



Blue Nature Alliance established

- The Blue Nature Alliance is a national collaboration of five primary members and a few other non-profit organizations.



BLUE NATURE ALLIANCE

- Antarctica
- Seychelles
- Canada
- Palau
- Western Indian Ocean
- Fiji
- Tristan da Cunha, an island in the South Atlantic Ocean

Note

- The Marine Conservation Institute published the Marine Protection Atlas in 2012. The atlas was created to provide the most up-to-date material on coastal conservation from around the world.
- This will allow marine conservation groups to collaborate to conserve at least 30% of the world's ocean by 2030.

Key Points:

- The alliance aims to protect 5% of the world ocean in five years.
- The alliance aims to target seven ocean locations. They are as follows:

Biggest Floating Solar Power Plant of India to be commissioned



- India's largest floating solar power plant of 100 MW capacity, belonging to the National Thermal Power Corporation, is expected to be commissioned at Ramagundam in Telangana.

Key Points:

- It refers to the deployment of photovoltaic panels on the surface of water bodies. They are a viable alternative to land-based solar arrays with applications in India.
- There are a large number of major reservoirs in the Southern Region which provides a huge opportunity to go for renewable energy in the floating solar method.
- The thermal plant at Ramagundam would be one of the renewable (solar) energy plants being developed by NTPC with an installed capacity of 447MW in the Southern Region and the entire capacity would be commissioned by March 2023.
- The largest solar power plant in the world is being set up by India on OmkarEshwar Dam on Narmada river in Madhya Pradesh. The cost of this project is estimated to be Rs 3,000 crores. The project is expected to start its power generation by 2022-23.

Note

Currently, the largest floating solar power plant of India is located in Banasura Sagar reservoir in Wayanad, Kerala. The capacity of this plant is 500 KW.

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.

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.

Great Green Wall Initiative : 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.

Climate Adaptation Summit 2021 held

- The Climate Adaptation Summit 2021 was held recently, in which India adopted a target of installing 450 GW of renewable energy by the year 2030.



Key Points:

- The Climate Adaptation Summit was held by the Netherlands Government on 25 January 2021. The summit was held online and is called "CAS Online."
- The summit was based on the success of the United Nations Climate Change Summit.
- The summit also outlined the ground-breaking strategies of climate emergency and sustainable momentum through the COP26 of UNFCCC.
- CAS will help in delivering the action and inspire the change to help the societies build back better.

Note

The 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference is also known as COP26. It is the 26th United Nations Climate Change conference. It will be held in Glasgow, Scotland from November 1 to 12, 2021.

My Ganga My Dolphin Campaign launched



- My Ganga My Dolphin campaign recently launched on the occasion of Ganga River Dolphin Day.
- It was launched by the National Mission for Clean Ganga, the Wildlife Institute of India and the Forest Department.

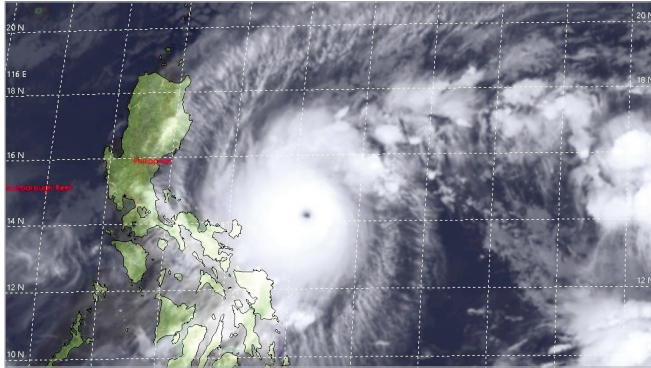
Objectives:

- The campaign has been launched for sustainable tourism. It also links with the livelihood through Dolphin Conservation for ecotourism along the Ganga river. It will also conduct a census under the stretch.

About Project Dolphin

- The project is being implemented by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.
- It was launched with an aim to conserve and protect dolphins in the marine and riverine ecosystems. The 10-year project focuses on both sea and river dolphins.

Super Typhoon Goni : World's strongest storm fallout in Philippines



- Super Typhoon Goni slammed into the Philippines with authorities warning of “catastrophic” conditions in the region expected to receive the hardest hit, where nearly a million people have been evacuated.
- It has brought “catastrophic violent winds” and thus is being the hardest landfall on record.

Key Highlights:

- Philippine officials ordered evacuation of thousands of residents in the southern part of the main Luzon island as a category 5 storm – Typhoon Goni – that is the world’s strongest in 2020 approaches the Southeast Asian nation.
- The strongest typhoon of the year so far made landfall on Catanduanes Island with maximum sustained wind speeds of 225 kilometres (140 miles) per hour, will make landfall as the strongest typhoon to hit the Philippines since Haiyan that killed more than 6,300 people in November 2013.
- Goni -- which intensified into a “super” typhoon as it neared the Philippines -- comes a week after Typhoon Molave hit the same region of the natural disaster-prone archipelago.
- About 347,000 people have been evacuated.

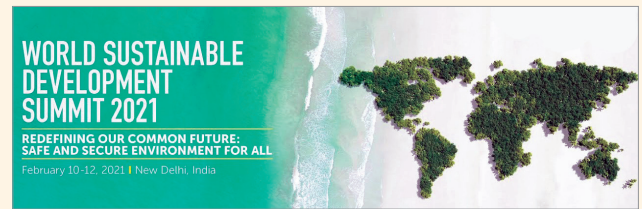
Catanduanes:

- Catanduanes is an island province located on the Luzon island in the Philippines. It is the 12th-largest Island of the country. Virac is its capital. The island province lies to the east of Camarines Sur across the Maqueda Channel.

About Typhoon Goni

- It's known as the Super Typhoon Rolly in the Philippines. It is a devastating tropical cyclone that has made landfall in the country an incredibly strong Category 5 super typhoon. It's the 19th storm, the 9th typhoon, and the 2nd super typhoon of 2020 in the Pacific.
- Goni formed as a tropical storm southwest of Guam on October 26, 2020.

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.



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.

A huge coral reef discovered in Australia Great Barrier Reef



- Scientists have uncovered a huge coral reef in the Great Barrier Reef of Australia. It's the first to be discovered in 120 years.

Key Highlights:

- The reef was discovered by Australian scientists at the Schmidt Ocean Institute.
- The base of the blade-like reef is around 1.5 km wide. Just 40 metres of the coral is beneath the surface of the water.
- The recently discovered reef adds to the world's seven other tall, disconnected reefs. This covers the island of Raine.

About SuBastian

It's the underwater robot that the team is deploying in the recently discovered coral. The robot has a manually operated arm to gather samples for identification purposes.

Dehing Patkai Wildlife Sanctuary becomes National Park

- The Assam State Government has decided for the up-gradation of the Dehing Patkai Wildlife Sanctuary to National Park.



Key Points:

- The Dehing Patkai Wildlife Sanctuary, also known as the Jeypore Rainforest is a part of Dehing Patkai Elephant Reserve.
- It is located in the districts of Dibrugarh and Tinsukia.
- Dehing Patkai is a deciduous rainforest interspersed with semi-evergreen and lush green flora, the only patch of virgin rainforest in Assam.
- It comprises Jeypore, Upper Dehing and Dirak.

Note

Under the Project Elephant of the Union Ministry of Environment and Forests, in 1992 Dehing Patkai was declared as an Elephant Reserve. Later on 13th June 2004, Dehing Patkai was declared as a Wildlife Sanctuary.

Western Ghats to be declared Ecologically Sensitive Area Soon

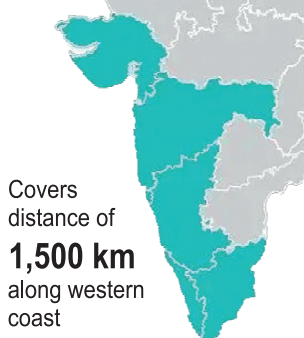
- The Union Government is in consultation with State governments for notification of declaring Western Ghats as an Ecologically Sensitive Area.

Key Highlights:

- The states that participated in the video conference include Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Goa, Tamil Nadu and Gujarat.
- The Government of India constituted a High level working group under Dr Kasturirangan. The committee identified geographical areas in the states that need to be declared Ecologically Sensitive Areas.
- Based on the report submitted by the committee, the Central Government in 2018 issued a draft notice to notify the areas as Ecologically Sensitive Areas (ESA).
- The meeting is a follow up to make a conclusion in declaring the regions as ESA.

FRAGILE WESTERN GHATS:

SPREAD OVER SIX STATES
Gujarat, Maharashtra,
Goa, Karnataka, Tamil
Nadu and Kerala



Proposed area to stop polluting activities and deforestation:

56,825 sq km

State & Area (in sq km)	
Karnataka	20,668
Maharashtra	17,340
Kerala	9,993
Tamil Nadu	6,914
Goa	1,461
Gujarat	449

NOTIFIED THRICE, BUT REMAINS ON PAPER

First	March 10, 2014
Second	September 4, 2015
Third	February 27, 2017

Note

When an area is declared an Ecologically Sensitive Area (ESA), it means that restrictions are put on mining, thermal plants, quarrying, construction and setting up of industries.

World's first Commercial Hydrogen Aircraft to be launched by 2035

Airbus company launched three concepts for the first zero emission commercial aircraft or the Hydrogen Aircraft. The aircrafts would be operational by 2035.

Key facts:

- The hydrogen aircraft will be designed and created by airbus and is the first commercial hydrogen powered aircraft.
- Airbus has introduced three concepts for zero emission under the codename ZEROe. The concepts include:
 - Turbofan design, which can accommodate 120 to 200 passengers and can fly at a range of 2000 plus nautical miles.
 - Blended wing body design, which can accommodate up to 200 passengers. In such aircrafts the wings merge with the main body of the aircraft.
 - Turboprop design, which can accommodate up to 200 passengers. It can travel at a speed of 1000 + nautical miles and is perfect for short haul trips.

Significance:

- The shift towards clean aircraft fuels such as hydrogen is significant in the light of increasing air pollution and climate change in which aviation emissions contribute around 5%.

Hydrogen is the lightest element and hence can lift the aircrafts easily. Further, hydrogen is a clean fuel and it is more expensive than that of fossil fuels.

GI tag sought for Gucehi Mushroom

- The Jammu and Kashmir Government sought GI tag for Gucehi mushroom. The Gucehi mushrooms are highly expensive and are full of health benefits.
- Gucehi mushroom is a species of fungus belonging to the family Morchellaceae. These are locally called "Thuntoo".



Key Points:

- The Gucehi mushrooms prefer soil with limestone base. They also grow in acid soils and usually found in early spring.
- They grow in the conifer forests of Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir. It takes months for the villagers to collect these mushrooms, dry them and bring them to the market.
- The Gucehi mushrooms cannot be cultivated commercially for their nature of germination. They germinate and grow in low temperature soil. They usually appear after fires.
- Health Benefits:** The Gucehi mushrooms are rich in vitamins, potassium and copper. They are also rich in Vitamin-D. Further they are rich in antioxidants that prevent health issues such as heart diseases and diabetes.

Saffron

Recently, GI Tag was provided to Saffron from Jammu and Kashmir.

Union Govt. extended timeline of EIA Notification 2020 implementation

- The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) has finally extended the timeline for the public to review an 80-page long draft on Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) notification 2020.
- The recently released draft is created with the intention of replacing the existing EIA notification 2006.

Background:

- In the year 1984, after the Bhopal Gas leak disaster, the government launched the Environment Protection Act 1986.
- In the Environment Protection Act 1986 itself, it was mentioned that the country will frame EIA norms which finally came into effect in 1994 and later modified by a draft in 2006.
- The EIA framework made a legal framework for regulating any activities which pollute the environment.



Key changes in EIA norms:

- EIA 2020 draft if implemented is going to increase the pressure of legal paperwork while making a minimalistic change on the ground.
- A huge list of projects has been excluded from the view of public consultation in the new policy, some being, gas and shale exploration, offshore and onshore oil, irrigation projects, small and medium mineral beneficiation units, hydroelectric projects up to 25 MW, small foundries involving furnace units, small and medium cement plants, acids other than phosphoric or ammonia, small clinker grinding units, Sulphuric acid, micro, MSMEs in dye and dye intermediates, synthetic rubbers, bulk drugs, all inland waterway projects, medium-sized paint units, aerial ropeways in ecologically sensitive areas, specified building construction and area development projects and expansion or widening of highways between 25 km and 100 km with defined parameters.
- Since these activities will be carried out without oversight. There is apprehension that the exemption from EIA and public consultation for these activities will seriously affect the environment.

Cheetah to be re-introduced in India

- The world's fastest land animal, Cheetah which was declared extinct in India in 1952, has been expected to be re-introduced in India in November 2021 at the Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh.

Key Points:

- India had spotted its last Cheetah in Chhattisgarh in 1947. After the death of the last Cheetah, it was declared extinct in 1952.
- Kuno is located in Chambal region. It is spread across an area of 750 sq km. Park has a conducive environment for cheetahs.
- It is a protected area which has a considerable population of four-horned antelopes, nilgai, chinkara, spotted deer and wild boar. Thus, the park has a good prey base for cheetahs.



The fastest land animal is native to Africa and central Iran. It can attain a running speed of 80 to 128 km/h.

Cheetah is listed in the "vulnerable category" of the International Union for Conservation of Nature's (IUCN) red list of threatened species.

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.

Union Government to regulate use of CAMPA Fund

- The Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has announced that the CAMPA funds shall be used only for plantation drives and afforestation. Also, the forest-based devolution funds are to be increased from 7% to 10%.
- CAMPA stands for Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority.
- The ministry has directed 80% of CAMPA funds towards afforestation and plantation drives. The funds were used to pay salaries to forest officials and infrastructure acquisition.

About CAMPA:

- The money paid by the developers that razed the forest land is called the Compensatory Afforestation Fund. These funds are managed by CAMPA. They are also called CAMPA funds.
- The funds under the CAMPA act were to be used for:
 - ◆ Compensatory Afforestation
 - ◆ Net Present Value of forest
 - ◆ Other project specific payments.
- As per rules of CAMPA funds, 90% of funds are to be given to the states and 10% is to be retained by the Centre.

Central Vista Redevelopment project started

- The Supreme Court of India recently 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.

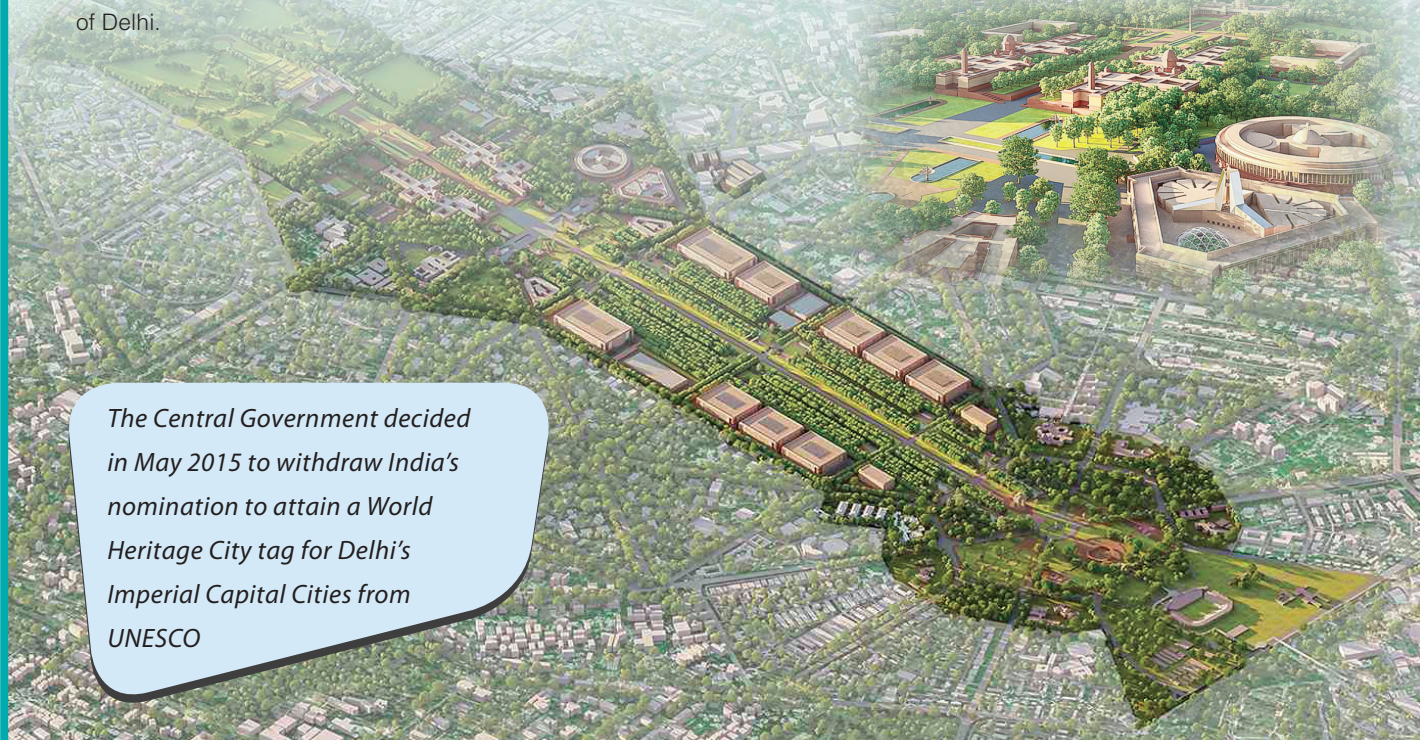
Need of new project:

- 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.

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



World's Highest Arch Bridge completed



- The Indian Railways recently completed the arch closure of the world's highest railway bridge, Chenab bridge. The bridge is a part of Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla rail link project. The Chenab bridge is located in Reasi district of Jammu and Kashmir.

About Arch Closure

- It is the world's highest railway bridge and is part of the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla rail link project (USBRL).
- The Project was declared as a Project of National Importance in March 2002.
- This bridge is 1,315-metre long and is the highest railway bridge in the world being 359 metres above the river bed level.
- The completion of the steel arch is a major leap towards the completion of the 111 km long winding stretch from Katra to Banihal.
- The Arch consists of steel boxes. To improve the stability of the arch, concrete is to be filled in the boxes. The two main benefits of using concrete filling are as follows:
 - The filled in concrete assists in controlling wind induced forces.
 - Also, using concrete filling removes the necessity of internal painting.

Union Govt. notified new guidelines for Social Media Regulation

- The Union Government recently notified Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules 2021. The new guidelines are aimed at regulating social media and OTT platforms.



Key Highlights:

- The new Rules on digital media and OTT aim to empower ordinary users of social media, embodying a mechanism for redressal and timely resolution of their grievance.
- The proposed framework is progressive, liberal and contemporaneous and seeks to address peoples' varied concerns while removing any misapprehension about curbing creativity and freedom of speech and expression.
- The rules have been framed keeping in mind the difference between viewership in a theatre and television as compared to watching it on the Internet.
- The rules focus more on in-house and self-regulation mechanisms whereby a robust grievance redressal mechanism has been provided while upholding journalistic and creative freedom.

The new guidelines on social media were framed in accordance with the section 87 (2) of the Information Technology Act, 2000. These guidelines were released after having an elaborate consultation with the public as well as the stakeholders.

Need of new rules:

- The government has notified the new rules on digital media and OTT with the aim of empowering the ordinary users regarding social media.
- With the new rules, the government wants to set up a mechanism for redressal and timely resolution of their grievance.

National Green Tribunal gave nod to Kaleshwaram Irrigation Project



- The National Green Tribunal (NGT) granted environmental clearance to the Kaleshwaram lift irrigation project in Telangana.
- The NGT have also formed a committee to assess the extent of damage that the project has caused and to identify the restoration measures.

About Project:

- Kaleshwaram lift irrigation project is a multipurpose irrigation project of the Telangana government.
- The project is being constructed on the meeting point of River Godavari and River Pranahita.
- The project will provide irrigation and drinking water to backward areas of Telangana.

National Education Policy, 2020



- The Union Cabinet approved National Education Policy 2020, paving way for transformational reforms in school and higher education systems in the country after 34 years.
- The aim of the Policy is to create an education system which is deeply rooted in Indian ethos and can rebuild India as a global knowledge superpower, by providing high-quality education to all.

Key Highlights of the Policy:

- Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) to be renamed as Ministry of Education.
- Public spending on education by the Centre and states to be raised to 6% of the GDP.
- The National Educational Technology Forum will be created for the exchange of ideas on use of technology to enhance learning, assessment, planning and administration.

School Education:

- The NEP proposes changing the existing 10+2 structure with 5+3+3+4 design covering the children in the age group 3-18 years. Under this:
 - ♦ **Five years of the Foundational Stage:** 3 years of pre-primary school and Grades 1-2.
 - ♦ **Three years of the Preparatory (or Latter Primary) Stage:** Grades 3-4-5.
 - ♦ **Three years of the Middle (or Upper Primary) Stage:** Grades 6-7-8.
 - ♦ **Four years of the High (or Secondary) Stage:** Grades 9-10-11-12.

- A child's mother tongue will be used as the medium of instruction till class 5.
- Universalise the pre-primary education (age range of 3-6 years) by 2025.
- Universalization of Education from pre-school to secondary level with 100% Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in school education by 2030.
- A new school curriculum with coding and vocational studies from class 6 will be introduced.
- A National Mission on Foundational Literacy and Numeracy will ensure basic skills at the class 3 level by 2025.
- Board exams will test core competencies rather than memorising facts, with all students allowed to take the exam twice.

Higher Education:

- The M.Phil degree will be abolished.
- By the year 2030, the minimum degree qualification for teaching will be a four-year integrated B.Ed.
- Four year undergraduate degrees with multiple entry and exit options will be introduced.
- A new regulator for all higher education except medical, legal courses will be established.
- College affiliation system to be phased out in 15 years, so that every college develops into either an autonomous degree-granting institution, or a constituent college of a university.

OBC Commission recommended its Sub-categorisation

- According to the Chairman of National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC), Bhagwan Lal Sahni, the NCBC is in favour of four subcategories of the Other Backward Classes (OBCs). This move complies with the recommendation of the Justice Rohini Commission.

Sub-Categorisation of OBCs

- The subcategories of the OBCs would be achieved by bearing in mind certain parts which either have benefited sufficiently or have benefited less from the reservation.

As per **Article 338 B**, the commission comprises a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and three other Members. The appointment, conditions of service and tenure of office of all of them is decided by the President.

- While the other two groups would be for the least benefited and those not benefited from the new OBCs reservation system.

About Justice Rohini Commission

- It was appointed on 2 October 2017 to review and report on the subcategorization of OBCs.
- The report will be submitted by the Commission by July 2021.
- The terms of reference of the panel are to research the extent of the inequitable allocation of the benefits of the reserve among the caste or group.

Government moves to setup database of migrate workers

- The Ministry of Finance has approved the development of a national database for the unorganised market. This will be the first ever nationwide directory for migrant workers.
- The objective of creating a central database is to establish a fair forum for migrant labourers.

About National Database of Unorganised Workers (NDUW)

- The Ministry of Labor and Employment has announced that the National Census of Unorganized Workers would maintain a database of workers using their 12-digit Aadhaar code.
- The database would enrol all unorganised jobs, including migrant workers.
- A database of all employees can help the government enforce social insurance programmes, provide jobs and give other incentives to unorganised workers. It will also help to keep track of the movement of workers in cases.
- The database will also help the workers to share details about his/her skills and get suitable work.

- The alliance will focus on industrial clusters, specifically steel, refineries, fertiliser, cement, ports and logistics; as well as heavy-duty transport use cases and the establishment of standards for storage and transport hydrogen in pressurised and liquified form.

Major works of India H2 Alliance:

- The India H2 Alliance will work with the government on five areas :
 - Develop a National Hydrogen Policy and Roadmap 2021-2030.
 - Creation of a National H2 Task-force and Mission in a public-private partnership format.
 - Identify National Large H2 Demonstration-Stage Projects.
 - Help create a national India H2 Fund.
 - Create hydrogen-linked capacity covering hydrogen production, storage and distribution, industrial use-cases, transport use-cases and standards.

Note

- Blue Hydrogen is produced from the splitting of natural gas into carbon dioxide and hydrogen. This is achieved by Steam Methane Reforming or Auto thermal Reforming.
- Green Hydrogen is made from non-fossil sources.

India H2 Alliance (IH2A) established



- Global energy and industrial majors have come together to form a new energy transition coalition, the India H2 Alliance (IH2A), focussed on commercialising hydrogen technologies and systems to build net-zero carbon pathways in India.

Key points:

- IH2A has been established with the objective of building the hydrogen economy and supply chain in India and to help develop blue and green hydrogen production and storage as well as build hydrogen-use industrial clusters and transport use-cases with hydrogen-powered fuel cells.

Anamaya: Tribal Health Collaborative launched

- Recently, the Ministry of Tribal Affairs has launched Tribal Health Collaborative (THC) 'Anamaya' through a video conference.



Key Features:

- It is an initiative bringing together governments, philanthropists, national and international foundations, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)/Community Based Organizations (CBOs) to end all preventable deaths among the tribal communities of India.
- It will converge efforts of various Government agencies and organisations to enhance the health and nutrition status of the tribal communities of India.
- It was launched by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in collaboration with the Ministry of Tribal Affairs.
- The initiative will also be supported by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and Piramal Foundation.
- The main objective of the initiative is to enhance the health and nutrition eco-system of tribal communities in India.

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.

ULPIN

Unique Land Parcel Identification Number

<p>14-Digit</p> <p>ULPIN will provide coordinates of the land</p>	<p>Six States</p> <p>will get the unique number in first phase</p>
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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 grand temple at Rama Janmabhoomi in Ayodhya will follow the Nagara style of temple architecture.

Ayodhya Verdict:

- The main issue of contention regarding Ayodhya disputed land was the belief among sections of Hindus that the Babri Masjid, named after Mughal emperor Babur, was built at the site where Lord Ram was born.
- A bench led by the then CJI Ranjan Gogoi delivered the Ayodhya verdict alongside Justices S.A. Bobde, D.Y. Chandrachud, Ashok Bhushan and S.A. Nazeer. The verdict was unanimous.
- As per the verdict, Hindus would get the entire disputed 2.77 acres in Ayodhya where the demolished Babri Masjid once stood.
- The Muslims will get alternate five acres of land to build a mosque at a prominent place in Ayodhya.
- A trust to be formed in 3 months to build a temple on the disputed land.

Note

The Supreme Court had invoked Article 142 of Constitution of India for the verdict which states that "The Supreme Court in the exercise of its jurisdiction may pass such decree or make such order as is necessary for doing complete justice".

PM CARES: Union Govt. created Fund to tackle emergency situations

- Prime Ministers Citizen Assistance and Relief in Emergency Situations



PM CARES
Prime Minister's Citizen Assistance and Relief in Emergency Situations Fund

- (PM CARES) is a dedicated national fund that was created on 28th March 2020. It was created for raising funds for providing help to the affected during any sort of distress situation or emergency such as COVID-19 pandemic in the country.
- The fund will be used for combating, containment and relief efforts against the coronavirus outbreak and similar pandemic like situations in the future.
- The funds donated to PM Cares Fund are to be 100% exempted from tax under Section 80G of Income Tax Act.
- Recent Updates:**
 - The Government of India has allocated Rs 2000 crore under PM CARES Fund Trust to procure 50,000 Made-in-India ventilators. These ventilators will be supplied to various government-run COVID-19 hospitals based on priority across the country.
 - From PM CARES, a sum of Rs 1000 crore was also released for the welfare (arranging food, accommodation, medical treatment, etc) of migrant labourers in the country.

Foundation stone laid for the Ayodhya Ram Temple



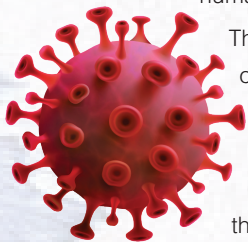
- PM Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone for a temple of Lord Ram in Ayodhya.

A new strain of **COVID-19** that shut the World

In **January, 2020**, China reported the first death in the country due to pneumonia caused by a new virus in the city of Wuhan. The Chinese scientists discovered that the new strain of virus is that of the coronavirus family.

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.

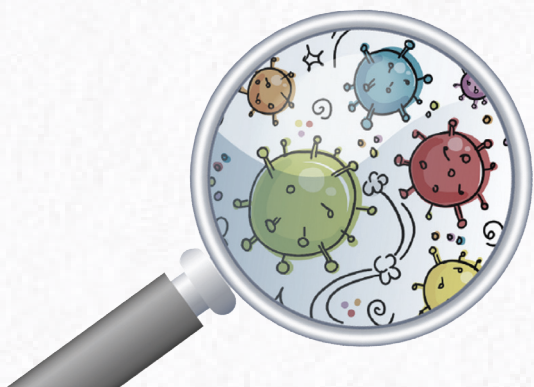


The virus has protrusions on its surface. This makes the virus look like an emperor's crown and hence the name Coronavirus.

The protrusions are made of proteins. Apart from human, the coronavirus can also infect cattle, dogs, pigs, camels, birds and hedgehogs apart from humans.

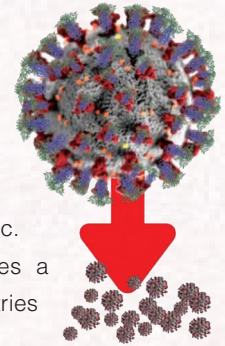
COVID-19

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.



Pandemic

An epidemic disease spread over a large region is pandemic. The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention defines a pandemic as "an epidemic that has spread over several countries or continents, usually affecting a large number of people."

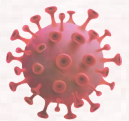
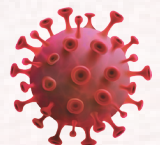


Phases of Pandemics

At the first phase, the virus affects animals in larger scale and does not affect humans. In second phase the animal flu virus begins its infections in humans.

At the next phase the infections begin to occur in clusters. This is when mass gatherings are avoided, schools are shut down, etc.

In stage 4, pandemic increases but its increase cannot be confirmed. It then begins to occur in more than one country. In the last stage, community level outbreaks begin.



Earlier outbreaks

In 2002-03, the flu-like SARS virus that belongs to Coronavirus family, killed more than 700 people in the world. The virus originated in China. The other deadly virus of the corona virus is the MERS (Middle East Respiratory Syndrome). There is no specific vaccine for the virus as of 2019. The virus was first identified in 2012 in Saudi Arabia. Most of the cases have occurred in Arabian peninsula.

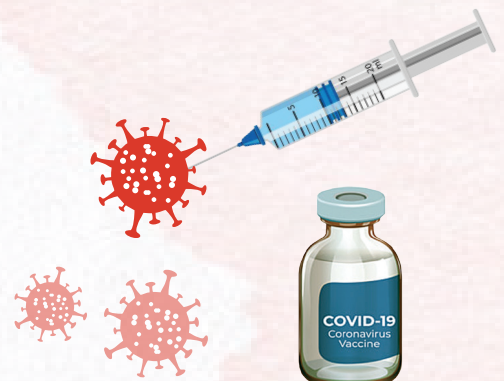


COVID-19 Vaccine Development

- Fast forward to the 21st century, the dissemination of COVID-19 mandated the development of a new vaccine. The main challenge is to produce a healthy vaccine in a minimum of time.

Stages in the development of a vaccine:

- According to the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), there are six stages of vaccine development: exploratory, pre-clinical, clinical development, regulatory review and approval, manufacturing and quality control.
- **Exploratory:** This is the research-intensive phase of the vaccine development process which is designed to identify "natural or synthetic antigens that might help prevent or treat a disease."



- **Pre-clinical:** During this phase, researchers use tissue-culture or cell-culture systems and animal testing to determine whether the candidate vaccine will produce immunity or not.
- **Clinical development:** It is a three-phase process. During Phase I, small groups of people receive the trial vaccine. In Phase II, the clinical study is expanded and vaccines are given to people who have characteristics similar to those for whom the new vaccine is intended. In Phase III, the vaccine is given to thousands of people and tested for efficacy and safety.
- **Regulatory review and approval:** If a vaccine passes through all three phases of clinical development, the vaccine developer submits a Biologics License Application (BLA) to the licensing authority.
- **Manufacturing:** Major drug manufacturers provide the infrastructure, personnel and equipment necessary to create mass quantities of vaccines.
- **Quality control:** Stakeholders must adhere to procedures that allow them to track whether a vaccine is performing as anticipated.

Vaccine Testing Phases:

- Vaccine testing typically begins with animal and lab testing before going on to different stages of human testing.
- **Phase A:** Phase one trials are small-scale, usually involving few participants, to assess whether the vaccine is safe for humans.
- **Phase B:** Phase two trials often involve several hundred subjects, and mainly evaluate the efficacy of the vaccine against the disease.
- **Phase C:** The final phase involves thousands of people to further assess the efficacy of the vaccine over a defined period of time, and can last several months.



Serum Institute of India

- Serum Institute of India (SII), a privately-owned company, is the world's largest vaccine manufacturer by number of doses produced and sold globally.
- It manufactures Polio vaccine, Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis, BCG, Hepatitis-B, Measles, Mumps and Rubella vaccines.
- It is estimated that about 65% of the children in the world received at least one vaccine manufactured by SII.
- Currently, SII is making doses of COVISHIELD and COVOVAX vaccines for COVID-19.
- **Chairperson :** Cyrus S. Poonawala
- **Headquarters :** Pune, India



Herd Immunity

Herd immunity is achieved over the period of time, when the majority of population gain immunity against the disease by infecting with the virus. Therefore, the level of its transmitting reduces.

COVID Vaccine Intelligence Network (Co-WIN)

- The Union Government recently announced that people can self-register for COVID-19 vaccine through the new mobile application called Co-WIN.

Key points:

- COVID Vaccine Intelligence Network (Co-WIN) is a multimedia portal for the Covid-19 Vaccination Distribution programme established by the Government of India.
- As per the COVID Operating Guidance provided by the Ministry of

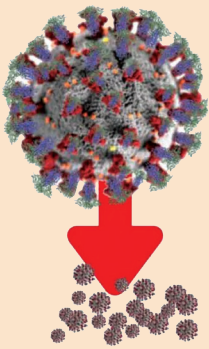
Health, the COVID Vaccine Intelligence Network (Co-WIN) framework will be used to monitor registered recipients and COVID-19 vaccines on a real-time basis.

- The Co-WIN application will have its own components.

Co-WIN-20:

- 'CoWin-20' is also a mobile application being developed to record data on vaccines, to compile a of healthcare staff and to log a Covid-19 vaccine.
- The CoWin-20 app can also submit real-time data from cold storage facilities that hold Covid-19 vaccines.





Double Mutant Corona Virus 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.

Key Points:

- 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.

B.1.617

- The B.1.617 variant of SARS-CoV-2 carries two mutations, E484Q and L452R. Both are separately found in many other coronavirus variants, but they have been reported together for the first time in India.
- The two mutations are found in the virus's spike protein. The spike protein helps the virus to bind itself to the human cell's receptors and gain entry into a host cell.



Proning for self-care

- The Union Health Ministry has advised 'proning for self care' for coronavirus patients, stating that it is extremely beneficial for such patients with compromised breathing comfort, especially during home isolation.
- Proning is the process of turning a patient with precise, safe motions, from their back onto their abdomen so that the individual is lying face down.

1 Prone

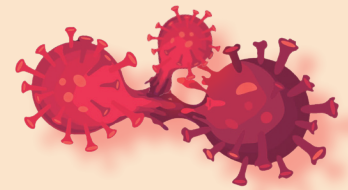


2 Right lateral recumbent



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'.

Sitting up 60-90 degrees

3



Left lateral recumbent

4



Alveoli

The Alveoli is the primary structural and functional unit of lungs. There are 500 million alveoli in the human lung. They are tiny sacs.

What is Proning?

- Proning is a practice of great potential benefit in COVID-19 disease, several studies, including the Lancet has found.
- The ministry of health explained that the position involves one lying on their stomach face down, which in turn improves ventilation, and makes breathing easy by keeping alveolar units open.
- This is supported by scientific data where hospitalized patients that were prone positioned showed improved oxygenation.
- Four to five pillows are needed for proning. One pillow is placed below the neck, one below the chest and two below the shins. The front of the leg below the knees is called shin.

Carnivac-Cov Vaccine



- Carnivac-Cov, the world's first-ever COVID-19 vaccine for animals was registered recently by Russia.
- According to the country's agriculture safety watchdog Rosselkhoznadzor, the vaccine will provide immunity to animals from coronavirus for at least six months after vaccination.

Key Points

- The world's first animal vaccine against the novel coronavirus has been named as Carnivac-Cov.
- The Carnivac-Cov vaccine for animals has been developed by a unit of Rosselkhoznadzor (Federal Service for Veterinary and Phytosanitary Surveillance).
- The clinical trials of Carnivac-Cov began in October 2020 and the trials included cats, minks, dogs, foxes, Arctic foxes, and other animals.
- This vaccine is the world's first and only product for preventing Covid-19 in animals.
- The results of the trials showed that the vaccine is harmless and highly immunogenic as all the vaccinated animals developed antibodies to the coronavirus in 100% of cases.

COVIRAP Technology

- Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kharagpur has successfully commercialized its flagship healthcare product COVIRAP the novel diagnostic technology to zero on infectious diseases including COVID-19.



Key point of COVIRAP:

- The COVID-19 diagnostic test can be conducted directly from human swab samples in the portable device developed by the team, without requiring any separate facility for RNA extraction.
- The kit has also been supplemented with a free smartphone app to facilitate unambiguous results interpretation and automated dissemination to the patients.
- For use of the test, the nasal, as well as oral swab samples, are diluted in a solution and tested in the portable device by mixing with reagents that are supplied in a pre-mixed form, test runs automatically in the device without intermediate manual intervention.
- COVIRAP test overcomes several potential bottlenecks faced by similar other tests in the past, for instance, poor performance outside highly controlled laboratory and lack of simple, affordable, yet generic and universal instrument that may be used for home-based testing and community health care for a wide variety of infectious and non-infectious diseases.

eSanta: Platform for Marine Products launched

- The Union Commerce and Industry Minister launched a platform called "eSanta" for marine products. The main aim of the platform is to empower aqua farmers.

About eSanta

- The Union Minister informed that the e-commerce platform will help in empowering farmers as they will be able to sell their products through this portal.
- The advanced platform will enable the farmers to do spot as well as forward sales.
- The eSanta portal eliminates the necessity of middlemen completely.
- National Centre for Sustainable Aquaculture (NaCSA) is an extension arm of Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA), Ministry of Commerce & Industry.
- It will raise income, lifestyle, self-reliance, quality levels, traceability, and provide new options for our aqua farmers.
- The platform will change the traditional way of carrying out business from a word of mouth basis to become more formalized & legally binding.

About National Centre for Sustainable Aquaculture (NaCSA)

- National Centre for Sustainable Aquaculture (NaCSA) is an extension arm of Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA), Ministry of Commerce & Industry Govt. of India.
- The objectives of NaCSA are to encourage and uplift the small and marginal farmers through organization of clusters and maintaining Best Management Practices in shrimp culture.

National Non-Communicable Disease Monitoring Survey (NNMS) released

- The National Non-Communicable Disease Monitoring Survey (NNMS) was recently released by the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare. The survey was conducted for the period of 2017-18.
- This is the first of its kind of a comprehensive survey on Non-communicable Diseases (NCDs). It covers the age groups of 15-69 years, males and females from the urban and rural areas.

Key Findings:

- The report highlights that, two in five adults have three or more risk factors for non-communicable diseases (NCDs) in India.
- Further, the status of the health system to respond to the disease burden is underscored.
- It also states that more than one in every four adults and 6.2% adolescents were overweight or obese.
- Three out of ten adults had raised blood pressure.
- 3% had raised blood glucose.

About NNMS

- It is the largest comprehensive national Survey on risk factors and health systems preparedness of non-communicable disease (NCD).
- It also provides a framework on the use of telemedicine for cancer, heart diseases, diabetes, and stroke.

CSCS to be merged with e-Daakhil Portal



- The Ministry of Consumer Affairs agreed to merge the Common Service Centers (CSCs) with the E-Daakhil platform in order to make e-filing simpler for customers.

Key Highlight:

- The e-Daakhil Consumer grievance resolution portal was introduced by the National Consumer Dispute Redressal Commission on 7 September 2020.
- This online dispute redressal portal is currently in service in 15 States and Union Territories.
- The e-daakhil platform empowers customers and their advocates to upload customer complaints online.
- The site also allows the online review of complaints by consumer commissions in order to approve, deny or forward any case to the Commission concerned in order to proceed further.
- This portal has been developed under the Consumer Protection Act, 2019.

TIFAC launched SAKSHAM portal and Seaweed Cultivation Mission



- The Technology Information, Forecasting and Evaluation Council (TIFAC) has launched a job portal named SAKSHAM to map the skills of employees needed by the MSMEs. Besides, Seaweed Cultivation Mission was also introduced.

SAKSHAM Portal

- TIFAC pointed out that the Saksham platform would help to remove middlemen and labour contractors.
- It would also help to determine the degree of expertise.
- The portal will also assist in the creation of shramik skill cards.
- This initiative would promote the recruitment of 10 lakh blue-collar workers across India.
- The platform would directly connect employees to small and medium-sized businesses and remove the need for middlemen or labour contractors.
- This portal would also reduce the difficulty of employees in seeking jobs in local small and medium-sized businesses.
- The platform is important because it will allow employees to find jobs who were forced to return to their native place in the middle of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

About Seaweed Cultivation

- Seaweed cultivation is sometimes referred to as kelp raising. It is the method of growing and extracting algae. The method requires handling spontaneously found batches in the simplest form. When in advanced form, the process requires the complete regulation of the algae life cycle.
- According to the Department's estimation, if seaweed is grown in 10 million hectares or 5 percent of India's Exclusive Economic Zone, it will help to provide jobs to 50 million people.

About TIFAC

- Technology Information, Forecasting and Assessment Council (TIFAC) is an autonomous organization. It was set up in the year 1988.
- It works under the Department of Science & Technology.
- The organisation works in the technology domain and assess technology trajectories.

Bird Flu outbreak in India



- Bird Flu has been recently recorded in wild geese in Himachal Pradesh, ducks in Kerala, crows in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh.

Key Points:

- The Kerala Government had started culling ducks and chicken.
- The Tamil Nadu and Karnataka Government have stepped up surveillance and formed guidelines.
- In Madhya Pradesh more than 155 crows died of H5N8 strain.
- Migrant birds died in Pong Dam Lake Sanctuary due to H5N8 infections.
- In Rajasthan, birds in Kota and Baran were found dead with the infection.

About Avian Influenza or Bird Flu

- It is a contagious viral disease caused by Influenza Type A virus. It usually affects poultry birds such as Turkeys and Chickens.
- There are several types of Influenza Type A virus. Some of the virus may cause low egg production and others result in early cracking of egg shells.

Farmer's Protest against Agricultural Bills

Members of many farmer's outfits in Punjab, Haryana and western Uttar Pradesh organised protests to demonstrate and demand immediate repealment of the Center's agricultural bills.



Three farm bill enacted recently by the government:

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.

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.

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

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.



FASTags made mandatory to all four wheelers

- As of January 1, 2021, the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) has made FASTags compulsory for all four-wheelers.
- The Ministry published a formal notice concerning this and also explained that it would also refer to old vehicles.

FASTags:

- FASTags are prepaid tags for the collection of automatic tolls. These are normally pasted on the vehicles' windscreen.
- FASTags are rechargeable and, as these vehicles travel into the toll centre locations, the volume of toll is automatically deducted.
- Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) technology deals with FASTags. Using FASTags reduces toll collection time and thus guarantees the accurate collection of tolls.



Govt. launched Swachhta Saarthi Fellowship



- The Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India under its "Waste to Wealth" Mission launched the "Swachhta Saarthi Fellowship".

Key Points:

- The Swachhta Saarthi Fellowship initiative was launched with the objective of recognizing the students, self-help groups, community workers, sanitary workers and municipal workers who are engaged in tackling the enormous challenge of waste management in a scientific and sustainable manner.
- Three Categories of Awards under the Fellowships:
 - Category-A:** This category will be open to School students of standards 9th to 12th who are engaged in the waste management community work.
 - Category-B:** This category is open to UG, PG and Research Students engaged in the waste management community work.
 - Category-C:** This category of the fellowship is open to the Citizens who are working in the community and through Self-Help Groups, municipal workers or sanitary workers who are working beyond the specifications of their job requirements.

About Waste to Wealth Mission

- This mission will identify, develop, and deploy technologies to treat waste to generate energy, recycle materials, and extract worth.
- The Waste to Wealth Mission is one of the nine national missions of the Prime Minister's Science, Technology, and Innovation Advisory Council (PM-STIAC).
- The mission will assist and augment the Swachh Bharat and Smart Cities projects to create circular economic models that are financially viable for waste management to streamline waste handling in the country.

National Program and Project Management Policy Framework launched



- The National Program and Project Management Policy Framework (NPMPPF) was initiated by NITI Aayog and Quality Council of India.
- The framework seeks to bring about fundamental changes in the way infrastructure projects are conducted in India.

Key Highlights:

- "NPMPPF" will help the Prime Minister understand the vision of Atma Nirbhar Bharat.
- The framework would ensure better facilities by reducing costs and waste materials. The framework does not undermine environmental sustainability. It also guarantees time-bound and results-oriented delivery of projects.

Railways launched Operation Meri Saheli



- Indian Railways has launched an initiative called "Meri Saheli". The initiative focuses on action of the security of women across all zones. This is an initiative of RPF.

Key Highlights:

- The primary goal of the project is to ensure safety and security for lady passengers travelling by train for their entire trip from the source station to the destination station.
- Under the initiative, the approach is to communicate with lady passengers, particularly those travelling on their own.
- A team of young lady RPF personnel will be engaging with the lady passenger at the source station.

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.
- 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.

Vision 2035: Public Health Surveillance in India



- NITI Aayog recently published a white paper entitled Vision 2035: Public Health Surveillance in India. It is part of the work to improve the health services of India.
- The paper calls for the integration of three-tier healthcare programmes in India viz. Primary, secondary and tertiary Ayushman Bharat.

Objectives:

- To make the public health monitoring system more predictive and sensitive and to improve preparedness for intervention at all levels.
- Improving processes for the exchange of data between the Center and the States.
- Providing geographic and global leadership in addressing incidents aimed at improving public health emergency structures of international concern.
- And protect the dignity and confidentiality of people.

According to the White Paper, 75 percent of re-emerging or emerging illnesses are zoonotic and 61 percent of deaths and 55 percent of injury are caused by non-communicable diseases of existing health conditions.

World Bank approved fund for DRIP-2 Project



Dam Rehabilitation & Improvement Project

- The World Bank has recently authorised USD 250 million to boost the efficiency and protection of existing dams in India.
- The funds were diverted to the DRIP-2, the second Dam Restoration and Development Scheme. The allocated funds are to be used to improve 120 dams in the region.

Key features of DRIP:

- DRIP is a scheme for the rehabilitation and improvement of the Dam. The loan is being applied with the help of the World Bank. The project was initially initiated in seven countries, including Karnataka, Jharkhand, Kerala, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Uttarakhand and Tamil Nadu. It was started in 2012.
 - The Project consists of three main components as follows
 - Rehabilitation and Improvement of Dams and associated appurtenances
 - Dam Safety Institutional Strengthening
 - Project Management
 - Under the project, new technologies of dam safety evaluation are promoted.

DRIP-II Project

- The protection of the dams is to be improved under DRIP-II. The technical efficiency of the chosen dams is also to be improved. The project is to be applied for a period of 10 years from 2020 to 2030. The project shall be supervised by the Central Water Committee. The estimated budget of the project is USD 1.5 billion. One billion USD is to be funded by the World Bank.
- The other important measures included under DRIP-2 are as follows
- Flood Forecasting System
- Integrated Reservoir Operations that will help to build climate resilience
- Prepare and implement Emergency Action Plans
- Piloting supplemental revenue generation schemes such as floating solar panels.

One Sun, One World, One Grid (OSOWOG) Initiative proposed

- The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) has proposed the One Sun, One Earth, One Grid (OSOWOG) initiative.
- The OSOWOG initiative aimed at creating a global ecosystem of interconnected renewable energy resources that can be easily shared.

Key Points:

- Its objective is to build global consensus about sharing solar resources among more than 140 countries of West Asia and South-East Asia.
- The vision of this initiative is 'The Sun Never Sets' and is a constant at some geographical location, globally, at any given point of time.

New Rules for Administration of J&K notified

- The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has notified new rules for administration in Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.
- The new rules specify the key functions of the President, Lieutenant Governor (LG) and the Council of Ministers related to UT of J&K.



Role of the President

- In case of difference of opinion between the LG and the Council of Ministers (led by a Chief Minister) with regard to any matter, the LG shall refer it to the President and shall act according to the decision of the President.
- In the above case, the LG will be empowered to pass directions till the President makes a decision.

Roles and Powers of Lieutenant Governor

- The executive functions of Lieutenant Governor include public order, police, anti-corruption and All India Services.
- Matters which affect or are likely to affect the minority community, Scheduled Tribe, Scheduled Caste or Backward classes are to be submitted to the LG.
- When there is a difference of opinion between the Minister and the LG, the decision of the LG is to have to be accepted by the Council of Ministers.
- Recently, Manoj Sinha has been appointed as Lt. Governor (LG) of Jammu and Kashmir. He succeeded G.C. Murmu (now CAG of India).

Role of Chief Minister (leader of Council of Ministers)

- The executive powers of the Chief Minister and the Council of Ministers have been restricted to service matters of non-All India Services, proposals to impose new tax, land revenue, sale grant or lease of government property, reconstituting departments or offices and draft legislations.
- Any matter which may cause conflict between Jammu & Kashmir Government and Union Government, the Chief Secretary should bring it to the notice of LG and the Chief Minister.

Role of the Central Government

- The LG shall make a prior reference to the Central government for following matters:
- Matters affecting the relations of the Centre with J&K Government, the Supreme Court of India or any other high court.
- Proposals for the appointment of Chief Secretary and Director General of Police (DGP).
- Important cases which affect or are likely to affect the peace and tranquility of J&K.
- Cases which affect or are likely to affect the interests of any minority community, Scheduled Castes or the Backward Classes.

J&K Integrated Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (JK-IGRAMS) launched

- The Jammu and Kashmir administration recently launched Integrated Grievance Redress and Monitoring System to receive, redress and monitor the grievances of the public.
- It has been launched on pilot basis for Jammu, Srinagar, and Reasi districts.
- Jammu and Kashmir is the first UT that will be linked to the Central Government system CPGRAMS.
- **Significance:** The move comes at a time when a sense of disconnection and alienation has been growing among the people of J&K, especially in the Kashmir Valley.

Key Highlights about JK-IGRAMS

- Deputy Commissioners (DCs) have been placed at the primary level for receiving, disposing of and monitoring grievances, the J&K administration.
- All SPs and DCs will be made available at designated times five days a week. They will be available in their offices and anyone can go and meet them.

About Centralized Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS)

- It has been launched by the Department of Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances (DARPG) under the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions.
- It enables the citizen to track online the grievance being followed up with Departments concerned and also enables DARPG to monitor the grievance.
- It provides the facility to lodge a grievance online from any geographical location.
- It has been developed by the National Informatics Centre under the Ministry of Electronics & IT (MeitY).



प्रशासनिक सुधार और लोक शिकायत विभाग
DEPARTMENT OF
ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS
& PUBLIC GRIEVANCES

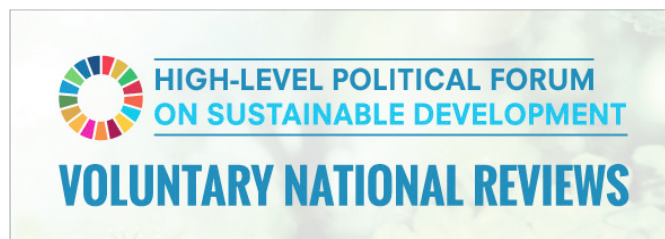
Union Cabinet approved Affordable Rental Housing Complexes (ARHCs)

- The Union Cabinet has given approval for developing Affordable Rental Housing Complexes (ARHCs) as a sub-scheme under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Urban (PMAY-U) for the Urban poor and migrants.
- The sub-scheme was announced by the Union Finance Minister as a part of the Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan.
- ARHCs will be made in urban centers of the country where urban migrant workers will be able to avail houses at an affordable rent. These complexes will benefit a large number of workers, service providers, students, etc. from rural areas or small towns when they move towards the urban centers in search of better opportunities.

Key Highlights

- Under ARHCs, at present approximately 3 lakh beneficiaries will be covered.
- Private and Public entities will be offered special incentives at priority sector lending rate and concessional loans from banks and tax relief for developing ARHCs in urban centers on their available vacant lands for a period of 25 years.
- The Housing Complexes of the Government that are vacant at present will be converted into ARHCs.
- For the projects using innovative technologies for construction under the ARHCs, an estimated Rs. 600 crore of expenditure will be made in the form of the Technology Innovation Grant.

NITI Aayog presented Voluntary National Review (VNR)



- NITI Aayog recently presented India's second Voluntary National Review at UN's High-Level Political Forum. NITI Aayog has the mandate of overseeing the adoption and monitoring of SDGs at the national and sub-national level.

Key Points:

- VNR is a process through which countries assess and present progress made in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

- The purpose is to present a snapshot of where the country stands in SDGs implementation, with a view to help accelerate progress through experience sharing, peer-learning, identifying gaps and good practices, and mobilizing partnerships.

Union Govt. approved creation of National Recruitment Agency

- The Union Government approved the setting up of the National Recruitment Agency (NRA) that will be responsible for conducting the Common Eligibility Test (CET).
- National Recruitment Agency (NRA) will be a multi-agency, autonomous body to conduct a Common eligibility test to fulfill the vacancies of non-gazetted officer posts of Group B and C for Railways, Banks, and SSC.
- The online mode of Tier-1 examination of the CET will be conducted by the National Recruitment Agency. Every district is going to have at least one exam center.
- The NRA will conduct a common eligibility test (CET) for graduate level, higher secondary level and the matriculate level candidates. The score of CET will be valid for three years but one can reappear in the examinations to upgrade his position and scores.
- CET will be the first tier of recruitment examinations. The other tiers will be conducted by the concerned recruitment agencies.

Indian Gas Exchange: The first gas trading platform launched

- The Indian Energy Exchange has launched the first gas trading platform, Indian Gas Exchange which will be the first online gas trading platform for physical delivery of natural gas. The trading of natural gas in the platform is to be done in rupees.
- The minimum lot size allotted is 100 million British Thermal Unit (MBTU).



Note

The India Energy Exchange is an electronic system regulated by the Central Electricity Regulatory Commission. It began its operations in 2008. It comprises of power traders, state electricity board, power producers and open access consumers.

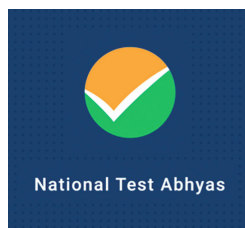
PM Modi launched CHAMPIONS Portal



- The Prime Minister Narendra Modi has launched a technology platform called CHAMPIONS, which stands for Creation and Harmonious Application of Modern Processes for Increasing the Output and National Strength.
- The portal aims to supporting small units, encouraging, solving their grievances, helping and handholding. It will act as a one-stop shop solution of all entities of the MSME sector.
- The platform is a control room-cum management information system. It is enabled with ICT technology tools. Along with this, the platform also includes telephone, internet and video-conference. It is enabled by Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning and Data Analytics.
- The system is to be completely integrated with Centralized Public Grievances and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS) which was developed by the National Informatics Centre along with Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG) and Directorate of Public Grievances.
- The platform has been created by the National Informatics Centre.

MHRD launched National Test Abhyas

- The Ministry Human Resources Development (MHRD) has launched a new mobile application called National Test Abhyas. It was developed by the National Testing Agency.
- The application will help the candidates to take mock tests for exams such as JEE Mains, NEET, etc. The application is powered by Artificial



Intelligence and therefore the students will get instant results after taking the tests.

- National Testing Agency (NTA) conducts the competitive exams in the country. This includes JEE, NEET, GPAT, UGC, NET, etc. The NTA is an autonomous organization. It was established under the Indian Societies Registration Act, 1860.

e-NAM gets expanded

- National Agriculture Market (eNAM) is a pan-India electronic trading portal which networks the existing Agricultural Produce Market Committees (APMC) mandis to create a unified national market for agricultural commodities. It was launched in 2016.
- Small Farmers Agribusiness Consortium (SFAC) is the lead agency for implementing eNAM under the aegis of Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, Government of India.
- It has vision to promote uniformity in agriculture marketing by streamlining of procedures across the integrated markets, removing information asymmetry between buyers and sellers and promoting real time price discovery based on actual demand and supply.
- **Context:**
 - Recently, around 200 Mandis were added to the eNAM platform from the states of Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh. These addends have brought the number of e-Nam mandis in the country to 785.
 - For the first time, a mandi from the state of Karnataka has been added to the e-NAM platform.

Delimitation Commission set up for Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Assam, J&K, Manipur

- Under former Supreme Court judge Ranjana Prakash Desai a Delimitation Commission was created.
- According to Jammu and Kashmir reorganization act, the Delimitation for the state of Jammu and Kashmir must be carried out. The preceding delimitation was achieved in 1995 for the state of Jammu and Kashmir. Before the final delimitation was completed, the territory was under the control of the President.

Delimitation Commission of India

- The Delimitation commission or Boundary commission of India is a commission established by the Government of India under the provisions of the Delimitation Commission Act.

- The main task of the commission is redrawing the boundaries of the various assembly and Lok Sabha constituencies based on a recent census. The representation from each State is not changed during this exercise.
- However, the number of SC and ST seats in a state are changed in accordance with the census. The present delimitation of constituencies has been done on the basis of 2001 census under the provisions of Delimitation Act, 2002.
- The Commission is a powerful and independent body whose orders cannot be challenged in any court of law. The orders are laid before the Lok Sabha and the respective State Legislative Assemblies. However, modifications are not permitted.

Supreme Court upheld a notification regarding SARFAESI Act

- The Supreme Court has recently upheld a notification issued by Government under which the cooperative societies have also come under SARFAESI Act. The SC has also ruled that the Cooperative Banks have also come under the definition of banks under Banking Regulation Act, 1949.
- The SC has also ruled that under SARFAESI Act, the Parliament has powers to provide procedures for recovery of loans under the act.

About SARFAESI Act

- The Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Securities Interest Act, 2002 (also known as the SARFAESI Act) allows banks and other financial institution to auction residential or commercial properties (of Defaulter) to recover loans.
- The banks utilize the Act as tool to recover bad loans, especially the non-performing assets.
- It also enforces security interests of the banks without intervention of the court. In order to recover a debt, the act empowers the financial institutions in India to take over immovable property.

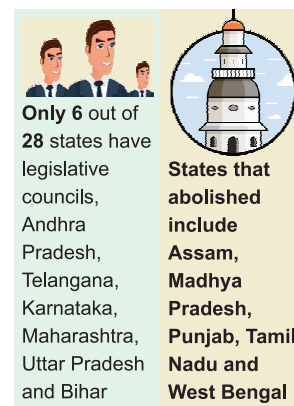
Andhra Pradesh Cabinet nods to abolish Legislative Council

- The Andhra Pradesh cabinet passed the resolution to abolish the Legislative Council. It is to be noted that the Legislative Council stalled two bills that were passed by the assembly. It includes the AP Capital Region Development Authority Repeal Bill and Decentralization bill.

Constitutional Provisions regarding Legislative Council

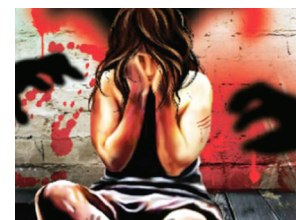
Article 169 of the constitution defines the Legislative Council. As of November 2019, there are 6 states with the State Legislative Council. The members of the State Legislative Council are selected in the following way:

- One-third are elected from the local bodies such as Gram Panchayat, municipalities and district councils.
- One-third are elected by members of the State Legislative Assembly.
- One-Sixth of the members are nominated by the governor
- One-twelfth are graduates who have resided for three years in the state
- One-twelfth are teaching professions.



OCSAE: On-line Child Sexual Abuse Investigation Unit formed

- The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has formed an On-line Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation (OCSAE) Prevention / Investigation Unit in New Delhi under its Special Crime Zone to tackle the Internet challenge of child porn.
- This move was taken after information about 7 Indian nationals engaged in Foreign Child Pornography was received by Germany Police.



About OCSAE Prevention/Investigation Unit

- This newly formed CBI Unit will compile, compile and disseminate information on producing, storing, releasing, sharing, searching, uploading, supporting, circulating and prosecuting those crimes relating to online child sexual harassment and exploitation.
- The investigation of such offences covered under provisions of Indian Penal Code (IPC) 1860, Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act 2012 and Information Technology (IT) Act 2000 and under various Laws of the land, as applicable. The territorial jurisdiction of this unit of CBI will be throughout India.

Important Committees in news

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

Important Committees in news

24.	Injeti Srinivas Committee	It will review competition regulations 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 Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) .
26.	AJ Paulraj Committee	It gave wide-ranging recommendations to drive India's 5G adoption entailing areas like spectrum policy, regulatory policy, standards and education.
27.	Amitava Roy committee	It looks into the problems of jails in India and suggest reform measures .
28.	Bhaskar Ramamurthy Committee	It will suggest changes to JEE (Advanced) 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- Food Safety and Standards (Labelling and Display) Regulations 2018 .
30.	Rajiv Gauba Committee	It will make recommendations for a separate penal provision on incidents of mob violence .
31.	Ravindra Dholakia Committee	Government formed committee for Sub-National Accounts to upgrade the norms for computation of economic data at states and districts level 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 standards for metro rail systems in the country.
33.	Rajesh Bindal Committee	It submitted recommendations on legal issues related to inter country removal and retention of children .
34.	Manmohan Juneja Committee	It will review enforcement of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) provisions under Companies Act, 2013.
35.	Subhash Chandra Garg Committee	It look into the development and regulation of the financial technology (fintech) sector in India.
36.	N Gopalaswami Committee	It select 20 Institutions of Eminence 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 bad loans, effectiveness of audits and rising incidents of frauds .
38.	Vinay Sheel Oberoi Committee	The committee will monitor and expedite capital acquisition projects for modernisation of armed forces and bolster armed forces preparedness.
39.	N Chandrasekaran Task force	The task force will study the whole gamut of issues surrounding strategic implications of AI in national security perspective , 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 social media expansion .
41.	Amitabh Kant Committee	It's a committee to address problem of Non-performing Assets (NPAs) or stressed assets 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 corporate governance has submitted its report to the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI).
43.	Suresh Mathur Committee	To review insurance marketing firms
44.	Bijoyo Chakarvarty Committee	Committee on Women's healthcare
45.	DB Shekatkar Committee	To recommend measures to enhance combat capability and rebalance defence expenditure of the armed forces .



Bills & Acts

GNCTD (Amendment) Act

- 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.

Tribunal Reforms Ordinance, 2021

- Recently, the President promulgated Tribunal Reforms (Rationalisation and Conditions of Service) Ordinance 2021 through which the Appellate authorities under nine laws have been replaced with High Courts.
- The Ordinance has amended the Finance Act 2017 to include provisions related to the composition of search-cum-selection committees, and term of office of members in the Act itself.

Key Highlights:

- The ordinance seeks to dissolve certain existing appellate bodies and transfer their functions to other existing judicial bodies.
- It seeks to empower the Central Government to make rules for qualifications, appointment, term of office, salaries and allowances, resignation, removal and other terms and conditions of service of Members of Tribunals.
- It provides that the Chairperson and Members of the Tribunals will be appointed by the Central Government on the recommendation of a Search-cum-Selection Committee.
- It also provides the composition of the Committee, to be headed by the Chief Justice of India or a Judge of the Supreme Court nominated by him.
- Chairperson of a Tribunal shall hold office for a term of 4 years or till he attains the age of 70 years, whichever is earlier. Other Members of a Tribunal shall hold office for a term of 4 years or till he attains the age of 67 years, whichever is earlier.

Note

The Article 123 of the Indian Constitution provides powers to the president to promulgate an ordinance. An ordinance laid under the act has the same effect as that of an act.

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.

Major Ports Authorities Bill, 2020



- The "Major Ports Authorities Bill, 2020" was recently passed in the Rajya Sabha. The bill was passed using the ballot votes. The bill was passed in the Lok Sabha in September 2020.
- The bill will encourage good competition within the major private ports.

Provisions of the bill

- The bill aims to provide more autonomy in decision-making.
- It will provide autonomy to the 12 major ports of India, Namely:
 - Deendayal (erstwhile Kandla) port
 - Mumbai port
 - JNPT port
 - Mormugao port
 - New Mangalore port
 - Cochin port
 - Chennai port
 - Kamarajar (erstwhile Ennore) port

- V O Chidambaranar port
- Visakhapatnam port
- Paradip port
- Kolkata (including Haldia) port
- The bill would also professionalise the administration of the port with the establishment of boards.
- The bill would replace the 1963 Major Port Trusts Act.
- It contains arrangements for the creation of a Board of Major Port Authority for each major port to replace the current Port Trusts.

Composition of the board

- The Board shall consist of a Chairperson and a Vice-Chairperson. Both will be named by the Central Government on the advice of the selection committee. The Board would also have one delegate from each of the respective State Governments, the Ministry of Railways, the Ministry of Defense and the Customs Service.
- It will also have two to four independent members. Further, it will include two members who will represent the interests of the employees from the Major Port Authority.

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.

Arbitration and Conciliation (Amendment) Bill, 2021

- The Parliament has passed the Arbitration and Conciliation (Amendment) Bill, 2021 which seeks to amend the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996.
- The Bill comprises the provisions of dealing with the domestic and international arbitration. It defines the law to conduct conciliation proceedings.
- It replaces the Ordinance that was promulgated on November 4, 2020, consisting of the same provisions.

Provisions of the Bill

- The Bill has provisions of "Automatic stay on awards". The previous Act had allowed the party to file an application in order to set aside the order given in the arbitration proceeding.
- It specifies that the court can stay the arbitral award, even if there is pendency of setting aside of application, when the court is satisfied that relevant arbitration agreement or contract or making of award was induced by fraud or corruption.
- Schedule 7 of Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996 specifies some qualifications, experience, and accreditation norms for the arbitrators. The arbitrator must be:
 - An officer of Indian Legal Service.
 - An advocate under the Advocates Act, 1961 along with the 10 years of experience.
- The bill of 2021 removes the Schedule 7 for arbitrators and mentions that these qualifications, experience, and norms will only be specified under regulations by the regulators.

Remarks

- The Arbitration and Conciliation Act of 1996 is the main governing law of the arbitration. It was enacted with the aim of consolidating and amending the law related to the international commercial arbitration, domestic arbitration and enforcement of the foreign award.
- It also seeks to define the law related to conciliation.

Juvenile Justice Care and Protection of Children Act, 2015

- The Union Cabinet has approved the amendments to the Juvenile Justice Care and Protection of Children Act, 2015.

Key Facts

- The amendment proposes that the Additional District Magistrate (ADMs) should monitor the functioning of the agencies implementing this Act in each district.
- Following this amendment, the District Child Protection Unit will operate under the District Magistrate (DM).

- The DMs will also objectively assess the Child Protection Committee and the Specialist Youth Policing Force.
- The amendments authorise the District Magistrate along with Additional District Magistrate to issue the adoption orders in accordance with Section 61 of the Juvenile justice act.

About Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015

- The Act was enacted by the Parliament of India by repealing the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000.
- This act requires teenagers under 16 and 18 years of age who are in trouble with the law and who are engaged in Heinous Crimes to be prosecuted as adults. It also aims to create a freely available law on adoption in India.
- The Act came into force in 2016. In order to smoothen the procedures for orphan, abandoned and surrendered children the Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA) was given the status of statutory body.

Note

- Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA) is an autonomous and statutory body under the Ministry of Women and Child Development. It was established in 1990.
- CARA is the nodal body of the adoption of Indian children. It also monitors and regulates in-country and inter-country adoptions.

Insurance Ombudsman Rules, 2017

- The Government of India notified comprehensive amendments to the Insurance Ombudsman Rules, 2017. Its objective are to improve the working of the Insurance Ombudsman mechanism to facilitate resolution of complaints regarding deficiencies in insurance services in a timely, cost-effective and impartial manner.

Key Highlights:

- The amendments strengthened the reach of the allegations submitted to the ombudsman from conflicts to service violations on the part of insurers, dealers, agents and intermediaries.
- Within the reforms, insurance brokers have been placed under the oversight of the Ombudsman. This was achieved by encouraging Ombudsmen to push awards on to insurance agents as well.

- Furthermore, the regulations on the timeliness and cost-effectiveness of the process have been improved. Policyholders can also submit reports online to the Ombudsman.
- The amended rules also aim to provide a complaint tracking framework to allow policyholders to monitor the status of their grievances electronically.
- The rules also specify that an ombudsman can use video-conferencing to hear cases.
- In the event of a vacancy in the office of any specific Ombudsman, extra fees will be paid to another Ombudsman in order to allow access to redress under the Ombudsman mechanism.
- As per the provision, the selection committee will now include a person with a record of promoting consumer rights or promoting the cause of consumer welfare in the insurance industry.
- Under the changes, the Executive Board of Insurers, which oversees the Ombudsman's process, has been called the Insurance Ombudsman's Board.

Note

Ombudsman is an official who is appointed to investigate the complaints regarding the service or on an administrative authority. The ombudsman is usually appointed by governments however, the private companies can also appoint them.

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).

Consumer Protection Act, 2019

- The Consumer Protection Act, 2019 passed by Parliament came into force on July 20, 2020. The Act will empower consumers and help them to protect their rights through its provisions such as Consumer Protection Council and Consumer Dispute Redressal Commission.
- The Act replaces the Consumer Protection Act, 1986.

Key Highlights

- Under the Act, the Central Consumer Protection Authority has been empowered to conduct investigations on violation of consumer rights, order recall of unsafe goods, misleading advertisements, impose penalties on endorsers, publishers or manufacturers, etc.
- As per the Act, the celebrities can be fined up to Rs 10 lakhs for promoting misleading products. Besides, strict actions shall be taken against advertisers for generating misleading content. However, no action can be taken against the media through which the advertisement is being published.
- The Act makes it mandatory for the E-Commerce entities to acknowledge the receipt of consumer complaints within 48 hours. Also, they have to redress the complaint within one month from the date of receipt.
- The Consumer Protection Act, 2019 defined six major consumer rights as follows:
 - ♦ Right to seek redressal against unfair trade practices.
 - ♦ Right to sue the celebrity for misleading endorsements.
 - ♦ Right to be protected against marketing goods and services that are hazardous to life and property.
 - ♦ Right to be informed about the quantity, quality, standard, purity and price of goods and services.
 - ♦ Right to be assured to access a variety of goods at competitive prices.
 - ♦ Right to claim product liability action under the Act on account of harm caused to consumers due to defective products.

The Medical Termination of Pregnancy (Amendment) Bill, 2020

- The Medical Termination of Pregnancy (Amendment) Bill, 2020 was passed by the Lok Sabha on March 17, 2020.
- The bill seeks to amend the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971 and increase the upper limit of legal abortions to 24 weeks for special categories of women.

Key Features

- The Medical Termination of Pregnancy (Amendment) Bill, 2020 proposes requirements for an opinion from one provider for termination of pregnancy up to 20 weeks of gestation and introducing the requirement of opinion from two providers for termination of pregnancy up to 20-24 weeks of gestation.
- The amended bill proposes increasing the upper gestation limit from 20 to 24 weeks for special categories of women such as vulnerable women including survivors of rape, victims of incest and others such as differently-abled women and minors.
- Under the amendment bill, the upper gestation limit will not apply in cases of substantial foetal abnormalities diagnosed by the Medical Board. The composition, functions and other details of the Medical Board will be prescribed subsequently in Rules under the Act.
- Further, the name and other details of the woman whose pregnancy has been terminated shall not be revealed except to a person authorised by the law.

Constitution (126th amendment) bill, 2019

- The Constitution (One Hundred and Twenty-Sixth Amendment) Bill, 2019 was introduced in Lok Sabha.
- The Bill amends provisions related to reservation of seats for Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs).

Key Features

- The bill provides for the extension of reservations for the SC and ST for the next years (i.e. till 2030) in Lok Sabha and state legislatures. This bill does this by amending Article 334.

- But the bill does not provide for the nomination of Anglo-Indians in legislatures. This means that nomination of Anglo-Indians will effectively end by Jan 25, 2020.
- The reason given by the government for this is the very minimal strength of Anglo-Indian citizens in India (only 296 members).

Article 334

- Article 334 lays down that the provisions for reservation of seats and special representation of anglo-indians, SC and ST will cease after 40 years. The clause was included in 1949. After 40 years, it is being amended with an extension of 10 years.

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.

Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2019

- The Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2019 was passed by the Parliament.

Need of the Amendment:

- During the partition of 1947, several citizens of undivided India of various religions were staying in the regions of Pakistan and Bangladesh.
- The constitutions of Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh have provisions for a specific state religion.
- Therefore many persons belonging to Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, Parsi and Christian communities have faced discrimination on grounds of religion in those countries. Many such persons fled to India and continued to stay in India.

Background:

- The Centre, in 2015 and 2016 issued two notifications exempting some groups of illegal migrants from the above mentioned 1946 and the 1920 Acts.
- The groups are Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis and Christians from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan, who came to India on or before 31.12.2014.

Key Features of CAA:

- The new bill is passed to provide Indian citizenship to the illegal migrants, who are from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan and are Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis and Christians.
- The Bill seeks to amend the act to allow cancellation of OCI (Overseas Citizen of India) registration if the person has violated any provision of the act or any law in force in India. A provision is also to be added where the OCIs are given opportunity to be heard in courts before the cancellation.
- The Bill says that on acquiring citizenship such persons shall be regarded as Indian citizens from the date of their entry into India, and all legal proceedings against them related to their illegal migration or citizenship will be closed.
- The bill also proposes to amend the 3rd Schedule to the Act, to make the applicants of the aforesaid religions and countries eligible for **citizenship by naturalisation** if they can prove their residency in India for **five years** instead of the existing eleven years.

- The illegal migrants who have entered into India up to the cut off date of **31.12.2014** shall be granted the certificate of registration or certificate of naturalisation and they may be given the citizenship of India from the date of their entry in India if they fulfil the conditions.
- The Bill adds that the provisions on citizenship for illegal migrants will not apply to
 - The tribal areas of Karbi Anglong (**Assam**), Garo Hills (**Meghalaya**), Chakma District (**Mizoram**), and Tripura Tribal Areas District.
 - The areas under the Inner Line Regulation, whose permit regulates the visit of Indians to Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, and Nagaland.

Criticism:

The prime opposition voice is that the act violates the right to equality under **Article 14 of the Constitution**.

Many severe resistances and oppositions are seen against the bill as it is seen to show disparity to illegal migrants on the following grounds:

- The Bill chooses to extend the citizenship only to non-Muslims from three nations with a Muslim majority. The Bill classifies migrants based on their country of origin to include only Afghanistan, Pakistan and Bangladesh. It is not clear why migrants from these countries are differentiated from migrants from other neighbouring countries such as Sri Lanka and Myanmar.
- Instead of the term "persecuted minorities", the bill lists the six religions which clearly excluded Muslims. Recently the people of Tamil Eelam and Rohingya Muslims are seen fleeing to India and taking refuge here. It fails to allow Shia and Ahmadiyya Muslims to apply for citizenship, who also face persecution in Pakistan. It is not clear why illegal migrants belonging to religious minorities from these countries have been excluded from the Bill.
- It is also unclear why there is a differential treatment of migrants based on their date of entry into India and the cut off date of 31.12.2014 is being fixed.
- Though the Bill further seeks to protect the constitutional guarantee given to indigenous populations of North Eastern States covered under the Sixth Schedule, it excludes illegal migrants residing in those areas, which are the notified tribal areas in Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Tripura.
- There is no clear regulation about the nature of the laws, which when violated lead to the cancellation of OCI registration.



Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana

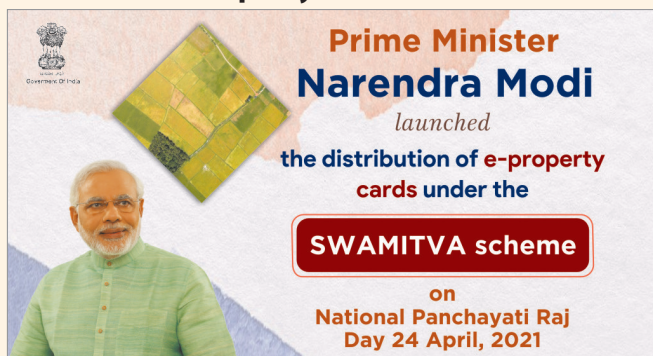
- Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana (PMMY) has seen a sanction of more than 28.68 crore loans for an amount of Rs 14.96 lakh crore have been sanctioned since launch of the scheme.
- A total of 4.20 crore PMMY loans have been sanctioned in 2020-21 and Rs. 2.66 lakh Crore sanctioned in FY 2020-21 (As on 19.03.2021).
- 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.

SVAMITVA E-Property Cards



Government Schemes/ Programmes

- The Prime Minister launched the distribution of e-property cards under the SWAMITVA scheme on National Panchayati Raj Day (24 April).
- The cards were distributed on the side-lines of National Panchayati Raj Day celebrations.

Svavitva Scheme

- SVAMITVA (Survey of Villages and Mapping with Improved Technology in Village Areas) was launched by the Prime Minister on 24th April 2020.
- It is a Central Sector Scheme to promote a socio-economically empowered and self-reliant rural India.
- The Scheme has the potential to transform rural India using modern technical tools of mapping and surveying.
- It paves the way for using the property as a financial asset by villagers for availing loans and other financial benefits.
- The Scheme will cover around 6.62 Lakh villages of the entire country during 2021-2025.

Note

Property Cards are known as 'Title deed' in Haryana, 'Rural Property Ownership Records (RPOR)' in Karnataka, 'Adhikar Abhilekh' in Madhya Pradesh, 'Sannad' in Maharashtra, 'Svavitva Abhilekh' in Uttarakhand, 'Gharauni' in Uttar Pradesh.

Large Area Certification (LAC) Scheme

- The 14,491 hectares area of UT of A&N Islands becomes the first large contiguous territory to be conferred with organic certification under 'Large Area Certification' scheme. This is the first large contiguous territory to be certified under government scheme.



Key highlights of LAC scheme:

- Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare under its flagship scheme of Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojna (PKVY) has launched this unique quick certification programme to harness these potential areas.
- Under LAC, each village in the area is considered as one cluster/group.
- All farmers with their farmland and livestock need to adhere to the standard requirements and on being verified get certified in-mass without the need to go under conversion period.
- Certification is renewed on annual basis through annual verification by a process of peer appraisals as per the process of PGS-India.

About Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana

- The program was initiated in 2014 to support organic farming.
- Currently, more than 30 lakh hectares of registered land have organic certification.
- India currently ranks fifth in terms of natural farming area and first in terms of overall number of farmers.

Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana

- The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas has recently reported that more than 14 crores of cost-free cylinders under Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana have been given to beneficiaries of the scheme during the COVID-19 crisis.
- The price of unsubsidized Liquefied Petroleum Gas cylinders of 14.2 kg shall remain at 694 rupees per cylinder.



How are LPG prices fixed in India?

- LPG pricing in India is based on the Import Parity Price. The import parity price is determined on the basis of LPG rates on the foreign market. It is focused on Aramco's LPG prices in Saudi Arabia.
- It also requires free on-board rates, custom duty, ocean freight costs, insurance, port fees, etc. The retail selling price of the non-subsidised LPG cylinder includes the cost of Inland right, GST, bottling charges, marketing costs and margins charged by the Oil Companies and dealer's commission.

Note

According to the United Nation's World Food Programme, the Import Parity Price is the price at the border of a goods being imported. It includes International transport cost and tariffs.

SWAMIH Fund

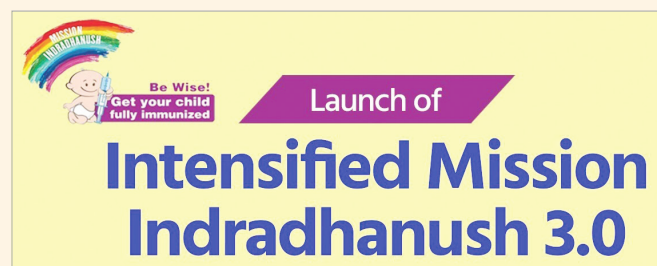
- The SWAMIH Fund is expected to produce its first completed apartments in the year 2021. It is a 250 billion-dollar fund set up by the Government of India.
- This fund was set up to finish the stalled housing schemes. The Fund provides a solution to the issue that hampered the savings of homeowners 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.

Intensified Mission Indradhanush 3.0



- The Union Health Minister, Dr Harsh Vardhan, has launched the Intensified Mission Indradhanush (IMI) 3.0. The mission will be conducted in two rounds.

Key Points:

- The IMI 3.0 initiative was launched by the central government in order to provide immunization to the pregnant women and children free of cost in India.
- The scheme will strengthen and re-energize immunization programmes.
- It will help in achieving full immunization coverage for children and pregnant women rapidly.

- This mission also aims to reach the unreached population. It will reach to them with all the available vaccines under the Universal Immunisation Programme (UIP).

About Mission Indradhanush

- Mission Indradhanush was launched in December 2014 with the aim of fully immunizing unvaccinated or partially vaccinated children under UIP.
- The scheme targets children aged under 2 years and pregnant women for immunization.
- The mission incorporated immunization programme against 12 Vaccine-Preventable Diseases (VPD) namely, Whooping cough, diphtheria, polio, tetanus, meningitis, tuberculosis, hepatitis B, pneumonia, Haemophilus influenzae type B infections, rotavirus vaccine, Japanese encephalitis (JE), measles-rubella (MR) and pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV).

National Urban Digital Mission

We invite you to

Launch of Digital Initiatives

National Urban Digital Mission (NUDM)

India Urban Data eXchange (IUDX)

Smart Cities Mission Website 2.0

Geospatial Management Information System (GMIS)

SmartCode Platform

Shri Hardeep S Puri
Minister of State (HUA) - HUA

Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad
Minister of Electronics & Information Technology

Shri Durga Shanker Mishra
Secretary, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs

Shri Ajay Prakash Sawhney
Secretary, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology

- 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.

Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana 3.0

- The Government of India is initiating the third step of Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana.
- It shall be enforced by the Ministry of Skills Growth and Entrepreneurship.



Key features:

- In the third step of Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana, 729 Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Kendra is to be formed and more than 200 ITIs are to be deployed under the Capacity India mission. This would create a deep pipeline of trained practitioners.
- Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana 3.0 is to train more than 1 lakh candidates for a period of one year with an investment of 950 crores of Rupees.

Pradhanmantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana Phase-1:

- Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana was launched as the National Skill Development Mission in 2010. It consisted of the following three institutions:
 - Prime Minister National Council on skill development
 - National Skill Development Corporation
 - National Skill Development coordination board
- The main focus of the phase was to provide training to class 10 and class 12 dropouts.

Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana Phase-2:

- Phase-2 of Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana has been initiated in 2015. It was based on the following

- Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas training centres offered short-term training to applicants who were either school or college drop-outs or unemployed.
- The training was provided according to the National Skills Qualification Framework. The curriculum mainly focused on entrepreneurship, soft skills, digital literacy.

Note

The National Policy on Skill Development had set a target of skilling 50 crore people by 2022 under Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana.

Start-up India

- The government decided to launch the Start-up India Seed Fund Scheme (SISFS).

#startupidia

The scheme will be launched with a corpus of Rs 945 crore.

Key Points:

- The programme was initiated with the goal of providing financial support to start-ups for product research, business penetration, proof of concept, prototype creation and marketing.
- The funds under the Start-up India Seed Fund Scheme will be disbursed around the country through chosen incubators.
- For the year 2021-25, the scheme will be in mission mode.
- The official notification on the launch of SISFS was released by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT).
- The overall execution and monitoring of the SISFS will be done by the DPIIT. The DPIIT will form an Experts Advisory Committee (EAC) to look after the same.

Eligibility Criteria:

- The funds under the SISFS which are used for start-ups who are established not earlier than 2 years ago at the time of application.
- Start-ups are recognised by the DPIIT.
- Start-ups receiving support under the programme must have an acceptable commercially feasible market plan to use innovations in their main product or service.

As per the eligibility conditions, the incubators must be legal entities. It must be operational for at least 2 years on the date of application to the scheme.

- The notification highlights that, preference will be given to start-ups that create innovative solutions in sectors such as waste management, social impact, healthcare, textiles, agriculture, water management, defence, food processing, education, energy, railways, financial inclusion, mobility, space, oil, gas and biotechnology.
- Start-ups should not have received monetary support of more than Rs 10 lakh under any other central or state government scheme.

Agricultural Mechanization Scheme



- 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 unreachable.' The programme aims to meet the unreachable 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.

Minimum Support Price Scheme

- The government has decided to include 14 new minor forest produce items under the mechanism for marketing by the minimum support price scheme.



Key Points:

- This new system would aim to ensure remunerative and equal rates for forest farmers' tribal gatherers.
- The products included in the scheme include: Tasar Cocoon, bamboo shoot, elephant apple dry, wild dry mushroom and malkangani crop.

About Minimum Support Price (MSP)

- It is the price of the agricultural commodity to be bought directly from the farmer by the Government of India. MSP is not constitutionally enforceable.
- This MSP rate is determined to protect the farmer at a minimum benefit for the crop in the event that the free market has a better price than the cost incurred. Price is set for 23 commodities twice a year.
- It has been recommended by the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP) since 2009.

Note

Minor Forest Produce (MFP) includes all non-timber forest produce of plant origin. It also includes bamboo, fodder, leaves, canes, waxes dyes, gums, resins and many forms of food like nuts, honey wild fruits, lac, tusser etc.

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.

'Smart' Anganwadis



- The government of Kerala has sanctioned ₹9 crore for the conversion of conventional anganwadis into "smart" anganwadis with better amenities.

Smart Anganwadi Scheme

- Under this scheme, the Department of Women and Child Development has granted 48 anganwadis of the states to construct its new buildings.
- The smart anganwadis will be built in order to provide early childhood care in a phased manner.

- These facilities will be established with the aim of making it more child-friendly. This way these facilities will help to nurture mental and physical development of children.
- To construct 48 anganwadis, a total of nine crore rupees has been sanctioned.

Anganwadi scheme

- It is a type of rural child care centre that was started in the year 1975 by the Indian government. This scheme runs under the Integrated Child Development Services program.
- It seeks to combat child hunger and malnutrition. These centres work in villages where they provide basic health care under the Indian public health care system. The basic health care activities are nutrition education, contraceptive counselling & supply.

Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Nidhi

- The Union Cabinet has recently approved the Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Nidhi (PMSSN) as a single non-lapsable reserve fund.
- It has been approved for the share of health from proceeds of Health and Education Cess which is levied under the Section 136-b of Finance Act, 2007.
- This fund is significant because the fund will ensure the enhanced access of universal and affordable health care with the availability of earmarked resources. It will also ensure that this amount does not lapse with the end of fiscal year.



About Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Nidhi

- Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Nidhi is a non-lapsable reserve fund for the Health in the Public Account. This fund will comprise the proceeds from the share of health in the Health and Education Cess.
- This fund will be used for the flagship schemes of the Health Ministry including the National Health Mission, Ayushman Bharat – Health and Wellness Centres, Ayushman Bharat – Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana and for the emergency & disaster preparedness and responses in cases of health emergencies.
- The fund will be administered and maintained by the Ministry of Health & Family welfare.

Poshan Gyan

- NITI Aayog, in partnership with the Centre for Social and Behaviour Change, Ashoka University, and Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, launched Poshan Gyan. It is a national digital repository on health and nutrition.



Key Points:

- Poshan Gyan is an online resource for any person working in the nutrition sector. It is also accessible for any person seeking information to improve nutritional outcomes.
- It holds communication materials that were created by government agencies and other developmental organisations.
- The materials held by Poshan Gyan cover a wide range of topics such as complementary feeding, antenatal care, adolescent health, anaemia prevention, diet diversity, etc.

About National Nutrition Mission

- The National Nutrition Mission or the Poshan Abhiyan aims to improve nutritional outcomes in children, lactating mothers and pregnant women.
- The mission aims to reduce undernutrition, stunting, anaemia and low birth weight by 2%, 2%, 3% and 2% respectively. This is to be achieved by 2022.

Light House Project



- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has recently launched the Light House Project in six states.
- Light House schemes are being initiated in Agartala (Tripura), Ranchi (Jharkhand), Lucknow (Uttar Pradesh), Indore (Madhya Pradesh), Rajkot (Gujarat) and Chennai (Tamil Nadu) under the Global Housing Technology Challenge-India.

Key Features:

- Light House programmes provide residents with affordable homes, taking into account urban climate and biodiversity.
- In the background of the project, cheap and solid houses are constructed using special techniques.

- Beam-columns and panels of houses have to be prepared from manufacturers and taken to the building site.
- The whole carpet area of this project will be 34.50 square metres.
- Under this, 14-storey towers will be built.
- A total of 1,040 flats are to be built. Each flat will be 415 square feet.

Benefits of the project:

- The main advantage of the initiative is that the length and costs of construction are minimised. Houses constructed under the Light House project would be completely resistant to earthquakes.
- They can be affordable and environmentally conscious due to the use of prefabricated materials.

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'.

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".

Saral Jeevan Bima

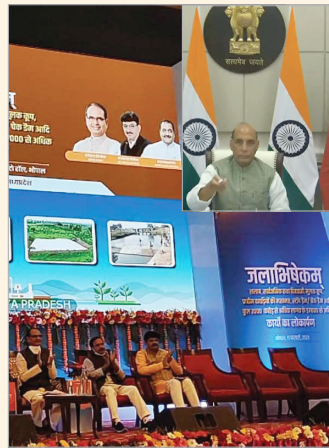
- The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority (IRDAI) has recently launched a standard individual term life insurance product known as 'Saral Jeevan Bima'.
- This will help customers make an informed choice and reduce mis-selling.

Key features:

- It will be a non-linked, non-participating individual pure risk premium life insurance plan providing for payment of the sum assured in lump sum to the nominee in case of the insured's death during the policy term.
- The plan will be for those in the 18-65 years age group. Policy term will be 5-40 years.
- It allows for a maximum maturity age of 70 years.

'Jalabhishekam' Water Conservation Campaign

- The Union Defence Ministry has inaugurated 57,000 water structures under the "Jalabhishekam Water Conservation Campaign" virtually from New Delhi.



Key Highlights

- These water systems have been installed in Madhya Pradesh.
- Conservation work would help to accomplish the goal of water conservation and establish a self-reliant Madhya Pradesh.
- This conservation work is being carried out with the participation of the public.

About National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005

- The act was passed with the intention of ensuring the 'freedom to live.'
- The act was passed in 2005 with aim to strengthen the protection of livelihoods in rural areas.
- It allows for a minimum of 100 days of salary work in the financial year. It offers jobs for any household in which adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work.
- The Act provides for economic stability and generates rural properties. It also aims to protect the environment and inspire rural women. The Act provides 100 working days, which in turn lowers rural-urban migration.

Saral Suraksha Bima

- The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) introduced a basic personal injury cover called Saral Suraksha Bima. This coverage has been made mandatory by general and health insurers from April 1, 2021.

Other Benefits

- Under the scheme, hospitalization costs will be paid up to a cap of 10% of the basic covered number.
- A one-time tuition allowance of 10% of the basic value of the insured would also be payable to minor children of the insured. In order to make advantage of the incentives,

children should take an education course and should not be above the age of 25.

- Further, the sum insured will be increased by 5 per cent every year for each of the claim-free policy year. In such cases, Policy is required to be renewed without break.

About Saral Suraksha Bima

- Saral Suraksha Bima policy has a guaranteed cumulative price of Rs. 1 crore and a guaranteed minimum amount of Rs. 2.5 lakh.
- Beyond this specified amount, the insurers are free to sell the amounts covered on their own. For this sum, the same name will be given if all terms and conditions are the same.
- The product also comprises a basic cover for which the entire sum assured will be paid by the insurance company after the death of the insured person because of injury sustained in the accident. In such cases, death occurs within 12 months from the date of accident.
- In cases of permanent total disablement, similar benefits will be paid by insurance firms.

PM-KISAN Scheme

- The Union Government is planning to crack down on those farmers who are unlawfully receiving payments from the PM-KISAN scheme by concealing important details required.



PM-Kisan Samman Nidhi

Department of Agriculture, Cooperation & Farmers Welfare
Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare

About Scheme

- Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) is a scheme to provide minimum income support of Rs. 6,000 per year. It was announced during the presentation of the 2019 Interim Union Budget of India.
- It aimed at providing financial assistance to the Small and Marginal Farmers in procuring various substances to ensure proper crop health and appropriate yields.
- It provides protection to the farmers from the corrupt practices of moneylenders in the matter of meeting agricultural expenses.
- The distribution of the yearly amount of 6,000 to each eligible farmer is provided in three installments to their bank accounts.

Pey Jal Survekshan



- Pey Jal Survekshan has recently been initiated by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MOHUA) under the Jal Jeevan Mission- Urban (JJM-U).
- This will be done in cities to ensure an equal allocation of water and the re-use of wastewater. The sarvekshan will also help to chart the bodies of water.

About Jal Jeevan Mission-Urban

- The Jal Jeevan Mission (Urban) was declared in the budget of the Union for 2021-22.
- The mission was confirmed by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.
- It aims to provide uniform water supply coverage to all households with working taps.
- The universal coverage will be done in all the statutory towns. The mission has been launched in accordance with Sustainable Development Goal- 6.

Mission Shakti

- The Uttar Pradesh Government has initiated a 6-month Women's Empowerment Initiative 'Mission Shakti'.
- The project was initiated to increase awareness and counter crime against women in the state.
- The six-month campaign has two phases — Mission Shakti and 'Operation Shakti'.



Key Points:

- **Mission Shakti:** This is the phase one of the campaign. It features awareness campaigns related to women's safety. Under this, awareness campaigns such as gender-based sensitisation, training, corporate activity, interviews, voice messages, programmes in Durga Puja and other cultural pandals will be organised.

- **Operation Shakti:** This is the second phase of the campaign. Under this, the police will prepare a register of persons who have served jail terms for crimes against women and now have come out.

PM-FME Scheme



- Recently, the Ministry of Food Processing Industries launched the Capacity building Component of the Pradhan Mantri Formalisation of Micro food processing Enterprises (PM-FME) Scheme.
- Under the capacity building component of the scheme, the trainers are to be delivered with classroom lecture and demonstration through online mode.
- These trainers will in turn train the district level trainers who will ultimately train the beneficiaries. Currently, the training is to be provided for fruits and vegetable processing.

About PM-FME Scheme

- The Pradhan Mantri Formalisation of Micro-Food Processing Enterprises (PM-FME) scheme was initiated under Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan and introduced by the Ministry of Food Processing.
- It is a centrally sponsored scheme.
- Scheme will be implemented over a 5 year period from 2020-21 to 2024-25. 2,00,000 micro-enterprises are to be assisted with credit linked subsidies.
- It aims to assist two lakh micro food processing units to provide technical, financial and business support to upgrade the existing micro food processing enterprises.
- **Objectives:**
 - Increase in access to finance by micro food processing units.
 - Increase in revenues of target enterprises.
 - Enhanced compliance with food quality and safety standards.
 - Strengthening capacities of support systems.
 - Transition from the unorganized sector to the formal sector.
 - Special focus on women entrepreneurs and Aspirational districts.
 - Focus on minor forest produce in Tribal Districts.

Note

India is the second largest producer of fruits and vegetables in the world after China.

Atma Nirbhar 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.

Garib Kalyan Rojgar Abhiyaan

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has launched the massive rural public works scheme- Garib Kalyan Rojgar Abhiyaan, which aims to reduce the economic impact faced by the rural parts of the country due to nationwide lockdown by providing livelihood support to the rural citizens, especially for the migrant workers.
- The scheme will work in a mission mode in 116 districts across these six States (Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh) where the maximum numbers of the migrant workers have returned.
- The various schemes for house construction, safe drinking water through tap connection to households, road construction, etc have been merged in this scheme. The returning migrant workers who require a job will be hired based on their skillset under the scheme.

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

Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan, a new flagship scheme, under which a financial package of 20 lakh crore has been announced amid concerns of economic crisis due to COVID-19 pandemic. The economic package is 10% of the GDP.
- The scheme will pay special attention on tax payers, farmers, labourers, cottage industries and MSMEs. The main aim of the scheme is to become self-reliant.
- **Vocal for Local:** The scheme will not only help to strengthen the chain of local supply but will also promote the locally produced products.



Key Highlights

Under the new scheme, the Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced following measures for different sectors:

MSME

1 Collateral free loans

The loans that are worth Rs. 3 lakh crore are made collateral free. This is extended to firms whose outstanding loans are Rs. 25 crore or those firms whose annual turnover is Rs. 100 crore.

2. Stressed MSMEs

Through debt-based scheme, Rs 20,000 crore is being infused in to the economy. This will help to benefit stressed MSMEs. Under this, Government will provide Rs 4,000 crore separately through CGTMSE (Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises). The Non-Performing Assets are also eligible to claim as beneficiary under the scheme.

3. Fund of Funds

The Government is to infuse Rs. 50,000 crore by creating fund of funds. A corpus of Rs 10,000 crore is to be infused through mother fund and daughter fund (funds created for venture capital) framework.

4. New Definition of MSME

- The Government has changed the definition of MSMEs. Previously, an enterprise with investment up to Rs. 25 lakh was called a micro unit. Under the new definition, a firm up to investment of Rs. 1 crore is to be called Micro unit, of Rs. 10 crore is to be called as small unit and investment greater than Rs. 20 crore will be called as medium unit.
- Also, earlier, only investment was used to define MSMEs. With the changed definition, both investment and turnover is used to define MSMEs. Under the new definition a firm with turnover of Rs. 5 crore is to be called a micro unit, of Rs. 50 crore will be called as small unit and turn over greater than Rs. 100 crore is to be called as Medium unit.

- It is to be noted that for an enterprise to come under the category of MSME it has to fulfil both investment and turn over conditions.

5. Global Tenders

Global tenders will be disallowed in government procurement for tenders up to Rs 200 crores. This is because majority of MSME were unable to supply large companies.

6. e-Market

The e-Market linkages are to be strengthened. MSMEs have to search online ways to promote their products.

EPF: Till now, under Employment Provident Fund scheme, 12% is contributed by the employee and 12% by the employer. Now, to increase take home salary, for those not covered under earlier, Statutory PF contribution reduced from 12% to 10%.

NBFC: In order to help the struggling Non-Banking Financial Corporations, Rs. 30,000 crore liquidity is being injected. This will help NBFCs serve the MSMEs better.

Discoms: The Discoms are highly affected due to COVID-19 crisis. Therefore, liquidity of Rs 90,000 crore is to be injected.

Contracts : The contracts under transport, Railway sectors, etc. will be instructed to extend by 6 months.

Real Estate Projects: The pending projects shall be extended till 6 months. Also, registration dates shall be extended by 6 months.

Taxation

- TDS (Tax deducted at source) and TCS ((Tax collected at source)) rates are to be reduced by 25%. This will last till March 2021. This will help in retaining Rs 50,000 crore within the hands of the people.
- All pending refunds to non-corporate business, trusts, proprietorships, are to be done immediately.
- The due date of Income Tax Returns (ITR) is to be extended to 30 November 2020.
- The deadline of Vivad Se Vishwas Scheme is postponed to 31st December 2020.

PDS: Through Public Distribution System (PDS), free food grains are to be supplied to migrant workers. The non-card holders will also receive 5 kg of wheat or rice per month and 1 kg of pulses per month.

MUDRA Loans: The Government is to provide interest subvention of 2% for MUDRA Shishu loans for a period of 12 months.

Street Vendors: The Government to launch a special credit facility to the street vendors within a month. The initial working capital for the street vendors has been fixed as Rs 10,000.

KISAN Credit Cards: Through KISAN Credit Cards, around Rs. 2 lakh crores are being allocated as concessional credit to farmers.

MGNREGA: Govt. has been helping the migrant workers through MGNREGA scheme as well. The number of workers enrolled in May 2020 under the scheme is 40% to 50% more than that joined in May 2019.

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 Maktabas 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 Ghar Tak Fibre Scheme

- The Union Government has launched the PM Ghar Tak Fibre scheme where all the villages of Bihar will be connected through Optical Fibre Internet Service.

PM Shri Narendra Modi
has launched 'Ghar Tak Fiber'
program in Bihar



- For this, the Common Service Centres (CSC) under the Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY) has undertaken the task of laying optical fibre networks across India.

Key Highlights:

- The Project would entail implementation of 1 wi-fi and 5 free of cost connections to Government Institutions like Primary Schools, Anganwadi Centres, Aasha Workers, Jeevika Didi etc.
- This project will lead digital services like e-Education, e-Agriculture, Tele-Medicine, Tele-law and other social security schemes to be easily available to all citizens of Bihar.
- The CSC is taking the initiative through its Village Level Entrepreneurs (VLEs) under the BharatNet Project.

BharatNet Project:

- BharatNet is a flagship mission implemented by Bharat Broadband Network Ltd. (BBNL).
- It is a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) set up by the Government of India under the Companies Act, 1956 with an authorized capital of Rs 1000 crore.
- It aims to facilitate the delivery of e-governance, e-health, e-education, e-banking, Internet and other services to rural India.
- It also has an objective to connect all the 2,50,000 Gram panchayats in the country and provide 100 Mbps connectivity to all gram panchayats.
- Currently, it is being implemented by the Department of Telecommunication under the Ministry of Communications.

Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY)

- The Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY), the national mission for financial inclusion, recently completed six 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.

Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana

- The Government of India has launched Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana which focuses on sustainable development of fisheries in India.
- The scheme will be implemented between 2020-21 and 2024-25.
- The funds allocated to fisheries under the scheme is Rs 20,050 crores.

**Key Features:**

- The scheme aims to enhance fish production to 70 lakh tonnes by 2024-25.
- The scheme will also aim at establishing hatcheries, construction of biofloc ponds, ornamental fish culture units, ice plants, installation of cages, fish feed plants, etc.

Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT)

- States across India have completed 2854 projects worth Rs 11110 crores under the Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT), as per the data provided.

**Key points:**

- Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) aims to provide basic civic amenities like water supply, sewerage, urban transport, parks as to improve the quality of life for all especially the poor and the disadvantaged people.
- The main thrust areas of the Mission are water supply, sewerage and septage management, storm water drainage to reduce flooding, non-motorized urban transport and green space / parks.

Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat Programme

- The Press Information Bureau (PIB) held a webinar in order to recognize the incredible journey of the handlooms and weavers in the country, especially about the weaves of Maharashtra and the Textiles of Odisha.
- This session focused on different handlooms and fabrics belonging to Maharashtra and Odisha which are also the 'paired states' under 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat' Programme.

**Key Points:**

- Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat Programme was launched by the Government of India in 2015 on the occasion of the 140th anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.
- The main objective of this programme is to enhance the understanding and bonding between the states so that the integrity and unity of the country can be ensured.
- Under this programme, every State and UT in the country to be paired with another State/UT for a year, during which they would carry out a structured engagement with one another in the spheres of language, literature, cuisine, festivals, cultural events, tourism etc.

Five Star Villages Scheme

- The Department of Posts has launched Five Star Villages Scheme, which aims to provide postal products and services, especially in interior villages.
- The initiatives covered under the scheme include:
 - ♦ Savings Bank accounts, Recurring Deposit Accounts, NSC / KVP certificates.
 - ♦ Sukanya Samridhi Accounts/ PPF Accounts.
 - ♦ Funded Post Office Savings Account linked India Post Payments Bank Accounts.
 - ♦ Postal Life Insurance Policy/Rural Postal Life Insurance Policy.
 - ♦ Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana Account / Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana Account.



- If a village attains universal coverage for five schemes from the above list, then that village gets five-star status; if a village completes four schemes, then that village gets four-star status and so on.

Gramodyog Vikas Yojana

- Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) has approved a programme for the benefit of artisans involved in manufacturing of Agarbatti under the 'Gramodyog Vikas Yojana'.
- The programme aims to enhance the production of 'Agarbatti' in the country and create sustainable employment for the traditional Artisans, by providing them regular employment and increase in their wages.

Key Highlights:

- Initially, four Pilot Projects will be started, including one in North-Eastern part of the country.
- Each targeted cluster of artisans will be supported with about 50 Automatic Agarbatti making machines and 10 Mixing machines.
- Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) will provide training, and assist artisans working in this area.

Atal Bimit Vyakti Kalyan Yojana

- The Employee State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) extended the unemployment benefit scheme Atal Bimit Vyakti Kalyan Yojana till June 2021.
- The Atal Bimit Vyakti Kalyan Yojana is being implemented by Employee State Insurance Corporation. The scheme was approved under the Employees State Insurance Act, 1948.



Scheme:

- The scheme was introduced in 2018. The scheme provides 25% of average per day earning in the previous four contribution periods.
- The scheme pays cash directly to the bank account of insured persons in case of unemployment.
- Under the scheme, the workers can draw 47% of total contributions towards ESIC after being unemployed for at least three months.

Unnat Bharat Abhiyan

- The Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India (TRIFED) operating under the Ministry of Tribal Affairs has signed an agreement with IIT Delhi to implement Unnat Bharat Abhiyan.
- As per the agreement, the tribal entrepreneurs working under the Van Dhan programme of TRIFED get access to research works of several institutions that are part of Unnat Bharat Abhiyan.



Key points:

- The Unnat Bharat Abhiyan is a flagship programme of the Ministry of Education (formerly Ministry of Human Resource Development).
- The programme aims to link a higher education institute with at least 5 villages. The institutes using their knowledge base will contribute to social and economic betterment of these village communities. So far 13,702 villages have been adopted by 2,474 institutes.

Saubhagya Scheme

- The Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana – "Saubhagya" has completed three years since its inception.



Saubhagya

Key Highlights

- The scheme was launched to provide electricity connections to all households in rural areas as well as urban areas.
- The scheme was started with an estimate of 16,320 crore rupees.
- Households have been identified through the Socio-economic and Caste Census (SECC) of 2011.
- Eligible households are getting electricity for free, while others are being charged Rs. 500. The beneficiary household got One LED lights, one DC power plug.

O-SMART Scheme

- Recently, Parliament discussed the O-SMART scheme operating under Ministry of Earth Sciences.
- The O-SMART is an acronym for Ocean Services, Modelling, Applications, Resources and Technology.
- It generates and updates information on Marine living resources in the Indian Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).
- It addresses ocean development activities such as services, technology, resources, observations and science and provides necessary scientific and technological background required for implementation of various aspects of Blue Economy.

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

- 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.

Ayushman Bharat

- The Ayushman Bharat Scheme which was launched in 2018, provides an insurance cover of Rs. 5 lakh per annum per family. The eligible families under the scheme are fixed based on the Socio-Economic Caste Census (SECC).



Context:

- The number of beneficiaries of Ayushman Bharat has touched 1 crore. On this occasion, PM Narendra Modi had a telephonic conversation with the one croreth beneficiary of the scheme.
- The Government of India has made the testing and treatment of COVID-19 free under Ayushman Bharat. The testing of COVID-19 is being carried out according to the protocols fixed by Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR).

Jal Jeevan Mission

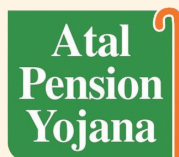
- Jal Jeevan Mission, a Union Government initiative under the Ministry of Jal Shakti, aims to ensure access of piped water for every household in India.
- The mission's goal is to provide to all households in rural India safe and adequate water through individual household tap connections by 2024.
- Jal Jeevan Mission aims to supply 55 litres of water to all rural households by 2024. The mission will create necessary infrastructure such as ground water recharge, rainwater harvest and management of household wastewater for reuse.

**Context:**

- The Union Government has allocated Rs 1,832 crores to Bihar, Rs 1,407 crores to Assam and Rs 445 crores to Chhattisgarh, under Jal Jeevan Mission.

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.

PAHAL Scheme

- PAHAL scheme is a joint initiative of United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and IPE Global, with main objective to provide quality and affordable health care solutions to urban poor. This will help reduce out of pocket expenditure of the underserved urban communities by 30%.
- PAHAL is an acronym for Partnerships for Affordable Healthcare Access and Longevity.

**Context:**

- Recently, USAID announced that it will provide 3 million USD for India's PAHAL project. Till now, USAID has provided 5.9 million USD. The funds that have been allocated recently are to be used to disseminate public health messages to the public, to provide care to the affected and to strengthen surveillance and case finding.

Soil Health Card Programme

- The Soil Health Card programme was launched in 2015, under which soil cards are provided to the farmers that report the soil quality.
- The cards provide nutrient status of the soil and also information about the application of proper dosage of nutrients to improve soil fertility. As per a study, Soil Health Card Programme has decreased the application of fertilizer by 8-10%.

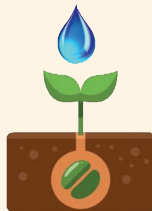


Context:

- The Union Minister of Agriculture Shri Narendra Singh Tomar has called for farmers' movement to integrate soil nutrient management. The announcement was made during progress review of Soil Health Programme.
- Farmer's movement will include soil testing and campaigns addressing the importance of application of fertilizers based on reports of soil testing. The movement will cover more than 1 lakh villages. It is to be launched and implemented in 2020-21. It also aims at promotion of Bharatiya Prakritik Krishi Padhati (BPKP).
- Bharatiya Prakritik Krishi Padhati:** The scheme aims to promote natural farming. It plans to cover 12 lakh hectares of land. It is a centrally-sponsored scheme.

Per Drop More Crop

- The Per Drop More Crop of Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY) focuses on water use efficiency through sprinkler and drip irrigation. It also aims at reducing fertilizer use, labour expenses and input costs.
- PMKSY is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme launched in 2015. Its objectives are:
 - Convergence of investments in irrigation at the field level,
 - To expand the cultivable area under assured irrigation (Har Khet ko pani),
 - To improve on-farm water use efficiency to reduce wastage of water,
 - To enhance the adoption of precision-irrigation and other water saving technologies (More crop per drop),
 - To enhance recharge of aquifers and introduce sustainable water conservation practices by exploring the feasibility of reusing treated municipal based water for peri-urban agriculture and attract greater private investment in a precision irrigation system.

**Context:**

- Union Government has allocated Rs 4,000 crores under the Per Drop More Crop component of Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana for the year 2020-21.
- The Union Government has allocated the funds and the state governments are to identify the beneficiaries.

Vivad Se Vishwas Scheme

- The Vivad Se Vishwas scheme was introduced to generate timely revenue for the Government while reducing pending tax litigations and help taxpayers settle their tax disputes.

**Context:**

The scheme was in news as National Mineral Development Corporation (NMDC), announced that it has saved Rs 888.09 crore by adopting Vivad Se Vishwas Scheme. NMDC is a Government-controlled resource producer, which is engaged in mining of natural resources like iron ore, copper, graphite, limestone, rock phosphate, gypsum, tungsten, dolomite, etc.

Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Ann Yojana

- Under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Ann Yojana, 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.

**Context:**

The scheme was in the news as the Food Corporation of India (FCI) is to conduct an Open Market Sales Scheme to ease the supply of Food Grains in the market. FCI has also opted for the open auction scheme. This will also help in supplying wheat to state governments and also to the empanelled flour mills.

Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) Scheme

- Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi is implemented as a centrally-sponsored scheme which was introduced to augment the source of income of small and marginal farmers. Under the Scheme, an amount of Rs.6000 per year is transferred directly into the bank accounts of the farmers, subject to certain exclusion criteria relating to higher income status.
- Affluent farmers have been excluded from the scheme such as Income Tax payers in last assessment year, professionals if they have farms- like doctors, engineers, lawyers, chartered accountants, etc. and pensioners drawing at least Rs.10,000 per month (excluding Group-D employees).
- The entire responsibility of identification of beneficiaries rests with the State/UT Governments.

Context:

Under PM-KISAN Scheme, Rs. 17,793 crores released for 8.89 crore farmers families during the lockdown.

Jal Shakti Abhiyan

- Jal Shakti Abhiyan is the largest water conservation movement in India that brings all stakeholders under one ambit. Under the scheme, more than 5 lakh water bodies have been renovated. Around one crore rain water harvesting and water conservation structures have also been created.
- This includes Central government, state governments, Panchayati raj institutions, etc.



Context:

The Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) had recently announced that the monsoon rains in the country are to be normal. With this, the Jal Shakti Abhiyan had made preparations to conserve water and recharge and replenish water sources.

Krishi Kalyan Abhiyan

- Krishi Kalyan Abhiyan was launched in 2018 which aims to aid, assist and advise farmers to improve their farming techniques and increase their incomes. It was launched by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare.
- It will be undertaken in 25 Villages with more than 1000 population each in Aspirational Districts identified in consultation with Ministry of Rural Development as per directions of NITI Aayog.
- Under KKA, the activities to promote best practices and enhance agriculture include:
 - Distribution of Soil Health Cards to all farmers
 - 100% coverage of bovine vaccination for Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD)
 - Demonstrations of integrated cropping practice
 - Distribution of Mini Kits of pulses and oilseeds
 - Distribution of Horticulture/Agro Forestry/Bamboo plant
 - Artificial insemination saturation

कृषि
कल्याण अभियान

Context:

The Krishi Kalyan Abhiyan (KKA) is being implemented in 112 Aspirational districts of the country.

SWADES Scheme

- The Government of India is to conduct SWADES initiative to map the skills of Indians returning from abroad. SWADES is an acronym for Skilled Workers Arrival Database for Employment Support.
- The SWADES initiative has been begun under the Vande Bharat Mission. The initiative aims to generate a database of Indians returning from abroad based on their skill sets and experience.
- SWADES initiative is conducted by Ministries of Civil Aviation, External Affairs, Skill Development and Entrepreneurship.

Reports & Indices

Women and Men in India, 2020 Report

- The Women and Men in India report was recently issued by the National Statistical Office, which is part of the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI).
- The report compiles key socioeconomic indices that depict gender situations in the region.

Population related Statistics

- India's estimated population in 2021 is 136.13 crore. The male-to-female ratio has risen from 933 in 2001 to 943 in 2011.
- The highest increase in sex ratio was reported in Delhi, followed by Chandigarh and Arunachal Pradesh.
- Daman and Diu, on the other hand, experienced the greatest fall in sex ratio.
- Health Statistics:** The Age Specific Fertility Rate for the females belonging to the age group 25-29 years was the highest at 146.4. The Infant Mortality Rate decreased from 39 in 2014 to 32 in 2018. According to National Family Health Survey-5 (NFHS-5), almost 100% institutional delivery was observed in the states of Goa, Kerala, Lakshadweep.
- Education:** The literacy rate of India increased from 73 in 2011 to 77.7 in 2017. The Gender gap in literacy rates was the highest in Rajasthan, Bihar, UP.

Anemia Mukh Bharat Index

- Haryana State emerged as the best state in the Anemia Mukh Bharat (AMB) Index among all the 29 states in the country.
- Haryana was ranked at the top with an AMB Index of 46.7.
- The state has also achieved 93% of immunization in the year 2019-2020 for the first time.

About Anemia Mukh Bharat

- It is an initiative of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and UNICEF. The scheme has been launched in order to reduce the prevalence of Anemia across India.
- Anaemia Mukh Bharat strategy focuses on benefiting six target beneficiary groups, through six interventions and six institutional mechanisms.
- The programme is aimed at achieving the target of anaemia reduction under the POSHAN Abhiyan.



Ease of Living Index 2020

- The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) launched its "Ease of Living Index-2020".
- It includes lists of cities with populations of more than one million and a special list for cities with populations of less than one million.

Key Highlights:

- In the list of Indian cities with a population of more than one million, "Bengaluru" emerged as the best city in the "simple of living" index of all 49 million-plus cities.
- The index reveals that the ease of living in Dhanbad, Bareilly and Srinagar was the lowest.
- In the list of cities with population of less than a million, Shimla has been ranked the highest. It is followed by Bhubaneswar. In this category, the Muzaffarpur city in Bihar was ranked at the lowest.

Ease of living Index (Top 10 Rankings)

Rank	City	Score	City	Score
Population > 1 million		Population < 1 million		
1	Bengaluru	66.70	Shimla	60.90
2	Pune	66.27	Bhubaneswar	59.85
3	Ahmedabad	64.87	Silvassa	58.43
4	Chennai	62.61	Kakinada	56.84
5	Surat	61.73	Salem	56.40
6	Navi Mumbai	61.60	Vellore	56.38
7	Combature	59.72	Gandhinagar	56.25
8	Vadodara	59.24	Gurugram	56.00
9	Indore	58.58	Davangere	55.25
10	Greater Mumbai	58.23	Tiruchirapalli	55.24

About Ease of Living Index

- The Ease of Living Index (EoLI) is an assessment tool that evaluates the quality of life and the impact of various initiatives for urban development.
- It provides a comprehensive understanding of participating cities across India based on quality of life, economic-ability of a city, and its sustainability and resilience.

Public Affairs Index-2020

- The Public Affairs Index-2020 has been released recently by the Public Affairs Centre.
- The states have been ranked on governance performance on the basis of a composite index. It is prepared in the context of the three pillars including equity, growth and sustainability.



Key Findings

- The State of Kerala topped the index. Kerala is followed by Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka that bagged the second, third and fourth rank respectively.
- Uttar Pradesh, Odisha and Bihar stood at the bottom of the ranking.
- Goa ranked first in the small states category. Goa is followed by Meghalaya and Himachal Pradesh.

Note

The Public Affairs Centre (PAC) is a data driven not-for-profit research think tank. The think-tank works to improve the quality of governance in India.

Health in India Report

- The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation has recently released the "Health in India" report, whose main objective was to gather quantitative data on India's health sector.

Key Highlights:

- The report has highlighted the health of religious communities across country.
- According to the report, around 7.5% of Indians suffered from ailments. Further, 6.8% suffered from ailments in the rural area while 9.1% in Urban area.
- Gender-wise, women are more susceptible to diseases than men. Around 6.1% of males were suffering from ailments in rural area while percentage of women in rural area was 7.6%. On the other hand, in urban areas, 8.2% of males and 10% of females were sick of ailments.
- As per the report, the Zoroastrians were the most susceptible to ailments. Around 31.1% of Zoroastrians were suffered from ailments as of July 2020.
- The community-wise percentage of people with ailments are:
 - ♦ Zoroastrians: 31.1%
 - ♦ Jains: 11.2%
 - ♦ Sikhs: 11%
 - ♦ Christians: 10.5%

- ♦ Muslims: 8.1%
- ♦ Buddhists: 8%
- ♦ Hindus: 7.2%

- The relation between health and religion is highly important, as many religious practices help to reduce the impacts of some of the diseases. The religious practices work as a guard against blood pressure. These practices also help to strengthen the immune system.

Global Multidimensional Poverty Index

- NITI Aayog is preparing the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) parameter dashboard and a State Reform Action Plan (SRAP).

Key Highlights

- The Global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) is a part of the government's decision to monitor the performance of the country on 29 selected global indices.
- It will fulfil the need to measure and monitor India's performance on various important social and economic parameters.
- This will enable the utilisation of these Indices as tools for self-improvement, bring about reforms in policies, while improving last-mile implementation of government schemes.
- NITI Aayog is the nodal agency for the MPI.

About Global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI)

- Global MPI is an international measure of multidimensional poverty covering 107 developing countries.
- It was first developed in 2010 by Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).
- The index is released at the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development of the United Nations in July every year.
- 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).
- It utilises the National Family Health Survey (NFHS), which is conducted under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) coordinated by International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS).



Miscellaneous National

- The Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways (MoPSW) has given the approval for the sanction of Rs. 50.30 crores for the development of an all-weather ROPAX Jetty Project on river Dhamra in the Indian state of Odisha. Ministry of Ports, Shipping & Waterways (MoPSW) has accorded administrative approval for developing all-weather ROPAX (Roll-on/Roll-off Passenger) Jetty and allied Infrastructure.
- To provide better educational opportunities for Ladakhi students, the Indian Army has initiated the project Ladakh Ignited Minds: A Centre of Excellence and Wellness. The project is aimed at providing better training facilities to disadvantaged Ladakhi students to give them opportunity to study in niche educational institutes.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently inaugurated the Rewari-Madar section of the Western Dedicated Freight Corridor. It is situated in Haryana and Rajasthan and runs for 227 km in Rajasthan. It crosses through Sikar, Jaipur, Ajmer, Nagaur and Alwar districts.
- The Delhi Government recently launched the 'Switch Delhi' campaign which aims to promote the use of electric vehicles in the city. The Delhi Government will hire electric vehicles in six weeks for various purposes.
- The Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare stated the fact that the economic cost of food-borne diseases is estimated to be increasing in future. The Health Minister quoting these figures noted that the "Eat Right India" and the "Fit India" Movement will prove to be game-changers.
- Clashes between residents of Assam and Mizoram have increased for the last three weeks. Assam and Mizoram share a 164.6 km inter-state border, and conflicting territorial claims have persisted for long. The dispute stems from a notification of 1875 that differentiated Lushai Hills from the plains of Cachar, and another of 1933 that demarcates a boundary between Lushai Hills and Manipur.
- The COVID-19 Shri Shakti Challenge was won by six women-led start-ups. The challenge was organised in April 2020 jointly by MyGov and UN Women. The goal of the challenge was to inspire and engage women-led startups to come up with creative solutions. The goal of the revolutionary solutions was to help battle COVID-19.
- On November 26, 2020, Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the 3rd Global Renewable Energy Investment called the RE-Invest. The 3rd Global RE-Invest Renewable Energy Investors Meet & Expo was organised by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE), Government of India. It was held on a Virtual Platform. The theme of RE-Invest, 2020 is "Innovations for Sustainable Energy Transition". COVID-19 has caused significant disruption and reduced the speed of development of renewable energy projects as compared to 2019. In spite of the crisis, the installed renewable capacity of India has increased by two and a half times in the last six years according to PM Modi.
- The government of Uttar Pradesh has recently initiated a scheme to take over the special culture of the Tharu tribes all over the country. The goal of the scheme is to position these tribal villages on a tourism map. This would build employment and bring economic freedom to the tribal people of the region.
- Under Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan, Rs 15,000 crores was approved by the Union Cabinet for AHIDF. The Government is to set up a credit guarantee fund of Rs 750 crores to achieve the targets in the dairy sector. This is to be managed by NABARD.
- The Union Minister of Jal Shakti presented the Swachh Bharat Awards, 2020 on October 2, 2020. The awards were presented under the cleanliness and drinking water categories. Gujarat won the first prize at state level. Tirunelveli of Tamil Nadu got the first prize at district level. Kharchrod block in Ujjain district, Madhya Pradesh won the first prize at block level. Chinnanur village of Tamil Nadu got the first prize a Gram Panchayat level.
- The Union Government has implemented the recommendations made by the Shekatkar Committee to create border infrastructure. The Shekatkar Committee was formed by the Ministry of Defence under chairmanship of Lt General (Retd.) DB Shekatkar in 2018.
- The associations of civil servants formed an initiative called Civil Services Associations Reach to Support Natural Disasters (CARUNA), which also includes IAS and IPS officers. The platform is to be represented by NGO, industry leaders, IT professionals along with the civil servants. The initiative is being launched to support government's efforts to fight Coronavirus. It will help in generating data base of information about migration, medical equipment, essential supplies, ventilators and masks. The initiative will help address shortages at district level.

Suez Canal Blockade

- Recently, the Suez Canal, one of the world's most critical transit routes, got blocked due to a large container vessel, the MV Ever Given. The blockage created huge impacts on global trade and is referred to as Suez Canal Crisis 2021 or Suez Canal Blockade.
- The Cargo ship was headed from China to the Netherlands. It had run aground in the canal and got stuck for a week. The global trade losses due to the blockage is estimated to be 9 billion USD.



Suez Canal

- The Suez Canal connects Mediterranean Sea and the Red Sea. The canal was officially opened in 1869.
- Until 1956, the canal was primarily owned by the European shareholders (mostly British and French) and partly by the Egyptian Government. In 1956, the then President of Egypt Gamal Abdel Nasser nationalized the canal. This led to the Suez Canal Crisis.

India not to accept Treaty on Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons

- India has recently declared that it does not accept the "Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons" and is not bound by any of the obligations of the Treaty.



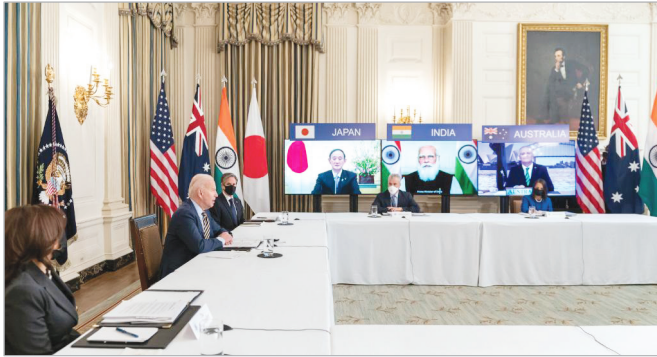
Key Highlights:

- The UN General Assembly (UNGA) approved the "Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons" in 2017.
- However, it was not sponsored by the nine countries that own nuclear weapons.
- The treaty was also not endorsed by the NATO alliance.
- In spite of this, the Treaty entered into effect on 22 January 2021.
- India maintains that it will continue to provide the high priority and remain committed to the universal, non-discriminatory and verifiable nuclear disarmament.

About Treaty on Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons

- The Convention is also called the Protocol on the Ban of Nuclear Weapons. This is the first legally binding multinational agreement.
- Which bans nuclear weapons and aims at the complete destruction of those weapons. The Treaty was ratified on 7 July 2017. For Member States, the Treaty bans the development, research, manufacturing, stockpiling, transfer and use of nuclear weapons.
- The states that have declared possessing the nuclear weapons include India, Pakistan and North Korea while Israel is the state that is indicated for possessing the nuclear weapons.

Quad Leaders' Virtual Summit held



- Prime Minister Narendra Modi participated in the first Leaders' Summit of the Quadrilateral Framework along with the Prime Minister of Australia, Scott Morrison; Prime Minister of Japan, Yoshihide Suga and President of the United States of America, Joe Biden.

Key Highlights of Meeting:

- The Quad Leaders discussed the regional and global issues which are of shared interest.
- They also exchanged their views on several practical areas of the cooperation to maintain a free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific region.
- The virtual summit also provided the countries an opportunity to exchange their views on the contemporary challenges like resilient supply chains, maritime security, climate change and emerging and critical technologies.
- Leaders also discussed the ongoing efforts to combat the COVID-19 pandemic.

About Quadrilateral Framework (Quad)

- Quad is an informal strategic forum comprising India, United States, Japan, and Australia. The forum is maintained by summits, military drills and information between member countries.
- This diplomatic and military arrangement is taken as a response to increasing Chinese economic and military power.

E-2025 initiative launched

- The World Health Organization (WHO) has identified 25 countries, including three from Africa, with the potential to eradicate malaria by 2025 under its 'E-2025 Initiative', ahead of World Malaria Day 2021.



- Three of the identified countries were from Africa namely Eswatini, Botswana and South Africa.

About E-2025 initiative

- In 2017, WHO launched the E-2020 initiative to support a group of countries to achieve zero indigenous cases of malaria by 2020.
- Some 21 countries across five regions were identified as having the potential to reach the milestone of eliminating malaria.
- The report 'Zeroing in on malaria elimination' brings out the progress made through the E-2020 initiative of WHO.
- Building on the successes of the E-2020, WHO has identified a new group of 25 countries that have the potential to stamp out malaria within a 5-year timeline.
- The E-2025 countries will receive technical and on-the-ground support by WHO and its partners.

Article 19 of the UN Charter in news

- Iran and six other countries surrendered their right to serve in the United Nations General Assembly because they had not charged their dues.
- The other countries that lost their voting rights were Niger, South Sudan, Zimbabwe, Congo Brazzaville, Central African Republic and Libya. On the other hand, three other countries such as Comoros, Somalia, Sao Tome and Principe will be allowed to vote despite their missing dues.
- The actions of suspending the members from voting has been taken under Article 19 of the United Nations Charter.



About Article 19 of UN Charter

- Provided for In article 19 of the Charter of the United Nations, a member shall have no right to vote if he has arrears in paying his financial obligations to the United Nations.
- The Charter provided for a term of grace of two years. That is, if the arrears have been outstanding for longer than two years, the right to vote shall be revoked.

Neptune Declaration on Seafarer Wellbeing and Crew Change in news



- The Maritime Union of India urged the government to take cognisance of the "Neptune Declaration on Seafarer Wellbeing and Crew Change" in order to formulate the Maritime India Vision 2030.

About Neptune Declaration

- The Neptune Declaration was signed by more than 450 organizations. The declaration highlights the main actions that are required to be taken in order to resolve the crew change crisis.
- The daily lives and wellbeing of seafarers was highly impacted due to COVID-19 pandemic. It led to a humanitarian crisis at sea.

Objectives of declaration:

- To recognize the seafarers as the key workers and provide them priority access to Covid-19 vaccines.
- To establish and implement the gold standard health protocols which are based on the existing best practice.
- To increase the collaboration between the ship operators and charterers so as to facilitate the crew changes.
- To ensure the air connectivity between the key maritime hubs for seafarers.

About Maritime Union of India (MUI)

- The Marine Union of India is the oldest marine office. It represents the Merchant Navy Officers who are its members. The office is affiliated to the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF), London, United Kingdom.
- The office works with the primary objective of working for and ensuring the fairness of work and wage conditions for the members.



U.S. suggested to extend New START Treaty

- US President Joe Biden suggested a five-year extension of the New START (Strategic Weapons Limitation Pact) Treaty. Russia accepted the idea.

Key Features of New START Treaty:

- The New START Treaty was announced between the United States and Russia in Prague in 2010. (Capital of Czech Republic). It came into effect in 2011.
- The formal name of the New START Treaty is 'Steps for further reduction and restriction of strategic offensive weapons.'
- The treaty was signed to reduce nuclear arms production and utilisation by US and Russia. Under the treaty, the countries will reduce their strategic nuclear missile launchers by half.

Note

The Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces Treaty was signed between the US and Russia during the cold war period. It was signed in 1987. Under the treaty, the countries agreed to eliminate their stocks of short range and intermediate range missiles. The US withdrew from the treaty in 2019.

United States to rejoin UNHRC

- The President of the U.S. Joe Biden announced that U.S. is all set to rejoin the UN Human Rights Council. The United States had quit from the Council in 2018 under the administration of Donald Trump.

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.



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.

India-Russia 2+2 Dialogue held

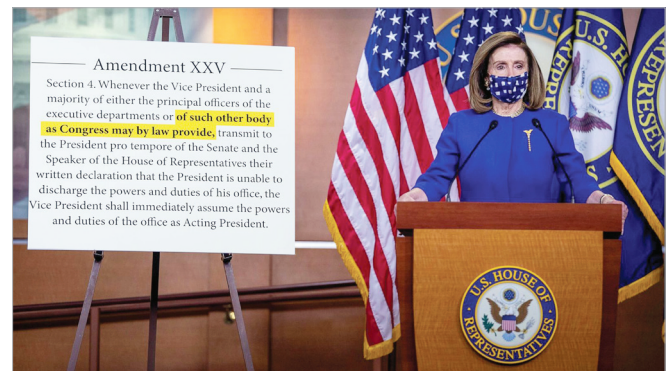
- India and Russia have agreed to establish a '2+2 Ministerial Dialogue' at the Foreign & Defence Minister level between the two countries. Russia is the 4th country and 1st Non-Quad member country with which India has established the '2+2 Ministerial dialogue' mechanism.



About 2+2 Dialogue

- India holds similar dialogues with the US, Australia and Japan.
- This dialogue is expected to boost the bilateral strategic partnership between India & Russia. Russia is the first non-QUAD member with which India is to hold the dialogue.
- In 2021, President Vladimir Putin is to visit India to hold the India-Russia bilateral summit. The summit is alternatively held in India and Russia.

25th Amendment of the US Constitution in news



- The United States Capitol Protests, 2021, induced calls to invoke the 25th Constitutional amendment.

Key Points:

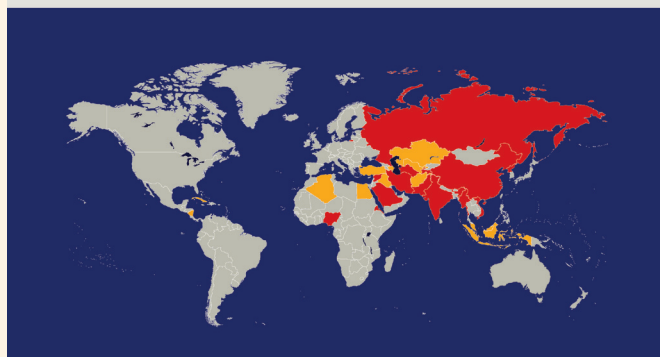
- The 25th Constitutional amendment lays out how a US President or a Vice President can be replaced or succeeded.
- It includes resolve issues revolving around unfortunate situations like death, resignation to removal of the US President and actions to be followed after a President becomes disabled to such a degree that he is unable to fulfil his responsibilities. The amendment has four sections.

Four sections of the amendment:

- The Vice-President would assume the position and title of the president in the event of the resignation of the president. Which will effectively prevent the departing current from returning to office.
- The second section of the amendment includes provisions of vacancies in the office of vice president.
- The third section of the amendment provides provisions to determine a city of presidents to discharge his powers and duties.
- The Vice-President can take over as acting president if the president declares his or her inability to act as president. When the president is unable to declare his or her incompetent then the fourth section of the amendment is invoked. This section requires the vice president and the cabinet to jointly prove the incompetence of the Vice-President.

India to be included in Countries of Particular Concern (CPC) list

2021 USCIRF RECOMMENDATIONS



■ COUNTRIES OF PARTICULAR CONCERN

Burma	Nigeria	Syria
China	North Korea	Tajikistan
Eritrea	Pakistan	Turkmenistan
India	Russia	Vietnam
Iran	Saudi Arabia	

■ SPECIAL WATCH LIST COUNTRIES

Afghanistan	Cuba	Iraq	Nicaragua
Algeria	Egypt	Kazakhstan	Turkey
Azerbaijan	Indonesia	Malaysia	Uzbekistan

- The USCIRF (US Commission on International Religious Freedom) has recommended classifying India as a Country of Particular Concern (CPC). It is due to the worst violations of religious freedom in India in 2020. The other three countries were Russia, Vietnam and Syria.

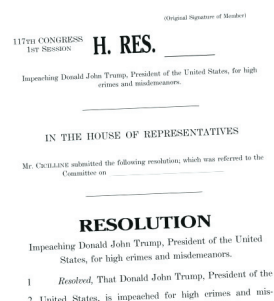
Key Points:

- USCIRF recommends the Country of Particular Concern (CPC) designation to the US State Department. It recommends countries engaged in severe violations of religious freedom under IRFA (International Religious Freedom Act) 1998.
- The countries that receive this designation either engage in or tolerate systematic, ongoing, glaring violations of religious freedom.

USCIRF

- The USCIRF was established by the US Government in 1998 after the enactment of the International Religious Freedom Act.
- The Commissioners of USCIRF are appointed by the President. It mainly aims to review the violations of religious freedom internationally.

U.S. House of Representatives impeached Trump for the second time



- Former U.S. President Donald Trump became the country's first president to be impeached twice.
- The House of Representatives of the United States recently agreed to accuse him of inciting a mob assault on the U.S. Congress.
- He was charged on offences such as treason, high crime, extortion, and misdemeanors.
- However, Senate of U.S. Congress acquitted him from all the charges.

U.S. Constitutional Provisions:

- The Constitution of the United States states that there are two ways to punish an accused official. One is to suspend the convicted official from his position and disqualify him from holding any office of honour, profit or trust under the administration of the United States.
- The second way is to remove an official by conviction with two third majority from the U.S. Senate. Only a simple majority is needed for disqualification.

Impeachment of President of India:

- The impeachment charges of an Indian President are initiated either in Lok Sabha or in Rajya Sabha.
- After the impeachment resolution is passed by majority of two thirds in one house, it is sent to the other house. The other house investigates the charges.
- If the other house also sustains the charges, an impeachment resolution is brought in.
- If the impeachment resolution is passed with two-thirds majority, the president is said to be impeached.

India proposed Eight Point Action Plan

- The External Affairs Ministry recently addressed the United Nations Security Council open debate, in which an eight-point action plan was proposed.

About India's Eight Point Action Plan

- All the member nations should fulfil their obligations in international counter-terrorism conventions and instruments.
- The countries should not bring in double standards in the battle. For instance, there are countries that support terrorism by offering financial support. Such countries are black listed by the international bodies such as FATF (Financial Action Task Force). These countries are being referred to double standard countries.
- The working methods of the committees dealing with counter-terrorism should be reformed.
- The enlisting and delisting of individuals and entities under the United Nations should be done objectively and not for political and religious considerations.
- The linkages between transnational organised crime and terrorism should be addressed vigorously.
- The FATF should continue to identify weaknesses in anti-money laundering and counter-terror financing frameworks.
- Adequate funding should be allocated to the UN Counter terrorism bodies.



ISA to launch World Solar Bank

- The International Solar Alliance (ISA) is preparing to launch the World Solar Bank (WSB) at the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Glasgow.
- The WSB will be introduced since many ISA member countries face the task of raising finances on their own. In comparison, 800 million people who do not have access to electricity have been supported.

Key Highlights:

- The establishment of the World Solar Bank will help India's efforts to protect its leadership in the climate arena.
- The establishment of the bank is important because green financing would be one of the priority topics of the climate meeting called the COP-26.
- COP-26 will be structured in the sense of the re-entry of the United States to the Paris climate agreement.

About ISA

- The ISA has been co-founded by India. It was created at the Paris Climate Change Conference 2015. It is the first treaty-based foreign government body headquartered in India.
- It is the nodal agency to execute India's "One Sun One World One Grid (OSOWOG)" global electricity grid programme.
- One Sun One World One Grid (OSOWOG) was launched with the objective of transferring the solar power generated in one region to feed the electricity demands of another region.

Russia to withdraw from Open Skies Treaty



- Russia has also 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.

WHO and IFRC signed 'Red Channel Agreement'

- The Red Channel Agreement finalised between the World Health Organisation and IFRC (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies) to implement the Emergency Medical Team Initiative was signed.

Key Points:

- The plan would improve the availability of health and emergency care services throughout the humanitarian crisis. This would make it easier for agencies to standardise emergency health response and also improve capacity building activities.
- The Agreement would allow the WHO to provide expanded funding to Red Crescent Societies and National Red Cross Societies.
- The agreement would bring more synergies between the two international organisations, especially in terms of norms, cooperation and transparency.

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC):

- IFRC is a humanitarian assistance organisation that carries out rescue operations to support victims of disasters.
- It aims to improve the potential of its members. Around 192 countries are members of the IFRC. IFRC is based in Geneva, Switzerland.

Note

International Humanitarian Law is a collection of international laws that lay out guidelines for what should and cannot be achieved during a military conflict. These principles were developed in the 1949 Geneva Conventions.

Puerto Rico voted for statehood

- For the seventh time in ten years, the United States territory of Puerto Rico has voted in favour of statehood.
- It asks for equal treatment like the other 50 Nations of the United States.
- Joe Biden's Democratic Party has embraced the principle of recognising the two institutions as states. On the other hand, Trump was opposed to it.



Background:

- Puerto Rico is a Spanish-speaking island. It's smaller than the state of Tripura. Yet there's a population of 31 lakhs.
- It's situated in the Caribbean Sea. The residents of Puerto Rico were given citizenship in 1917. The island was not, however, made a province. It continues to be the domain of the United States.
- In the past, Puerto Rico has had six referendums. At such referendums, voters were asked to choose between secession, statehood or the commonwealth. 52% supported statehood in the 2020 referendum.

Washington demand:

- Washington D.C. The notion that national capital should not be part of any state was founded in 1776.
- The citizens of Washington were given the freedom to vote only in 1961, after the 23rd US constitutional amendment. Much like Puerto Rico, Washington still has only one member of the House of Representatives who has no legislative rights.

Note

For Washington, D.C. to gain statehood, all the chambers of the US Congress (Senate and House) would need to approve the proposal. After that the President of the United States would authorise it.

'Hanoi Declaration' adopted at East Asia Summit



- India was represented by the External Affairs minister S Jaishankar at the East Asia Summit. The summit adopted the Hanoi Declaration.

Key highlights:

- The Minister expressed concern about the deterioration of trust in the South China Sea Area.
- The declaration of Hanoi reaffirmed the following declarations of the East Asia Summit
 - 2005 Kuala Lumpur Declaration
 - 2010 Ha Noi Declaration
 - 2011 Bali Declaration
 - 2015 Kuala Lumpur Declaration
- The declaration highlighted the ASEAN-centric regional architecture
- It stressed upon the effective implementation of Manila Plan of Action to advance the Phnom Penh Declaration (2018-2022). It focuses on the East Asia Development Initiative.

About East Asia Summit

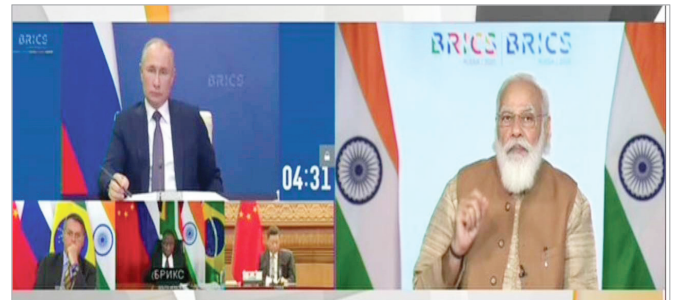
The Summit is held between 18 members including 10 ASEAN countries. The other eight are India, China, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Russia, US and the Republic of Korea.

12th BRICS Summit held virtually

- The Prime Minister of India attended the 12th BRICS summit which was hosted by Russia. The summit was held under the theme "Global Stability, Shared Security and Innovative Growth."

Key Highlights:

- The BRICS representatives to be part of the meeting are China, India, Brazil, Russia and South Africa.
- The meeting was set to take place in St Petersburg in July 2020. However it was delayed due to the pandemic of COVID-19. The 7th BRICS summit was eventually presided over by Russia.



India and BRICS relations:

- BRICS is an acronym for the world's leading developing economies, including Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.
- Together, BRICS constitutes about 40 percent of the world's population and about 30 percent of GDP (Gross Domestic Product), making it a vital economic driver.



UN unveiled "Team Halo"

- The United Nations unveiled "Team Halo" along with the "Vaccine Trust Initiative" of the University of London. More than 100 scientists from various parts of the world have come together as part of the initiative.
- Team Halo seeks to counter misinformation on the safety and efficacy of COVID-19 vaccines. Under the programme, scientists will create social-media-friendly videos on the vaccine sciences of COVID-19 based on their personal knowledge.

Food Coalition:

- In November 2020, the United Nations initiated a new coalition to prevent the food crisis of COVID-19. The coalition was proposed by Italy and is headed by the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO). The partnership would seek to improve the resilience of the agricultural food system.

United States Presidential Election 2020



- The Democratic candidate and former Vice-President Joe Biden defeated incumbent US President Donald Trump in the US presidential election, 2020, by winning 306 electoral college votes, while Trump clinched 232.
- For being elected as President of USA, a candidate needs 270 electoral votes.
- Kamala Harris became the United States' first female Vice President, the highest-ranking female elected official in U.S. history, and the first African-American and first Asian-American Vice President.



Controversy surrounding results

- During the counting of votes and results, the incumbent US President Trump accused his rival Joe Biden of election fraud and vowed to move the US Supreme Court over the results.
- There are numerous other political parties in USA other than these two parties. For example: The Anti-masonic party, Libertarian Party, Green Party, Reform Party and independent candidates who have won elections throughout the history at different levels but such victories are sparse.
- **Citizen of USA can cast their vote by:**
 - Absentee Ballot or Absentee Voting: It is generally used in every state to refer to a ballot filled by a voter who cannot physically make it to the voting location on the election day due to various reasons. In Colorado, Hawaii, Oregon, Utah and Washington state, all ballots are delivered through the mail
 - Mail-in-Ballot: It refers to ballots which are sent through the mail including in all mail voting states along with some forms of absentee voters.
 - Americans living outside the United States may register and vote under the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA)
 - Directly voting at the voting location.
- The elections were the direct contest between present US President and Republican nominee Donald Trump and Joe Biden, the Democratic nominee who was vice-president during the Barack Obama presidency.

Rohingyas to be relocated in Bhashan Char Island

- Approximately thousands of Rohingyas are being relocated from Cox's Bazar refugee camp to the newly built facility on the island.



- Bhashan Char Island is a small uninhabited island in Bangladesh, situated in the Bay of Bengal. It's also known as Char Piya.

Safety issues of the Bhashan Char Island:

- The Bhashan Char Islands are also known as the Floating Islands. They are created by the Himalayan silt washed down from the Himalayas. Recently, the island was formed in 10 years of time. However, according to the environmentalists, it is now eroding at a rate of half a kilometre per year. Environmentalists say the island is vulnerable to cyclones and flooding.
- However, according to Bangladesh authorities, the latest Amphaan cyclone proved the safety of the island.
- During storms and extreme conditions, the island would become inaccessible. The camp would focus on the selection of rainwater and underground tanks. Mangroves have been cultivated by the Forestry Department of Bangladesh since the project proposal started. Around the same time, though, some 5,000 to 7,000 acres of forest have vanished into the sea due to natural disasters.

About Bhashan Char Island

- The island, which covers an area of 40 square kilometers, is thought to have been formed by the Himalayan silt only in 2006.
- The Government of Bangladesh is relocating the Rohingya refugees to this island, 60 kilometres from the mainland.

UN launched 3RF Framework

- 3RF stands for the Structure for Restructuring, Rehabilitation and Restoration. It was initiated by the United Nations to revitalise Beirut.
- The system has been prepared by the United States, the World Bank and the European Union.
- On 4 August 2020, the deadly explosion in Beirut, the capital of Lebanon, killed more than 200 civilians. A million people were left homeless. This led to riots in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

About 3RF

- The System will determine the amount of incoming assistance towards the needs of the people of the region.
- It will concentrate on the most needy in the world. Apart from stabilisation and rehabilitation, the framework will also concentrate on resolving the root cause of the crisis.
- The purpose of the initiative is to restore port facilities, rehabilitate neighbourhoods damaged by the explosion and connect the port facility with the city.

Multi-Donor Trust Fund:

- The revitalisation programme is to be funded by the Multi-donor Trust Fund set up by the World Bank, the European Union and the United Nations.
- The funds are to be reserved for the focus regions. The 3F Strategy prioritises health, good government, education, infrastructure, social security, culture and heritage.
- The proposal would pay immediate attention to the needs of small and medium-sized businesses.

Background:

- Lebanon is now in high financial bankruptcy. Lebanon's current poverty rate is 55%. Twelve months earlier, that was 28 percent. Despite the situation, the requisite changes remain stalled due to political uncertainty.

Israel-Bahrain Peace deal finalised

- Israel and Bahrain have reached a landmark deal to fully normalise their relations, under the mediation deal offered by the USA. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Bahrain's King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa issued a joint statement about the deal.



- Bahrain is only the fourth Arab country in the Middle East - after the UAE, Egypt and Jordan - to recognize Israel since its founding in 1948.

Key Points:

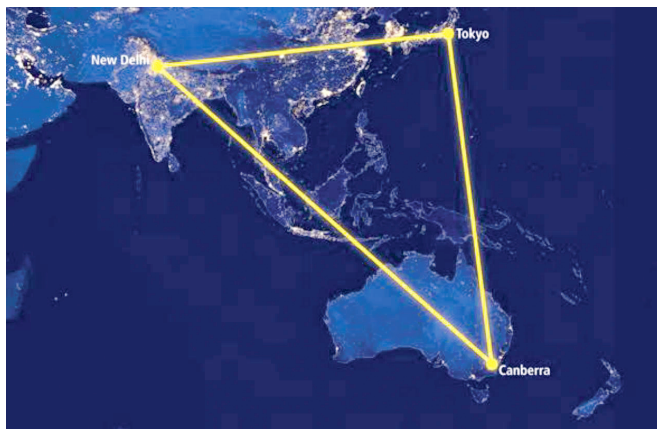
- The UAE welcomed the latest move by Bahrain to ease ties with Israel.
- The Palestine who has been long relied on a unified Arab response for the acceptance of a Palestinian state, criticized the move by Bahrain. It recalled its ambassador to Bahrain.
- Iran termed the deal as a betrayal of the Palestinian cause.

Israel-UAE Agreement:

- In August 2020, Israel and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) announced an agreement to normalize the diplomatic relations between the two countries.
- This agreement is named as the Abraham Accords.

Supply Chain Resilience Initiative (SCRI) proposed

- Japan has proposed the Supply Chain Resilience Initiative (SCRI) as a trilateral approach to trade with India and Australia.



Key highlights:

- Supply chain resilience is an approach that helps a country to ensure that it has diversified its supply chain of nations instead of being dependent on just one or a few.
- In the light of the COVID-19 pandemic and trade tensions between China and the United States, Japan proposed this initiative.

Objective of SCRI:

- It aims to attract foreign direct investment to turn the Indo-Pacific into an economic powerhouse and to build a mutually complementary relationship among partner countries.
- Under the proposal, the aim is to work out a plan to build on the existing bilateral supply chain networks.

- India and Japan already have an Indo-Japan Industrial Competitiveness Partnership that deals with locating Japanese firms in India.
- After an understanding emerges among India, Japan and Australia, the initiative could also be thrown open for the ASEAN countries.

India joined 'Djibouti Code of Conduct'

- India has joined the Djibouti Code of Conduct (DCOC) as an observer which will enhance India's efforts for maritime security in the Indian Ocean region.

Key Points about Conduct:

- The Djibouti Code of Conduct has been instrumental in repressing piracy and armed robbery against ships in the western Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden.
- It has broadened its scope to cover other illicit maritime activities, including human trafficking and illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing.
- It was adopted on 29th January 2009.
- It was established under the International Maritime Organization (IMO).



Jeddah Amendment

- In 2017, a high-level meeting of signatories to the Djibouti Code of Conduct, held in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, adopted a revised Code of Conduct, known as the "Jeddah Amendment to the Djibouti Code of Conduct 2017".
- Under an amendment, DCOC to cover other illicit maritime activities also, including human trafficking and illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.

- Signatories: Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Maldives, Seychelles, Somalia, the United Republic of Tanzania, Yemen, Comoros, Egypt, Eritrea, Jordan, Mauritius, Mozambique, Oman, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Sudan and the United Arab Emirates.
- Observers: India, Japan, Norway, the UK and the USA.

Kosovo-Serbia Deal signed



- Serbia and Kosovo have signed a U.S.-brokered agreement in Washington to normalize economic relations between the two long-disputed countries.

Key Highlights

- The deal was signed between Serbia's President Aleksandar Vucic and Kosovo's Prime Minister Avdullah Hoti, who hailed the agreement as a significant step forward.
- The agreement deals with economic, energy and political issues between Serbia and Kosovo.
- They also agreed to work with the US on sharing the disputed Gazivode/Ujmani Lake, for reliable water and energy supply.
- The deal includes rail and transit agreements between Serbia and Kosovo.
- An agreement was signed to operationalize the first flight between Pristina (Capital of Kosovo) and Belgrade (Capital of Serbia) in 21 years.
- The US also signed two separate documents with Kosovo and Serbia to ensure US investment as a stimulus for more economic co-operation between them.
- Under this deal, Serbia pledged to stop its campaign to get countries to "derecognise" Kosovo for one year, while Kosovo also promised to stop applying for membership of international organisations, also for a year.
- Both Kosovo and Serbia agreed to work more on issues of missing persons, refugees and internally displaced persons from the 1990s Kosovo war.

Background

- The heart of the dispute between the former foes, is Serbia's refusal to recognize Kosovo's independence, which it declared unilaterally in 2008.
- Most Western nations including the United States have recognized Kosovo. However, Russia and China have not recognized Kosovo, preventing it from joining the United Nations.

Qatar brought 'Labour Laws Reforms'

- Qatar has brought a change in its labour laws which are now applicable to workers of all nationalities including domestic workers.

Abolition of Kafala System:

- Qatar has abolished its controversial Kafala system, which required a "no objection certificate" that migrant workers needed to get from their employers before changing jobs.
- Kafala means 'to guarantee' or 'to take care of' in Arabic.
- Earlier, a migrant worker could not enter the country, transfer employment nor leave the country for any reason without first obtaining explicit written permission from employer or sponsor (the Kafeel).
- Thus, this system enabled exploitation and forced labour.

Key Highlights

- Now, workers will have to serve a one-month notice period if they have worked for less than two years and notice period of two months if they have worked longer.
- Increasing the minimum wage by 25 per cent to \$274 or 1000 Qatari riyals
- An additional 300 QAR for food and 500 QAR for accommodation in case not provided by the company.

Kafala System

Currently, the Kafala system is being practiced in Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Jordan and Lebanon.

Constitutional Referendum held in Russia

- Russia recently underwent Constitutional Referendum in which as per the votes, 77.95 percent of Russian citizens have voted in support of the amendments to the Constitution of Russia which was adopted in 1993. Only 21.23 percent of the Russian Citizens voted against the amendments.
- Earlier, in the State Duma (Russian Parliament), President Vladimir Putin had submitted the list of 14 draft amendments that will be changed under the 1993 Constitution of Russia. For introducing these amendments, he called for a nationwide referendum.

Key highlights:

- As per one of the amendments, the term of the current President Vladimir Putin and former President Dmitry Medvedev (from 2008-2012) will be reset or counted from 0 from 2024 so that either of them can be elected as the President again in 2024.
- At present, a person can serve as the President of Russia for a maximum of two consecutive terms. The term of the President of Russia is 6 years.
- Vladimir Putin's second consecutive term (from 2012-2018, 2018-2024) would have ended in 2024, but now with a clear majority of the Russian's having opted for the Constitutional Amendments, Putin can remain as the President of Russia until 2036.
- Apart from these in 2020, the 5 new Articles were added and 41 existing Articles have already been rewritten in the Russian Constitution of 1993.

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.

New Zealanders voted in favour of legalising euthanasia

- New Zealanders have voted in favor of legalizing the euthanasia for people with a terminal illness.
- The decision was taken after people voted in the general elections, they also had the option to vote in referendum. The referendum asked the public to vote on whether the End of Life Choice Act 2019 should come into force.

End of Life Choice Act 2019:

- The Act is meant to give certain terminally ill people the option of requesting medical assistance to end their lives and to establish a lawful process for assisting eligible persons who are able to exercise that option.
- The opponents of the Act such as the Euthanasia Free-NZ group maintain that it lacks oversight and safeguards and have pointed out issues with the eligibility criteria such as the age limit of 18 years and the "arbitrary" nature of the 6-month prognosis.

Categories of Euthanasia:

Euthanasia is categorized into voluntary, non-voluntary and involuntary.

- **Voluntary Euthanasia (with patients' consent):** euthanasia is performed with the patients consent. It is legal in some countries like Belgium, Netherlands, etc.
- **Non-voluntary Euthanasia (patient's consent unavailable):** where a person is unable to give their consent (for example –the patient is in a state of coma or are



severely brain-damaged) and another person takes the decision on their behalf, often because the ill person had expressed a wish previously to end their life in such circumstances.

- **Involuntary Euthanasia (without asking consent or against the patient's will):** Euthanasia conducted against the will of the patient is termed involuntary euthanasia. It is also regarded as murder.
- **Active Euthanasia:** where a person intentionally intervenes to end someone's life with the use of lethal substances or forces. For example- Administering a lethal injection to end life.
- **Passive Euthanasia:** where a person causes death by withholding or withdrawing treatment that is essential to maintain life. For example- stoppage

of antibiotics treatment in certain cases where it is necessary for the continuance of life, removal of life support system, etc

Euthanasia in India:

- Passive euthanasia has been legal in India under strict guidelines since March 2018. In India, the consent of patients is required through a living will.
- The patient may be either terminally ill or in a vegetative state. On 9 March 2018, the Supreme Court of India legalised passive euthanasia as part of the verdict in the light of Aruna Shanbaug, who had been in the Persistent Vegetative State (PVS) until her death in 2015.

Euthanasia

- The phrase "euthanasia" was coined by Sir Francis Bacon. It is also called 'mercy killing'. The term "Euthanasia" has been derived from the two Greek words 'eu' and 'thanatos', which literally means 'good death'.
- Euthanasia is the practice of intentionally ending a life in order to relieve pain and suffering (provided motive should be good & death must be painless as much as possible).
- According to British "Ethunesia is a deliberate intervention was undertaken with the express intention of ending a life, to relieve intractable suffering."

Armenia-Azerbaijan Clashes



- Recently, Defence forces of Armenia and Azerbaijan clashed over the disputed separatist region of Nagorno-Karabakh, in which both sides suffered heavy losses of lives.

Issue:

- Nagorno-Karabakh region in the South Caucasus is the point of contention which has led to territorial disputes and ethnic conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan in Central Asia.

About Nagorno-Karabakh Region

- Nagorno-Karabakh is a landlocked region in the South Caucasus, within the mountainous range of Karabakh, lying between Lower Karabakh and Zangezur, and covering the southeastern range of the Lesser Caucasus mountains. The region is mostly mountainous and forested.
- The region having area of around 4,400 square kilometers, lies 50 kilometers from the Armenian border.

Hagia Sophia declared as Mosque



- Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the President of Turkey, has declared Hagia Sophia as a mosque which will be open to Muslim

worship after a top court ruled that the building's conversion to a museum was illegal.

Key Points:

- Hagia Sophia is a historic house of worship located in Istanbul, Turkey. It was constructed in 537 AD as a cathedral in the Christian Byzantine Empire but was converted into a mosque after the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople in the year 1453. It is a UNESCO world heritage site.
- In 1935, in the early days of the modern secular Turkish state under Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, it became a museum.

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.

India to join Global Partnership of Artificial Intelligence (GPAI)

- India has joined the Global Partnership of Artificial Intelligence as a founding member which is the first initiative of its kind that will help to understand the opportunities and challenges of Artificial Intelligence (AI) better.
- It will bring opportunities to bridge the gaps between theories of AI and AI supported researches to increase AI-related priorities.
- By joining GPAI, India with its experience will help in global development of AI.
- The other leading member countries that joined along with India are UK, USA, Australia, France, Canada, Germany, Mexico, Italy, Republic of Korea, Singapore, New Zealand, etc.



T-3 Tech Alliance to be launched

- India, USA and Israel are collaborating to create next generation technologies under T-3 Tech Alliance.
- This includes a transparent, open, reliable and secure 5G communication network.
- The initiative will open the doors for more tech-savvy democratic countries like Sweden, Finland and South Korea.
- It also becomes a platform for other democracies such as Japan, Germany, the UK, France and Australia. With this, T-3 can easily expand to T-11.

Inter-Parliamentary Alliance on China launched

- A group of eight democracies have launched the Inter-Parliamentary Alliance on China. It is an international cross-party group of legislators that are working towards reforms on democratic countries' approach towards China.
- The Alliance was formed by Japan, United Kingdom, Australia, Germany, Lithuania, Norway, Netherlands and USA. The European Union was also present when the representatives from these countries discussed issues related to China.
- The alliance is an international group of legislators that are working towards reforms on how countries approach China. The mission monitors developments and assists legislators to craft strategic approaches on the issues related to China.



India participated in World Health Assembly



- In this year's World Health Assembly, India was represented by Union Minister Dr. Harsh Vardhan who has also been elected as chairman of the Executive Board of the WHO. He succeeds Dr Hiroki Nakatani of Japan.

- Apart from COVID-19, the World Health Assembly also addressed Global Vaccine Plan, polio eradication and neglected tropical diseases.
- Around 120 countries backed the resolution to conduct investigation on China over the origin of COVID-19.

About World Health Assembly

- The World Health Assembly is the highest decision-making body of the World Health Organization (WHO). It is mainly composed of health ministers of member countries. The members of the assembly meet every year in Geneva during the month of May.
- It approves works of World Health Organization and also budgets and elects its Director General.

GAVI Alliance: India Participated in Global Vaccine Summit

- PM Narendra Modi recently participated at the Global Vaccine Summit that was led by the United Kingdom. At the summit, the PM announced that India will pledge 15 million USD to GAVI Alliance.
- The world leaders have come together to find a vaccine to the COVID-19 with GAVI as an integrating platform.
- The Global Vaccine Summit organized by the UK discussed collecting funds for GAVI. Over 50 countries participated in the programme.
- India has now become a big supporter of the alliance. This saved GAVI 400 million USD in the past five years. Earlier India was only a beneficiary. Since 2014, India has become a donor.

About Gavi Alliance

- GAVI, the Vaccine Alliance, is a public-private global health partnership with the goal of increasing access to immunisation in poor countries.
- GAVI brings together developing country and donor governments, the World Health Organization, UNICEF, the World Bank, the vaccine industry in both industrialised and developing countries, research and technical agencies, civil society, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and other private philanthropists.
- It has observer status at the World Health Assembly.



Toman: Iran adopts new currency

- The Iran Government has recently come up with the decision of changing the name of its currency to Toman. Currently, the unit of Iranian currency is Rial.
- Due to USA pulling out from Nuclear Deal and its sanctions on Iran gave heaviest blow to the Iranian currency. The currency became 600% weaker than the US Dollar.

Key Highlights

- According to the Iranian Government, one Toman is 10,000 Rials.
- Gheran is another new denomination. 100 Gheran makes a Toman.
- The new system was authorized by the Iranian Parliament recently to manage high inflation in the country.
- In order to make Toman, the four zeros in the older currency notes are alone removed. Rial will still remain legal.

Iran withdraws from the JCPOA deal completely

- Iran has completely withdrawn from Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) nuclear deal. The announcement came after the US troops killed Iran's General Qassem Soleimani.
- In 2018, the United States walked away from the nuclear deal, citing that JCPOA gives Iran access to billions of dollars. However, the other participants of JCPOA such as Russia, China, European Union, France, Germany and UK tried to keep the agreement alive.
- According to the deal, Iran curbed its nuclear programme in exchange to relief from sanctions.

India joined Reskilling Revolution Initiative

- India recently joined the Reskilling Revolution Initiative launched at the World Economic Forum as founding member. The initiative aims at providing better education, jobs and skills for more than 1 billion people in the world by 2030.
- The other founding members include US, UAE, Russia, Pakistan, France and Brazil.
- In order to achieve the reskilling, the World Economic Forum also released a report namely "Jobs of Tomorrow: Mapping Opportunity in the New Economy". The report mapped 96



new emerging jobs in seven fastest growing professions based on new technologies.

About Fourth Industrial Revolution

Fourth Industrial Revolution is the developing environment where robotics, Internet of Things and Artificial Intelligence are changing the lives of people globally. It has increased machine operated automation and changed the labour force involved.

Second BRICS Sherpas' meeting convened



- The second BRICS Sherpas' and Sous Sherpas' meeting was convened under India's Chairship. It was conducted to discuss preparations for the scheduled meeting of BRICS Foreign Ministers on 1st June.
- First BRICS Sherpa meeting was held in 2019 under the Presidency of Brazil in Curitiba, Brazil.

Key Highlights:

- The BRICS Sherpas' and Sous Sherpas meeting was convened under India's Chair-ship from 25th to 28th of May. During the meeting BRICS partners negotiated key deliverables for India's char-ship at BRICS 2021. They also negotiated including outcome documents for Foreign Ministers' meetings.
- Sherpa is the personal representative of the head of state or government, preparing an international summit like G7 and G20 summits.
- First BRICS Sherpa meeting was held in 2019 under the Presidency of Brazil in Curitiba.

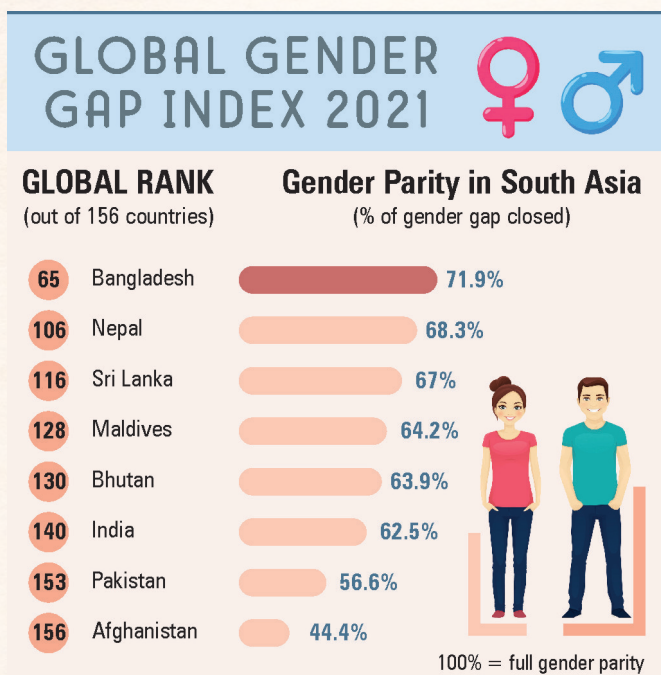
About Sherpas

Name Sherpas is derived from "Sherpa people" who are Nepalese ethnic group. They serve as guides and porters across the Himalayas. Thus, designating grouping as Sherpa refers to the fact that Sherpa clears the way for heads of state at major summits

Reports & Indices

Global Gender Gap Index 2021

- The World Economic Forum has released the Global Gender Gap Report 2021. India has seen a decrease in its ranking on the index by 28 places.



Key Points:

- India has fallen 28 places- it is now ranked 140 among 156 countries. It is now one of the worst performers in South Asia, trailing behind neighbours Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka and Myanmar.
- India has declined on the political empowerment index as well by 13.5 percentage points
- The report highlighted that India's gender gap on this dimension widened by 3% this year, leading to a 32.6% gap closed till date.
- Most of the decrease has been seen on the political empowerment subindex, where India regressed 13.5 percentage points. The women ministers have declined to 9.1% in 2021 from 23.1% in 2019).

World Economic Outlook

- The International Monetary Fund released the World Economic Outlook titled "Managing Divergent Recoveries".



Key Findings of the report

- The report has predicted GDP growth of India for the current fiscal year 2022 to be 12.5%. This is 1% higher than the

previous projection of 11.5% in January 2021. This is the very best among the emerging economies and also among the elite of advanced economies.

- Also, the growth projection of India for the year 2023 has been increased from 6.8% to 6.9%. Earlier the IMF had predicted the expansion rate of India to be 6.8%.
- The global economy is to grow at 6% in 2021 and is expected to moderate to 4.4% in 2022. In 2020, the global economy contracted by 3.3%.
- According to the report, China has returned to pre-COVID GDP in 2020. However, many others are not expected to return till 2023.
- The Hotel and Restaurant sector has suffered huge production and employment losses due to COVID-19.

International Monetary Fund

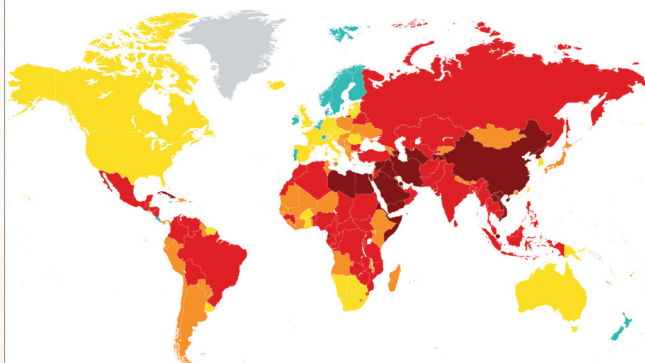
- The International Monetary Fund was set up at a conference in Bretton Woods in the US along with the World Bank after World War II so as to assist the reconstruction of war-ravaged countries.
- They are known as the Bretton Woods twins. It was created in 1945 and is accountable to the 189 countries that make up its near-global membership. India joined on December 27, 1945.

World Press Freedom Index, 2021

The State of World Press Freedom

Countries ranked by level of press freedom in 2021

■ Good situation ■ Satisfactory situation ■ Noticeable problems
■ Difficult situation ■ Very serious situation



- The Reporters Without Borders, a not-for-profit body recently published the World Press Freedom Index, 2021. It ranked 180 countries. India ranked 142 in the index. India was at the same position in 2020 as well.

Key Highlights

- Journalism, the main vaccine against disinformation, is completely or partly blocked in 73% of the 180 countries.
- Only 12 of the Index's 180 countries (7%) can claim to offer a favourable environment for journalism.
- The Report has raised concern about the larger Asia-Pacific region as several nations in an attempt to curb freedom of press have in place draconian laws on 'sedition,' 'state secrets' and 'national security'.
- Norway has topped yet again for the fifth year in the row, followed by Finland and Denmark.
- Eritrea received the last rank in the index. China ranked 177th out of 180 countries. North Korea was at rank 179 and Turkmenistan was at rank 178.

World Press Freedom Index

- It has been published every year since 2002 by Reporters Sans Frontieres (RSF) or Reporters Without Borders.
- Based in Paris, RSF is an independent NGO with consultative status with the United Nations, UNESCO, the Council of Europe and the International Organization of the Francophonie (OIF).

World Bank's Roads and Safety Report

- The World Bank recently released its study "Traffic Accident Accidents and Disabilities: The Pressure on the Indian Population".
- This article was compiled by the Ministry of Roads and Highway Transport.

Key Findings

- The article mentions the unfair effect of a traffic accident on disadvantaged families. It also sheds light on the ties between poverty, traffic accidents, inequalities and disabled road users across India.
- The study points out that India has just 1% of the world's cars. And as it accounts for 11% of the world's death from traffic injuries.
- The World Bank report highlighted that the road crash deaths among rural poor households accounts for 44 per cent.
- While, the road crash death among urban poor households accounts for 11.6 per cent.
- The report further highlights that the low-income household spends seven months of its income on post-road crash care.

Freedom in the World 2021 Report

- The USA's NGO Freedom House recently released its annual study on global human rights and freedoms. The study entitled "Freedom in the World 2021 – Democracy under Siege" released a report on political freedom around the world.

Key findings:

- India's score fell by four points to 71, the worst decline among the world's 25 largest democracies.
- India scored 34 out of 40 points in the political rights category, but only 37 out of 60 in the civil liberties category, for a total score of 71, a drop from last year's score of 75.
- India is near the bottom of the pile among the countries categorised as "Free", with only Tunisia receiving a lower score.
- The scrapping of Article 370, the National Register of Citizens (NRC) and the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 (CAA), as well as the crackdown on mass protests have been listed as the main signs of declining freedom.

Freedom in World Report:

- The Freedom in World Report was launched by the Freedom House in the year 1973. In the report, it assessed the level of freedom across the countries, ranked them on the basis of numerical score and declared the countries as "free", "partly free" or "not free". This report is one of the oldest quantitative measures of democracy.

Human Development Report, 2020

- The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) issued a study on human development. According to the survey, India ranked 131th among 189 countries in the Human Development Index.

Key Points:

- India's human development index was 0.640. India was 129 in 2019. This year's index adopted new metrics, including CO2 pollution and material footprint, and introduced a Planetary Pressure – Modified Human Development Index (PHDI).
- Life expectancy at birth in India was 69.9, though maternal mortality was 174. The maternal mortality rate is one in hundred thousand live births. Women's share of seats in Parliament in India was 11.6 per cent (as of 2017).
- Norway, Ireland and Switzerland occupied the top 3 ranks in the report. These countries were followed by Hong Kong, Iceland and Germany at 4th, 5th and 6th places respectively.
- China was ranked at 85th position and Pakistan was ranked at 154th position.

Index

- The Human Development Report was first released in 1990 by Indian Nobel Prize winner Amartya Sen and Pakistani economist Mahboob Ul Haq.
- The Human Development Index is prepared on the basis of factors such as life expectancy at birth, women's political participation and maternal mortality.
- A study on human evolution was produced in 2020 under the theme "Human Development and Anthropocene."

Planetary Pressures-Adjusted HDI:

- The Planetary Pressure Adjusted Human Development Index (PHDI) is an experimental metric that adjusts the Human Development Index (HDI) for planetary pressures.
- This index is similar to the HDI Disparity Change, which was originally adopted by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) (UNDP).
- This is the human growth standard adjusted by carbon dioxide emissions per person and per capita material footprint.
- The material footprint is the amount of fossil fuels, metals and other resources consumed by a country to produce the required Goods and Services.

Global Innovation Index



- The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) has released the Global Innovation Index.
- India, for the first time, has ranked among top 50 countries. It has been ranked at 48th position out of 131 countries.
- The index was released based on the theme "Who will Finance Innovation?"

Key Highlights:

- Along with WIPO, Cornell University and INSEAD Business School were a part in framing the index.
- Switzerland acquired the first position followed by Sweden, USA, UK and Netherlands.
- India ranks in the top 15 in indicators such as ICT services exports, government online services, graduates in science and engineering, and R&D-intensive global.

World Investment Report, 2020

The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) has released its World Investment Report, 2020. According to the report, India is the 9th largest recipient of FDI in 2019.

Key Highlights

- Report says that FDI in India has increased from 42 billion USD in 2018 to 51 billion USD in 2019. In the region of Asia, India was among the top 5 countries.

- Besides, the investments in Digital sector of India were highly promising. The investors of India in the first quarter of 2020 concluded deals that were worth of 650 million USD and majority of the deals were in digital sector.
- The report says that the global FDI inflows are to decrease by 40% in 2020 as compared to 2019.
- Apart from this, the FDI inflows in South Asia increased by 10%.

World Bank: Recent data on Global Remittance

The World Bank recently released its "Migration and Development Brief". 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. It was 540 billion USD in 2020 and 548 billion USD in 2019.

Key Findings

- The reduction in remittance inflows were smaller than that of 2009 Global Financial Crisis.
- However, the remittance inflows to China reduced by 30% in 2020.
- The inflows to the Caribbean and Latin countries increased by 6.5%
- Increased by 5.2% in south Asia
- Increased by 2.3% in North Africa
- In Pacific and East Asia, it fell by 7.9%
- Fell by 2.3% in North Africa and Middle East
- Fell by 9.7% in Central Asia and Europe
- Fell by 12.5% in Sub-Saharan Africa
- Apart from China, the remittance inflows declined greatly in Nigeria. It fell by 28%.

India and its Neighbourhood

- In 2019, India received 83.3 billion USD remittances. This fell by 0.2% in 2020. This was maximum in remittance from UAE. The remittance from UAE to India reduced by 17%.
- In Pakistan, the remittances increased by 17%. The biggest growth in remittances to Pakistan came from Saudi Arabia.
- The remittances in Bangladesh increased by 18.4%
- In Sri Lanka, it increased by 5.8%
- In Nepal, it fell by 2%
- **What is Remittance:** It is a sum of money sent from one country to other country. It can be business payments or remittances paid to a family member, friends.
- **How are remittances important:** They help the currency to hold its value against a foreign currency.
- The World Bank says that the remittances are the second largest resource inflow for developing countries after FDI.
- As the flow of remittances increases, the currency value of receiving country increases and the value of foreign currency depreciates.

World Competitive Index 2020

The Institute of Management Development has released the World Competitive Index, in which Singapore secured the top position in the ranking system. Denmark was at the second position, followed by Switzerland, Netherlands and Hong Kong.

Key Highlights

- India ranked at 43rd position in the ranking out of 63 countries.
- According to the ranking, India has improved in long term employment growth, foreign currency reserves, overall productivity and education. On the other hand, India had declined in taxes, real GDP growth, competition legislation and exchange rate stability.
- China slipped from 14th place to 20th and US moved to 10th place.
- Among the BRICS countries, China topped followed by India, Russia, Brazil and South Africa.

Democracy Index 2020

- The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) recently released its report titled "Democracy in sickness and in health?" and also published the Democracy Index 2020.

Key Findings

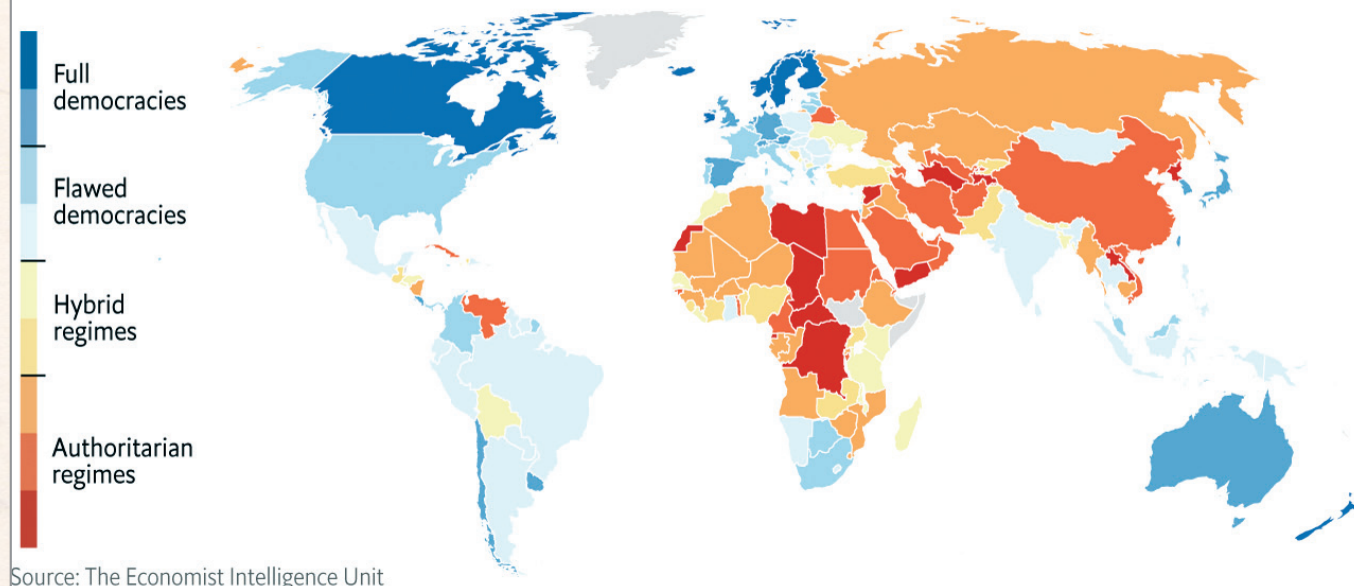
- The Democracy Index report 2020 covers the 167 countries. India's rank has degraded by two places from the previous year ranking. This year India has been ranked at 53rd place.
- It has classified the economies in categories such as flawed democracies, full democracies, hybrid regimes, and authoritarian regimes.
- The report highlights that, 23 countries are full democracies, 52 are flawed democracies, 35 countries are hybrid regimes while 57 countries are authoritarian regimes out of total 167 countries.
- In the Democracy Index, Norway has topped. The 2nd 3rd 4th and the 5th ranks have been secured by Iceland, Sweden, New Zealand and Canada respectively in the index.

EIU

The EIU has been headquartered in London, United Kingdom. It is the leading resource that provides the forecasting and advisory services through the economic and business research across the world.

The Economist Intelligence Unit's 2020 Democracy Index

167 countries scored on a scale of 0 to 10 based on 60 indicators

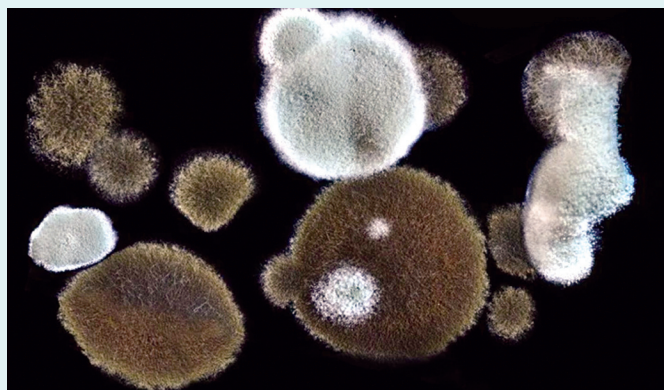


Mucormycosis–Black Fungus Infection in COVID Patients

- 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

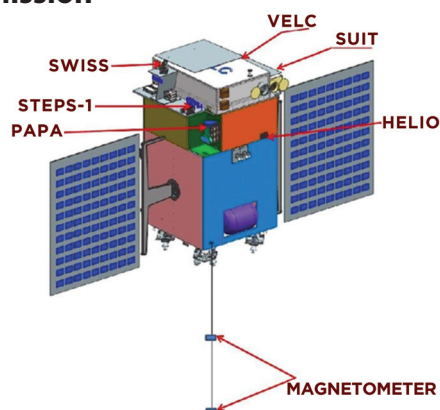
- It causes redness around the eyes, nose.
- Also, the person suffers from headache, fever, bloody vomits, shortness of breath, altered mental status.
- Mucormycosis is suspected when a person suffers from sinusitis, local pain on cheekbone, blackish discoloration over bridge of nose, chest pain, thrombosis, pleural effusion, necrosis, blurred vision, etc.



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.

Aditya-L1 Mission : ISRO planned India's first solar mission



- Aditya-L1 Mission is India's first solar mission planned by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO). Earlier the name was Aditya -1, which has been renamed as Aditya-L1 Mission.
- It is ISRO's second space-based astronomy mission after AstroSat for a scientific expedition to study the Sun. The mission was initially named Aditya 1 which was limited to observing only the solar corona.

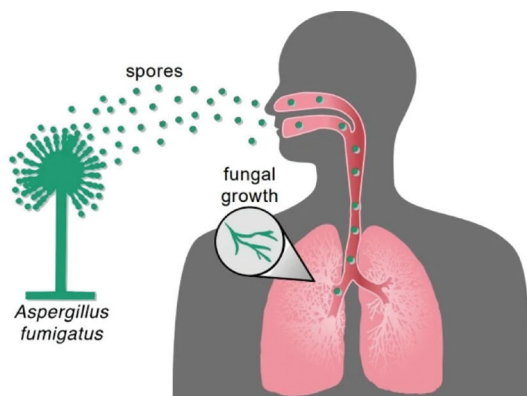
About Aditya-L1 Support Cell

- ISRO and ARIES collaborated on this project. The acronym ISRO stands for Indian Space Research Organization, and ARIES stands for Aryabhata Research Institute for Observational Sciences.
- The Centre will house visiting observers and assist them in analyzing the mission's observations by providing data from the mission.
- It would consolidate all of the mission's data into a single interface.

About Aditya-L1

- The Aditya-1 mission was conceived as a 400kg class satellite carrying one payload, the Visible Emission Line Coronagraph (VELC) and was planned to launch in a 800 km low earth orbit.
- A Satellite placed in the halo orbit around the Lagrangian point 1 (L1) of the Sun-Earth system has the major advantage of continuously viewing the Sun without any occultation/ eclipses.

Aspergillosis Fungal Infection reported among COVID 19 patients

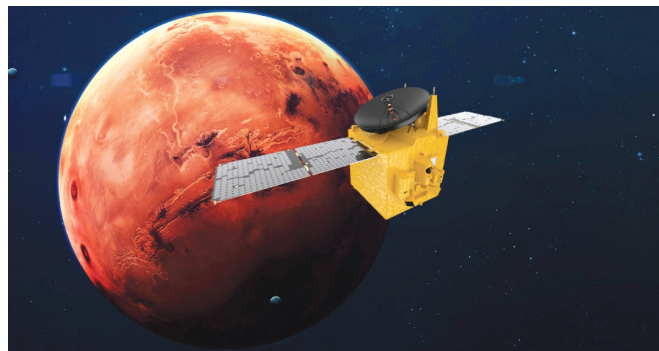


- In the midst of the country's fight against the covid-19 epidemic and rising occurrences of mucormycosis, doctors in Ghaziabad, Mumbai, and Gujarat have reported cases of a new illness known as 'aspergillosis.'
- People can come in contact with the fungus by breathing in microscopic "aspergillus spores" from the environment.
- Though people come in contact with the fungus daily but never contract illness. Because, aspergillosis infects people suffering from lung disease or weak immune system. It causes infections in organs and other allergic reactions.

About Aspergillosis

- Aspergillosis is a fungal infection, fungal growth or allergic reaction caused due to Aspergillus fungus.
- The fungus is found indoors as well as outdoors. It lives on decaying vegetation or dead leaves. This fungal infection is not as deadly as black fungus but it can turn fatal too.
- There are 5 types of aspergillosis namely, allergic bronchopulmonary aspergillosis, aspergilloma (fungus ball), allergic Aspergillus sinusitis, chronic pulmonary aspergillosis and invasive aspergillosis. But, COVID-19 patients are being diagnosed with rare sinus pulmonary aspergillosis.
- Signs and symptoms depend on which organs are affected, but in general, invasive aspergillosis can cause:
 - Fever and chills
 - A cough that brings up blood (hemoptysis)
 - Shortness of breath
 - Chest or joint pain
 - Headaches or eye symptoms
 - Skin lesions

HOPE: UAE's Mars Mission



- The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has put a probe called Hope in the orbit around the Mars. By doing so, UAE has become the latest enterant to launch the spacecraft into the orbit of Mars after the United States, Russia, European Union and India.

Key Highlights:

- The spacecraft had left the Earth seven months ago.
- It then made a braking manoeuvre in order to be captured by Mars' gravity on February 9, 2021.
- With the successful launch of spacecraft in orbit, UAE scientists can now study the planet's atmosphere.
- The spacecraft carries three instruments with it to observe how neutral atoms of Oxygen and Hydrogen leak into space.

About Emirates Mars Mission

- It is a UAE Space Agency space exploration mission to Mars.
- UAE had launched the Hope orbiter on July 19, 2020. It was launched from the Tanegashima Space Center in Japan.

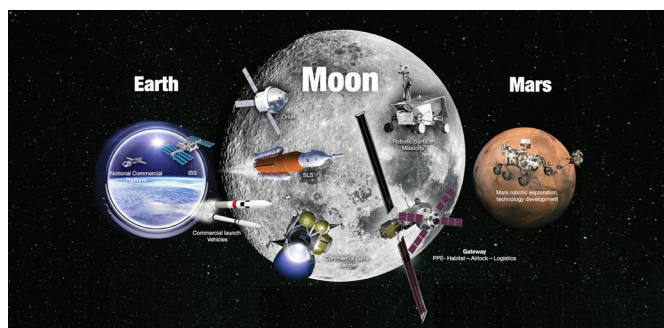
SUTRA Model to forecast COVID-19 pandemic

- Questions are being raised by many scientists about a government-backed model, 'SUTRA' to forecast the rise and ebb of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The model can predict the future only if the virus dynamics and its transmissibility do not change. In case of COVID-19, the nature of the virus has been changing continuously.
- The model was incapable to predict the future under different scenarios. However, its predictions till February 2021 fitted in perfectly.



About Model

- SUTRA standing for Susceptible, Undetected, Tested (positive) and Removed Approach earlier gained a public eye when one of its expert members informed in October 2020 that India had crossed the COVID-19 peak. The prediction for the second wave, however failed and the rising number of cases are a standing proof of the same.
- This SUTRA Model is backed by Gol and was developed by professors from IIT Kanpur, IIT Hyderabad.

Artemis Programme : NASA to land on astronauts on Moon

- The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) has decided to land a person of colour on the moon as part of an international spaceflight program called Artemis Programme.

Key Highlights

- The first cadre of the astronauts of the Artemis programme was announced in December 202. However, the first two crew members (male and female) of 2024 Artemis III space mission are yet to be announced.
- The initial group of astronauts who are a part of the Artemis Programme comprises 18 very diverse teams of astronauts including both veterans and new ones.
- In a proud moment for India, Indian American Raja Chari is a part of the initial group of Artemis astronauts.
- Acting NASA Chief of Staff, Indian-American Bhavya Lal said, "These are historic moments in advancing equity for all of mankind."

Note

Artemis Programme is an international human space flight programme funded by the US Government. The main objective of the programme is to launch a manned mission to the south pole region of the moon by 2024.

Luna 25: Russian will launch Moon mission

- Russian Space Agency 'Roscosmos' will launch its spacecraft 'Luna 25' in the last quarter of 2021 towards the icy South pole of the Moon.
- The Roscosmos is the State Space Corporation of Russia that is responsible for space flights, aerospace research and cosmonautics programmes.

About Luna 25

- Luna 25, a Russian Moon Lander, is set to launch on October 1, 2021.
- The four-legged lander with a Lunar Robotic Arm and six science instruments has been designed to study the water below the surface at the South pole of the Moon and to assess the threats from the sharp fragments of lunar dust, for one year.
- The Moon lander will use a camera built by the European Space Agency (ESA) for the lunar missions. The European Pilot-D camera will capture the terrain of the Moon. The data will help ESA prepare for their landing on the Moon.
- Luna 25 is one of the five Lunar missions planned by Russia. The country will launch Luna 26 in 2023 or 2024. Luna 27 is expected to be launched in 2027. Details about the remaining two missions are yet to be decided.

Note

Lunar-A was a proposed orbiter of Luna 25 mission. It was to be developed through a merger between Roscosmos and JAXA (Japanese Space Agency). However, the merger was aborted.

Cycle threshold (Ct) Value in a RT-PCR Test

- According to the ICMR, the current positivity criteria is based on the cycle threshold (CT), which is a measure of how soon after an RT-PCR test, the SARS-CoV-2 is detected in a sample.
- The ICMR documents mention different Ct Values. Also, there are divergent views among the National Centre for Disease Control and also among Niti Aayog.



About Ct value

- Short for cycle threshold, Ct is a value that emerges during RT-PCR tests.
- In an RT-PCR test, RNA is extracted from the swab collected from the patient. It is then converted into DNA, which is then amplified.
- The Ct value refers to the number of cycles after which the virus can be detected.
- If a higher number of cycles is required, it implies that the virus went undetected when the number of cycles was lower.
- The lower the Ct value, the higher the viral load—because the virus has been spotted after fewer cycles.
- It has been found that the time since the onset of symptoms has a stronger relationship with Ct values as compared to the severity of the disease.
- Globally, the accepted Ct value is between 35 and 40.

Ingenuity Helicopter on surface of Mars

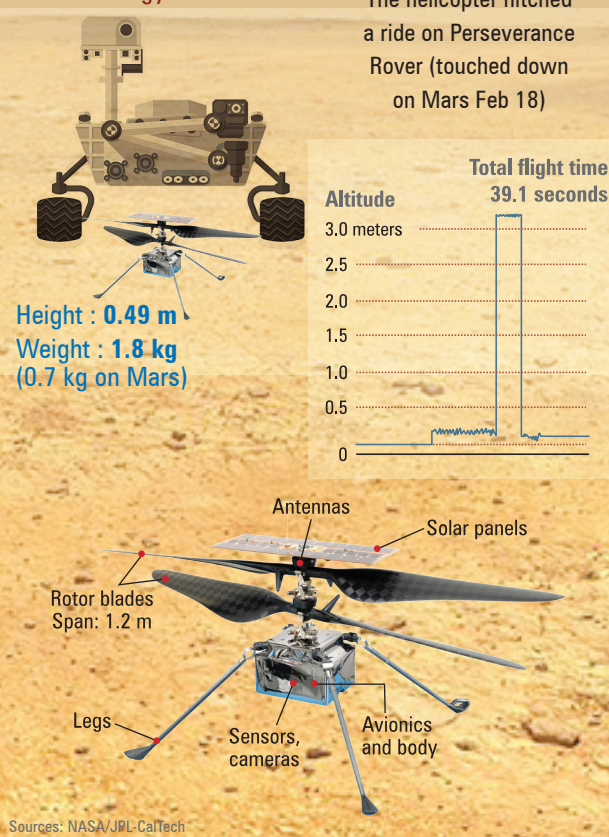
- NASA's Ingenuity mini-helicopter has been dropped on the surface of Mars in preparation for its first flight. The helicopter had been fixed to the belly of the Perseverance rover, which touched down on the Red Planet.

Ingenuity Helicopter : First flight on Mars

NASA's Ingenuity
Test flight to demonstrate
its technology works

First Flight
April 19, 2021

The helicopter hitched
a ride on Perseverance
Rover (touched down
on Mars Feb 18)



Ingenuity Helicopter

- The ultra-light aircraft had been fixed to the belly of the Perseverance rover, which touched down on the Red Planet on February 18.
- It had been feeding off the Perseverance's power system but will now have to use its own battery to run a vital heater to protect its unshielded electrical components from freezing and cracking during the bitter Martian night.
- Ingenuity will be attempting to fly in an atmosphere that is one percent the density of Earth's, which makes achieving lift harder — but will be assisted by gravity that is one-third of our planet's.

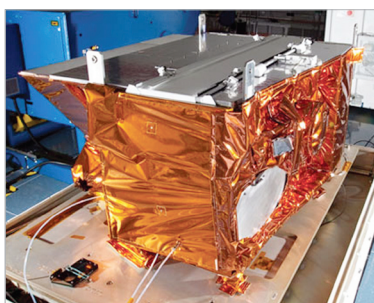
- Ingenuity will be taking high-resolution photography as it flies. Up to five flights of gradual difficulty are planned over the month.

Note

Mars 2020 mission was launched in July 2020. It is a part of NASA's Mars Exploration Programme of NASA. Mars 2020 mission was launched from the Atlas V Launch vehicle.

Visible Infrared Imaging Radiometer Suite (VIIRS) data for forest fire warnings

- According to Global Forest Watch, India reported 82,170 forest fire warnings between April 1, 2021 and April 14, 2021.
- This is more than twice the amount registered over the same time frame in 2020. The data from the Visible Infrared Imaging Radiometer Suite was used to generate the alarm (VIIRS).

**Key Points:**

- VIIRS is a weather monitoring equipment placed in satellites orbiting the earth. It is basically a sensor that was designed and manufactured by Raytheon company. It collects imagery and radiometric measurements of atmosphere, land, cryosphere and oceans. The data is collected in visible and infrared bands of the electromagnetic spectrum.
- VIIRS is placed in Suomi National Polar orbiting Partnership (Suomi NPP) and NOAA-20 weather satellites.

Mayflower 400 : World's first unmanned vessel

- A team of researchers claimed that the Mayflower 400 ship is the world's first unmanned vessel to navigate across the Atlantic ocean.
- The world's first artificial intelligent ship is the 50-foot (15-metre) trimaran, which weighs nine tonnes and navigates with complete autonomy, and is preparing for a transatlantic voyage.

Key features:

- It is 15 metres long and weighs nine tonnes. It is basically a trimaran.
- It navigates with complete autonomy.
- The ship is to study marine pollution and analyze plastics in water. The voyage is important because more than 80% of the underwater world remains unexplored.

- It has been taught on how to avoid collisions. Thus, the ship can correct itself. It has been trained with hundred hours of audio data. The training will help the ship to detect the presence of marine animals and thereby provide information about the population distribution of these animals in the ocean.
- Sophisticated cameras and radars will act as the eyes and ears of the ship. There are six cameras in the ship.

NASA's announced Mars Oxygen In-Situ Resource Utilization Experiment (MOXIE)

- NASA has announced that the Mars Oxygen In-Situ Resource Utilization Experiment (MOXIE) aboard the Perseverance rover was able to produce oxygen from the thin Martian atmosphere for the first time.



- MOXIE produced 5 grams of oxygen from carbon dioxide, enough for an astronaut to breathe for 10 minutes on Mars. It is designed to generate up to 10 grams of oxygen per hour.

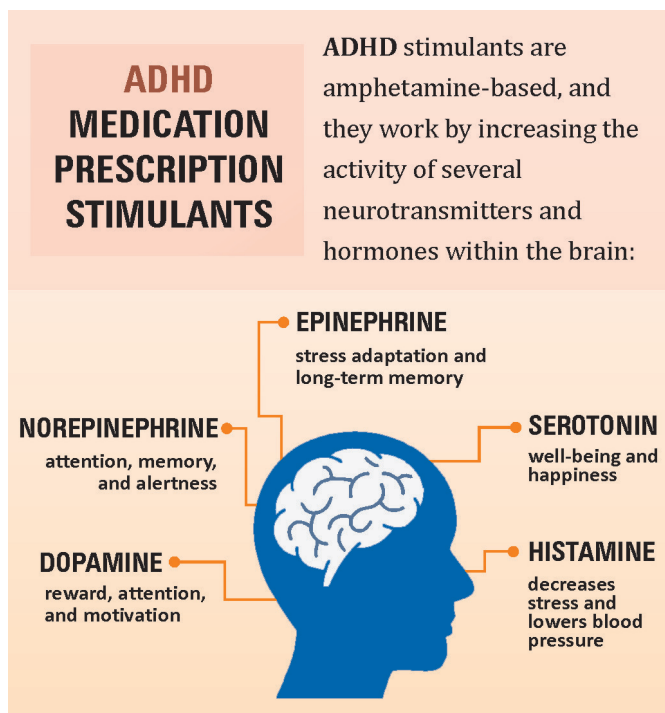
Key Points:

- A technology demonstrator, MOXIE is designed to generate up to 10 grams of oxygen per hour, and is placed inside the Perseverance rover.
- It is the size of a car battery, weighing 37.7 pounds (17.1 kg) on Earth, but just 14.14 pounds (6.41 kg) on Mars.
- Over the next two years, MOXIE is expected to extract oxygen nine more times.
- MOXIE was designed by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).
- It was built with nickel-alloy. The alloy is heat-resistant and is designated to tolerate temperatures of 1,470 degrees Fahrenheit.

Note

Perseverance landed on Mars on February 18, 2021. It carried the Ingenuity helicopter. The helicopter recently made its successful flight. This was the first flight to another planet.

FDA licensed ADHD drugs in US



- The ADHD medication was recently licensed by the FDA in the United States for the treatment of patients aged 6 to 17 years.
- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is an abbreviation for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. The ADHD medication is a stimulant, which is a kind of treatment.
- These drugs work by increasing the activity of the brain. Several controversies have arisen in the US as the FDA has approved the ADHD drug.

About ADHD Drugs

- ADHD medications are classified into two types. There are two types of stimulants: stimulants and non-stimulants. Stimulant drugs, according to the FDA, raise dopamine levels in the brain.
- Dopamine is a brain chemical linked to motivation and concentration. Stimulant drugs, on the other hand, can cause adverse effects such as elevated blood pressure, headaches, anxiety, and reduced appetite.

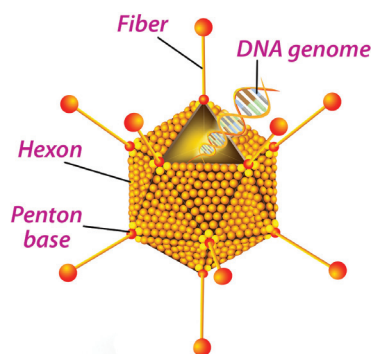
NIC and CBSE launched CollabCAD software

- The National Informatics Centre (NIC) and the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) jointly launched the CollabCAD software.

Key Points:

- The CollabCAD software provides engineering solutions for students and the Faculty of Engineering Graphics curriculum. It aims to provide a platform to students across the country to create and modify digital designs.
- The aim is to provide a good platform to the students of Atal tinkering labs across the country. With the software the students of Atal tinkering labs will be able to create and modify 3D designs with free flow of creativity:

US hold approval one shot Johnson and Johnson COVID-19 vaccine



- The US health authorities recently paused the rollout of one-shot Johnson and Johnson COVID-19 vaccine.
- The vaccine uses similar technology as that of the AstraZeneca vaccine. Both the vaccines are developed from adenoviral vectors.

Key point of Adenovirus:

- Adenoviruses (ADVs) are DNA viruses ranging from 70-90 nanometre in size, which induce many illnesses in humans like cold, respiratory infection etc.
- Adenoviruses are preferred for vaccines because their DNA is double stranded which makes them genetically more stable and the chances of them changing after injection are lower.
- Adenoviruses are non-enveloped, double-stranded DNA viruses. They were first discovered in the human adenoid tissue in 1953 by Rowe and his colleagues.
- Adenoviruses are usually spread from an infected person to others in the following ways.
 - Close personal contact, such as touching or shaking hands.
 - Air transmission through coughing and sneezing.
 - Touching an object or surface with adenoviruses on it, then touching mouth, nose or eyes before washing hands.

ISRO to adopt Atal Tinkering Labs

- The Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) recently announced that it is to adopt 100 Atal Tinkering Labs across the country.

Key Points:

- By adopting a hundred Atal Tinkering Laboratories, ISRO aims to promote the mentoring and coaching of students in cutting-edge technology. It also contains developments related to space.
- ISRO will foster scientific disposition among students and allow them to use space-related technology.
- Via the class, students can acquire realistic and application-based knowledge of STEM.
- There are more than 7,000 Atal Tinkering Labs in India. It allows more than three million students to develop a problem-solving, creative and tinkering way of thinking.
- Atal Tinkering Laboratories has been set up by NITI Aayog under the Atal Innovation Mission Programme.

About Atal Innovation Mission

- The Atal Innovation Mission was launched to promote entrepreneurship and innovation in the country. It has two core functions namely entrepreneurship through self-employment and innovation promotion.
- Atal New India Challenges fosters product innovations. It aligns them to the needs of various ministries.
- Atal Incubation Centres fosters world class startups and will add a new dimension to the incubator model.



India imported 10,000 oxygen concentrators

- As Central and State Governments scramble to procure enough oxygen for hospitals, demand for Oxygen Concentrators has also raised exponentially. The Government of India is to import 10,000 oxygen concentrators.



Key highlights:

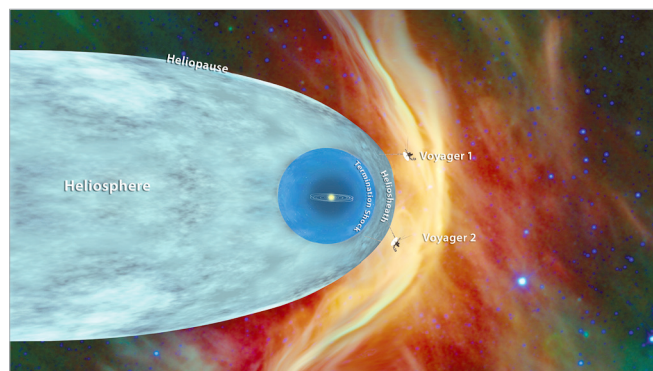
- An oxygen concentrator is a medical device that concentrates oxygen from ambient air. Atmospheric air has about 78 percent nitrogen and 21 percent oxygen, with other gases making up the remaining 1 per cent.

- The oxygen in the oxygen concentrator is compressed and dispensed through a cannula.
- The oxygen is 90% to 95% pure.
- A pressure valve in the concentrators helps to regulate the supply of oxygen from 1 to 10 litres per minute.
- According to a 2015 report by the WHO, concentrators are designed for continuous operation and can produce oxygen 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, for up to 5 years or more.

Note

Oxygen concentrators are the easiest alternatives to cylinders but can only supply 5-10 litres of oxygen per minute (critical patients may need 40-50 litres per minute) and are best suited for moderately ill patients.

NASA launched SHIELDS Mission

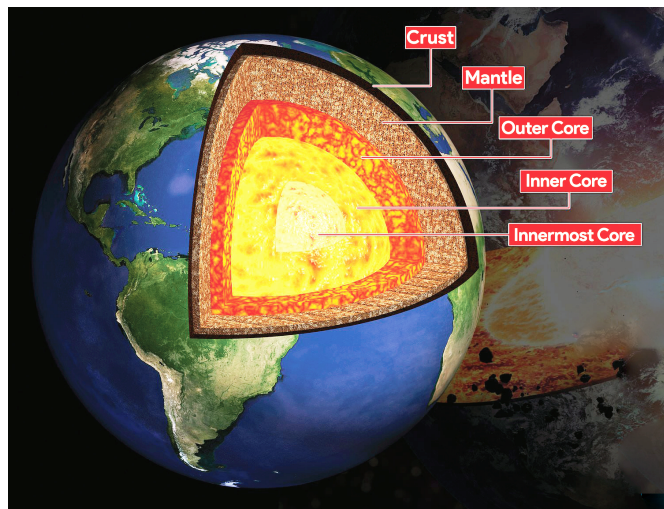


- The SHIELDS Mission was launched by NASA from the White Sands Missile Range in New Mexico. The mission is to investigate light emitted by cosmic particles in the heliosphere.

Key Points:

- SHIELD is an Emission Line Dynamics Spectrometer for Spatial Heterodyne Interferometry. It can reach a maximum altitude of 300 kilometers.
- SHIELDS will investigate the origins of hydrogen atoms in outer space. These atoms contain equivalent amounts of fundamental particles such as electrons and protons. These interstellar hydrogen atoms cross the magnetic lines as their positive and negative charges balance each other.
- The project will monitor the paths of hydrogen atoms as they travel across the heliosphere.
- SHIELDS can look for light emitted by hydrogen atoms. It will determine how much these atoms' wavelengths extend or contract.

Scientists of ISC detected Earth's hidden layer



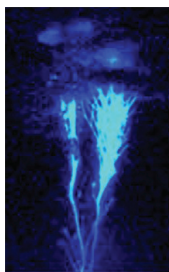
- The Scientists from International Seismological Centre have recently detected the signs of a hidden structure inside the core of Earth. This layer is being termed as the 'fifth layer'.
- As per the long-standing narrative, there exists four layers namely; crust, mantle, outer core and inner core.
- Apart from this, the scientists have also spotted reportedly some changes in the structure of iron within the inner core. These changes suggest that a new 'boundary line' is stretching for about 650 kilometres from the centre of the Earth.

Key highlights:

- Scientists were long suspecting about the fifth layer after they studied the travel time data of the seismic waves which are travelling inside the Earth.
- The data was captured by the International Seismological Centre, following which, the scientists and researchers used their new algorithm in order to search and discover the evidence of changes in structure of the inner core of the Earth.

ISS Scientist witnessed Blue Jet Lightning

- Scientists at the International Space Station (ISS) have witnessed a brilliant blue lightning bolt flying out from the thunderclouds.
- These blue jets are impossible to detect from the ground, since electrical discharges originate from the tops of thunderclouds. But the effect can easily be observed from space.



Key Highlights:

- The space station instrument caught a blue jet fired from a thunderstorm cell above a small island in the central Pacific Ocean on February 26, 2019.
- Scientists have seen five powerful bursts of blue light.

About Blue Jets

- Blue jets are started as "normal" lightning discharges.
- It appears between the upper positive charge area in the thundercloud and the negative scanning layer above the charging region.
- The positive end network fills the negative charge region and then the negative end fills the positive charge region.

Note

Cumulonimbus Cloud is a dense and towering vertical cloud. This cloud is formed by the water vapor which is carried by the powerful upward air currents.

Union Govt. launched Sugamya Bharat App

- Union Minister for Social justice and Empowerment has launched the "Sugamya Bharat App". On this occasion, a handbook called "Access – The Photo Digest" was also launched.



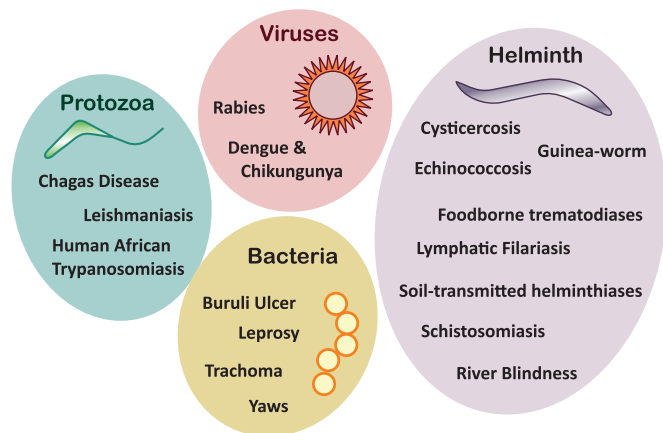
Key Facts:

- It is a mobile application developed to sensitise and enhance accessibility within the 3 pillars of the Accessible India Campaign. These pillars namely- the transportation sector, building an accessible environment and the ICT ecosystem in India.
- The app will aid the Accessible India Campaign towards making a barrier-free and conducive environment for Divyangjans (Persons with Disabilities – PwDs)

Features of the App:

- This mobile app comprises five main features. Out of these features, 4 are directly related to enhancing accessibility while the one is a special feature which caters to the Divyangjan with respect to the COVID-19 related issues.
- The accessibility related features of the app are- registration regarding the complaints of inaccessibility across 3 broad pillars of Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan.
- It also comprises various user-friendly features such as easy drop-down menus, videos in Hindi and English, sign language interpretation and uploading complaints with photographs.

India light up Qutub Minar as a sign of unity to combat NTD



- India has entered the world to Light Up Qutub Minar as a symbol of solidarity in the fight against Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTD).
- This was achieved to mark the second annual World NTD Day held on 30 January.
- The World Day of Neglected Tropical Diseases highlights the dedication of the global community to stop the epidemic.

About Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs)

- NTDs are a diverse group of communicable diseases that are found in tropical and subtropical environments.
- More than one billion people are affected by these diseases per year. Countries spend billions of dollars per year in the war against the epidemic.
- As per the WHO major NTDs are: Buruli Ulcers, Chagas Disease, Dengue, Chikungunya, Sleeping Sickness (Human African Trypanosomiasis), Hansen's Disease (Leprosy), Trachoma Mycetoma, chromo-blastomycosis, deep mycoses etc.

Note

As per the data, one in five people across the world are affected by NTD. India is home to the world's largest absolute burden of 11 of the major neglected tropical diseases.

NASA-ISRO SAR (NISAR) radar to be installed

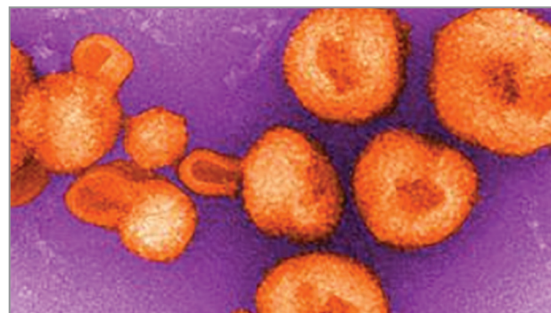
- Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) have



completed the development of Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR) which has the capability of producing extremely high-resolution images for joint earth observation satellite mission.

- NISAR is a joint collaboration for the dual-frequency L-Band and S-Band SAR for the earth observation.
- NISAR is the first satellite mission which will use two different radar frequencies called L-band and S-band. These radar frequencies will be used to measure the changes in Earth's surface less than a centimetre across.
- This mission will be launched in the year 2022 from the Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh. The payload was shipped from the Ahmedabad-based Space Applications Centre (SAC) to the Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) of NASA.

Chapare Virus: US Scientists observed human to human transmission



- The researchers from the United States Centre for Disease Control and Prevention have discovered that the Chapare Virus is capable of human to human transmission.
- Bolivia is reportedly battling an outbreak of the virus. Like the Ebola virus, the Chapare virus is capable of causing haemorrhagic fever.

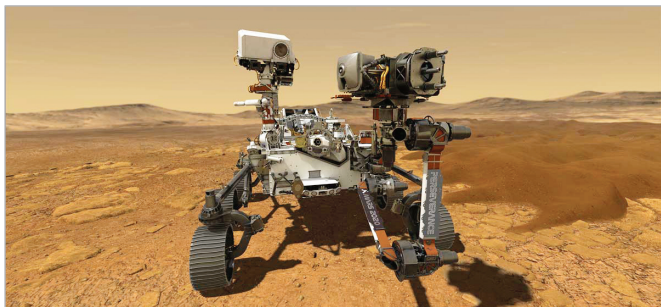
Key Points:

- The Chapare hemorrhagic fever (CHHF) is caused by the same Arenavirus family that is responsible for diseases such as Ebola virus disease (EVD).
- According to the CDC website, arenaviruses such as the Chapare virus are usually borne by rats and can be spread by direct contact with the infected rodent, its urine and droplets, or by contact with the infected human.

Symptoms:

- | | |
|-----------------|------------------------|
| ▪ Fever | ▪ Abdominal pain |
| ▪ Bleeding gums | ▪ Vomiting |
| ▪ Skin rashes | ▪ Pain behind the eyes |

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.

Union Government launched 'ASEEM Portal'

- The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship has launched a digital portal Atmanirbhar Skilled Employee Employer Mapping (ASEEM) which aims to bridge the demand-supply gap in the market across all the sectors in the country for the skilled workforce.
- The portal will be used as a match-making engine by providing real-time data analytics that will help to map skilled workers with the jobs available.

- The portal is developed and managed by the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC).

ISRO launched 'CMS-01' Communication Satellite

- ISRO recently launched 'CMS-01' communication satellite from Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh.



Key Points:

- It is a communications satellite designed to offer services in the expanded C frequency spectrum range and will cover the Indian mainland and the Andaman & Nicobar and Lakshadweep Islands, the ISRO.
- It is estimated that the satellite will have a life of more than seven years.
- It was injected precisely into its pre-defined sub-geostationary transfer orbit (GTO).
- CMS-01 is considered to be a replacement of the aged satellite GSAT-12. It provides services like tele-education, tele-medicine, disaster management support and Satellite Internet access.

C Band : It contains frequencies from 4 GHz to 8 GHz. These frequencies are commonly used for communication, Wi-Fi, weather radar and monitoring purposes.

NITI Aayog established Frontier Technologies Cloud Innovation Centre

- NITI Aayog announced the establishment of first of its kind the Frontier Technologies Cloud Innovation Centre (CIC).
- NITI Aayog and Amazon Web Services (AWS) is being developed in order to address societal challenges through digital innovation.

About Cloud Innovation Centre (CIC)

- This CIC is a part of the AWS CIC Global Programme.
- It provides an opportunity to the government agencies, nonprofits and educational institutions in order to come together on pressing challenges, to test new ideas, to apply design thinking, and to access the technology expertise of AWS.

Shudh: IIT Kanpur developed an ultraviolet sanitizing device

- IIT Kanpur has developed an ultraviolet sanitizing device named Shudh which is capable of disinfecting a 10 × 10 square feet room in just 15 minutes. The device is smartphone-operated and has six UV lights, each is of 15 watts.
- The device can be used to assist at highly prone places such as hotels, hospitals, malls, offices and schools.
- Usually, an Ultraviolet-C (UV-C) ray is used to kill microorganisms which include drug-resistant bacteria as well. It is the most dangerous to human beings, especially to their skin and eyes. UV-C light does not reach the earth surface as the ozone layer absorbs it. It is generated in scientific labs.

Digantara : India's first space debris monitoring system

- Digantara is a Space start-up company that has developed India's first in-orbit space debris monitoring and tracking system. The system works on Light Detection and Ranging (LIDAR) technology which will provide global real-time earth surveillance. This is to be achieved by deploying a constellation of cost-efficient nano satellites in the Low Earth Orbit (an altitude of less than 1000 km).
- The system will help international space agencies to track and map space debris. This will aid to minimize the major threats of future space exploration.

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.

MoHUA launched 'e-Dharti Geo portal'

- The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs has launched the e-Dharti Geo Portal.
- The portal would incorporate legacy drawings, including maps and leasing plans, into the information management system.
- The platform would render Geographic Information System (GIS)-enabled maps and leasing plans.

About Property Card or Certificate

- A certificate will be given to the holder of the land.
- The certificate will contain property specifics such as land type, property type, date of assignment, property condition, land location, property address, etc.
- Certificates can be acquired by paying a premium of up to 1,000.

World-wide Radio Navigation System added IRNSS for its operation

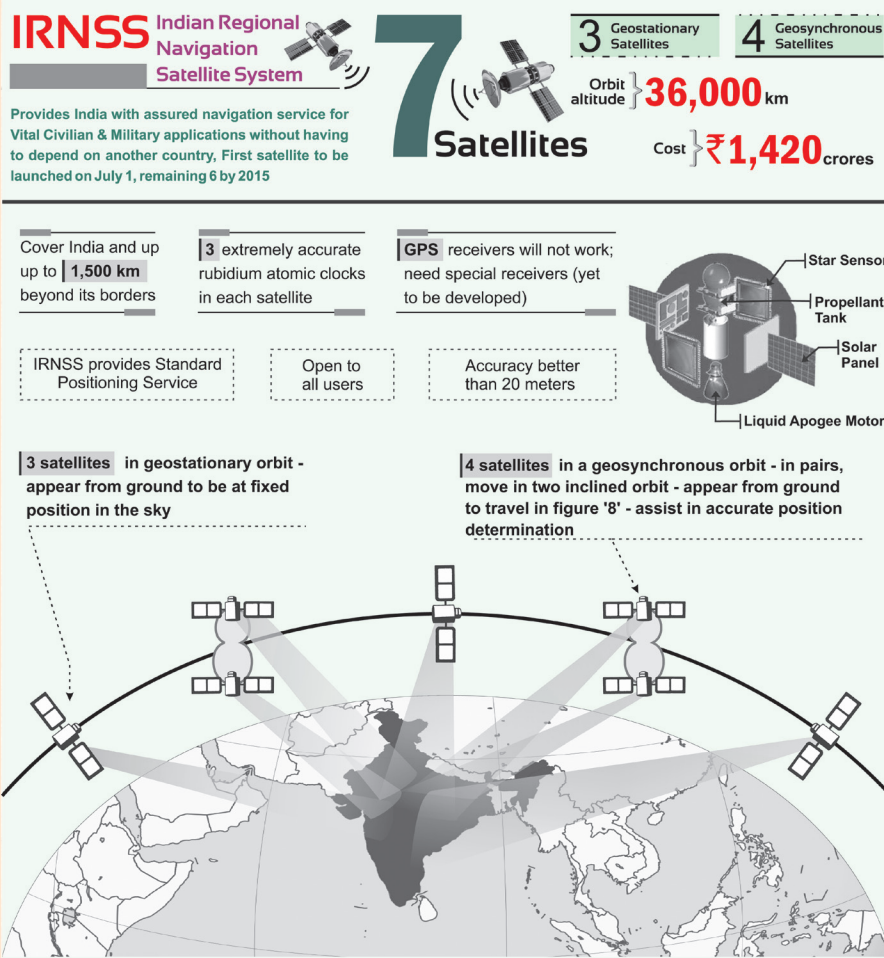
- The Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS) has been accepted as a component of the World-Wide Radio Navigation System by the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) for its operation in the Indian Ocean Region.

Key Points:

- This will enable the vessels to use IRNSS to obtain position information similar to GLONASS and GPS.
- The navigation system up to 1,500 km in the Indian Ocean waters can now replace GPS. This means that the ships in the Indian Ocean can obtain information from IRNSS for their position at sea.

Note

- The GPS is a Global Positioning System owned by the United States.
- GLONASS is the Global Navigation Satellite System of Russia. The GLONASS satellite was completed in 1995.



IRNSS

- The Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS) is an independent regional navigational satellite system that was developed by India.
- Its operational name is NAVIC (Navigation with Indian Constellation).
- It was developed in India by Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and its commercial wing ANTRIX.
- It consists of 8 satellites located at a distance of approximately 36,000 Km. Currently, 7 satellites are active.
 - 3 satellites are in Geostationary Orbit (GEO)
 - 5 satellites are in inclined Geosynchronous Orbit (GSO)

IOCL developed 100 Octane Petrol

- The Indian Oil Corporation recently released the first 100 Octane Gasoline. This is the first time that 100 Octane fuel has been introduced in the region.
- The fuel was developed in the Mathura Refinery of Indian Oil Corporation based in Uttar Pradesh. According to the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, the fuel will be available at selected Indian Oil Company outlets.

Octane ratings:

- Octane ratings are an indicator of the stability of fuel. It's the ability of the fuel to stop knocking. Knock happens as the fuel is ignited prematurely in the engine cylinder. This decreases the performance of the engine and destroys the engine. The higher the Octane number, the higher the resistance of the fuel to knock.
- In other words, higher than the Octane number, the fuel can tolerate more compression before detonating.

Govt. launched SERB-POWER initiative



- The Ministry of Science & Technology of the Union, Ministry of Earth Sciences and Ministry of Health & Family Welfare have initiated a scheme called "SERB-POWER (Promoting Opportunities for Women in Exploratory Research)."
- The project is designed solely for women scientists on the e-platform.
- The Science and Engineering Research Board (SERB) has initiated the scheme.

About SERB-POWER

- The scheme has two components- SERB-POWER Fellowship and SERB- POWER Research Grants.
- SERB-POWER Fellowship: The scheme is targeted at women researchers aged 35-55 years. The scheme accounts for a fellowship of Rs 15.000/-per month, with the exception of regular income, a research grant of Rs 10 lakh annually and an Overhead grant of Rs 90.000 annually. The duration of the fellowship will be three years.
- SERB – POWER Research Grants: This POWER grants aim to inspire women researchers by funding them in two categories. Under Level I, the funding amount is up to 60 lakhs for three years, while under Level II, the funding scale is up to 30 lakhs for three years.

'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.

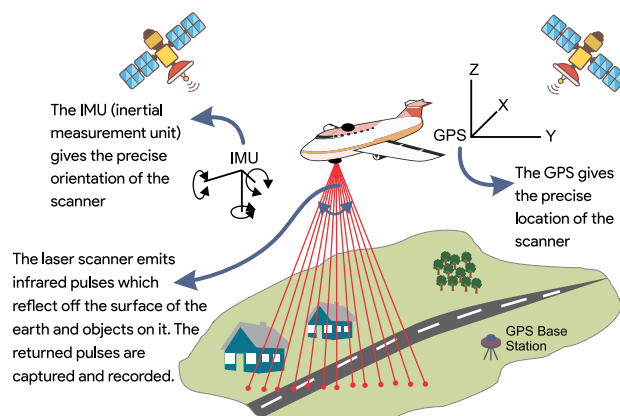
- The Havana Syndrome has been infecting American diplomats and intelligence officials based in China, Cuba and other countries for more than four years.

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.

Indian Railways to use LiDAR Technique

- The Indian Railways shall use the LiDAR technique to perform a ground survey of the Delhi Varanasi High Speed Rail Corridor. LiDAR is the Light Detection and Ranging technique.



About LiDAR

- It is a remote sensing system that uses light in the form of a pulsed laser to determine the distances available in the world. The light bursts in the device produce three-dimensional knowledge on the shape of the earth and its surface characteristics.
- The LiDAR system consists of a scanner, a laser and a GPS receiver. Helicopters and aeroplanes are the most widely used vehicles for the acquisition of LiDAR data.
- There are two types of LiDAR, Topographic and Bathymetric. The topographic LiDAR uses infrared lasers to map the land. On the other hand, the bathymetric LiDAR uses water penetrating green light and measures river bed elevations and sea floors.

NETRA : ISRO setup Space Situational Awareness Control Center

- The Indian Space Research Organization has recently set up a dedicated Space Situational Awareness Control Center (SSA) in the region, named NETRA.



Key points:

- NETRA is the Space Object Network Monitoring and Review (NETRA). The goal of the project is to control, map and secure India's space properties.
- A few nations, such as Russia, have their own Space Situational Awareness Centres. The ISRO SSA Control Center has been set up on the ISTRAC campus in Bengaluru.

About NETRA

- In essence, NETRA can detect both natural and man-made phenomena in satellite orbits. Tracking artefacts of this type is called Space Situational Awareness (SSA). It is the science of monitoring objects to send warnings about collisions. This is really important as space is getting over crowded with private and government satellites. They pose significant threats to the Earth's orbital satellites.
- The key components of NETRA are the optical telescope, the radar and the control room.
- It will act as a hub of all the SSA activities within India.
- It will conduct concurrent processing of data from the upcoming observational facilities for space objects' orbit determination, catalogue generation and correlation.

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:

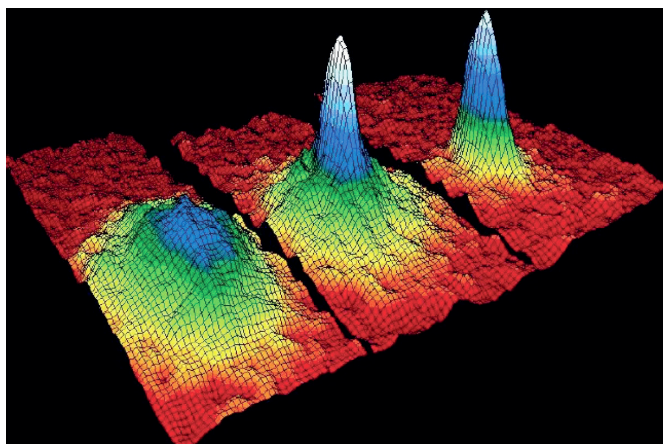
- Data Sonification refers to the use of sound values to represent real data. It is the auditory version of data visualisation.

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.

NASA observed fifth State of Matter

- The NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) scientists unveiled the first results of Bose-Einstein condensate experiments under which the particles can be manipulated free from Earthly constraints.
- Bose-Einstein Condensates were predicted by Indian Mathematician Satyendra Nath Bose and Albert Einstein almost a century ago. The BEC is a state of matter that is typically formed when a gas of bosons is cooled to temperatures close to absolute zero.



Four States of Matter

- There are four states of matter namely solid, liquid, gas and plasma. The fourth state of matter called the plasma was described by the chemist Irving Langmuir. It consists of gas of ions in which orbital electrons are removed and positively charged nuclei roam freely.

Fifth State of Matter

- The BEC is the fifth state of matter and was created by the scientists 25 years ago. When a group of atoms are cooled to absolute zero, the atoms clump together behaving as a one big super atom. This state is called the fifth state of matter and is referred to BEC.

Government of India cleared Genome India Project

- The Department of Biotechnology operating under the Ministry of Science and Technology has given clearance to an ambitious gene-mapping project, estimated to be worth Rs 238 crore. More than 20 leading institutions including IISc Bengaluru are to participate in the project.

Key Highlights:

- The project will at its first phase take samples of 10,000 persons to develop a reference Genome.
- The Centre for Brain Research, which is an autonomous institute in the IISc, Bengaluru, will serve as the nodal point of the project. The Project was inspired by the Human Genome Project.
- Genome is the sequence of DNA. It contains all the hereditary information of an individual. Genome is not the same as gene or DNA. Genes are made of DNA. The Genome is simply the sum of all DNAs of an individual.

Human Genome Project

- The Human Genome Project was launched in 1990 and ended in 2003. It was an international project funded by the US Government.
- The project aimed to map the human genome and assemble them together to obtain a complete sequence of chromosomes. It mapped the nucleotides in the genome.

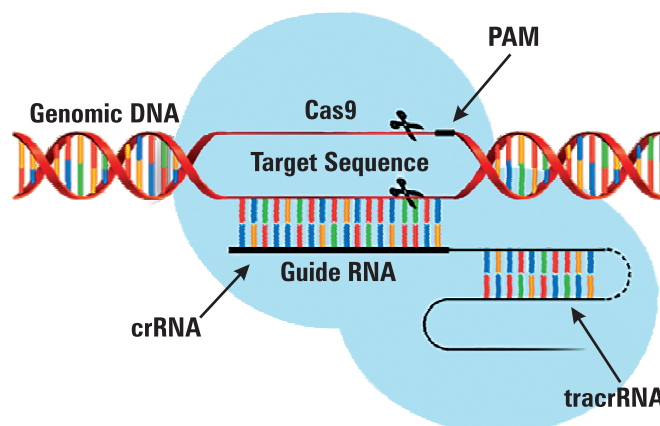
Gaganyaan Mission: ISRO to tap technologies of local start ups

- The Indian Space Research Organization has identified 17 technologies at lower costs from Indian start ups to use in the Gaganyaan mission.
- The technologies identified include food and medicine for astronauts, life support systems, inflatable habitats, thermal protection technologies and anti-radiation technologies. ISRO will also share its intellectual properties with the companies participating in the mission.
- India had sent its Air Force pilots to Russia to get trained for the Gaganyaan mission.

About Gaganyaan Mission

- Gaganyaan is a crewed space programme of ISRO. Under the programme, three air force pilots will be carried to space. The crewed mission is to be launched in December 2021.
- Along with the crew, a female looking robot Vyommित्रा is to accompany the astronauts. The robot will provide warnings if the environmental changes within the cabin get uncomfortable to the astronauts.

CRISPR (CaS9) Tool used to treat blindness



- Scientists have used the gene editing tool Crispr-Cas9 inside a person's body for the first time, a new development in efforts to operate on DNA to cure blindness.
- However, doctors claimed that it will take a month to check if the vision of the patient has restored. This has been achieved at the Oregon University, Portland, USA.

About CRISPR (CaS9)

- CRISPR is a dynamic, versatile tool that allows us to target nearly any genomic location and potentially repair broken genes. It can remove, add or alter specific DNA sequences in the genome of higher organisms.
- CRISPR (Clustered Regularly Interspaced Short Palindromic Repeats) are sections of DNA and are sections of genetic code containing short repetitions of base sequences followed by spacer DNA segments.
- CAS-9 (CRISPR-associated protein 9) is an enzyme. It uses a synthetic guide RNA to introduce a double strand break at a specific location within a strand of DNA. It is a system used by bacterial cells to recognize and destroy viral DNA as a form of adaptive immunity.

Govt. launched MANAS Application

- The Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India launched the "MANAS" App to promote wellbeing across age groups.

Manas App

- MANAS is a scalable, comprehensive, and national digital well-being platform and app that has been developed to promote the mental well-being of Indian citizens.
- The app integrates the health and wellness efforts of various government ministries of India as well as scientifically validated indigenous tools with gamified interfaces which are developed by various research institutions and national bodies.
- The MANAS app was jointly executed by NIMHANS Bengaluru, C-DAC, AFMC. However, it was mainly developed by C-DAC (Centre for Development of Advanced Computing).
- The app is supported with tele consultation especially for mental health related problems.



- The app was launched during the 34th Foundation celebrations of C-DAC.

Note

A report published in The Lancet Psychiatry in February 2020 indicates that in 2017, there were 197.3 million people with mental disorders in India. The top mental illnesses were depressive disorder (45.7 million) and anxiety disorder (44.9 million).

AmbiTAG: India's first indigenous Temperature Data Logger

- Indian Institute of Technology, Ropar (IIT Ropar) in Punjab has developed a first-of-its-kind IoT device AmbiTag that records real-time ambient temperature during the transportation of perishable products, vaccines and even body organs and blood.



AmbiTAG

- AmbiTAG is shaped like a USB device. It continuously records the temperature of its immediate surroundings.
- It can detect temperatures "from -40 to +80 degrees" in any time zone for 90 days on a single charge unlike other devices available in the market that record data only for a duration of 30- 60 days. Recorded data can be retrieved by connecting USB with any computer.
- That recorded temperature further helps to know whether that particular item transported from anywhere in the world is still usable or perished because of temperature variation.
- Ambitag was developed under Technology Innovation Hub – AWaDH which stands for "Agriculture and Water Technology Development Hub" and it's Startup ScratchNest.

Note

AWaDH is a research center at IIT Ropar. It was established with support of the Department of Science & Technology (DST) and Science & Engineering Research Board (SERB). It carries out extensive research in agriculture and water.

Dipcovan: DRDO developed Covid-19

- The Defense Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has developed a Covid-19 antibody detection kit named Dipcovan.

Key Points:

- Dipcovan or DIPAS-VDx COVID 19 IgG Antibody Microwell ELISA is an antibody detection-based kit that can be used for sero-surveillance for detecting the presence of Covid antibodies amongst the population.
- The kit can detect both spikes and nucleocapsid (S&N) proteins of the SARS-CoV-2 virus with a high sensitivity of 97% and specificity of 99%.
- The kit offers a significantly faster turn-around time. It requires just 75 minutes to conduct the test without any cross-reactivity with other diseases. It also has a shelf life of 18 months.

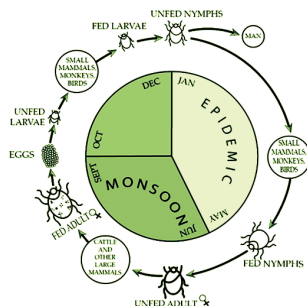


About Antibody

- Antibody, also called immunoglobulin, is a protective protein produced by the immune system in response to the presence of a foreign substance, called an antigen.
- Antibodies recognize and attack onto antigens in order to remove them from the body.

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.

Version 3.0 of MCA21 launched

- Recently, the government launched the first phase of the latest update to its digital corporate compliance portal, Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) 21 Version 3.0.
- It will help in improving Ease of Doing Business in India. India ranked 63rd out of 190 countries in Ease Doing Business 2020: World Bank Report.

About MCA21 Version 3.0

- The MCA21 system is the first Mission Mode e-Governance project of the Government of India.
- The Version will have additional modules for e-Adjudication, e-Consultation and Compliance Management.
- The MCA21 V3 Project is a technology-driven forward looking project. It is envisioned to strengthen enforcement, promote Ease of Doing Business, enhance user experience, facilitate seamless integration and data exchange among Regulators.
- The MCA21 V3 is envisioned to transform the corporate regulatory environment in India.

What is MCA21?

- It is an online portal of the corporate affairs ministry. Launched in 2006, the portal has made all the information related to the company, accessible to stakeholders and the general public.

Kaleidoscope Effect seen in Bengaluru

- Recently, people of Bangalore observed a bright rainbow ring around the sun for a few seconds. This is a rare optical and atmospheric phenomenon known as Kaleidoscopic Effect which is also known as "22-degree circular halo".

22-degree circular Halo

- A 22-degree circular halo is observed around the sun and occasionally around the Moon. It is also called a moon ring or winter halo.
- This phenomenon occurs when rays from the sun or moon get refracted through hexagonal ice crystals present in cirrus clouds. Cirrus clouds are thin, detached, hair-like clouds formed in the atmosphere, at a height of 20,000 feet.
- The halo or ring forming around the sun or moon has an apparent radius of 22 degrees. It is the brightest part, present at the inner edge of a circular disk, where there is no light inside the disk because no light is refracted through smaller angles.



NASA to design new Earth System Observatory

- NASA will design new, Earth-focused missions to support our growing understanding of climate change and provide important information to those on Earth impacted by its effects.
- With the Earth System Observatory, each satellite will be uniquely designed to complement the others, working in tandem to create a 3D, holistic view of Earth, from bedrock to atmosphere, according to a press release published by National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).



Earth System Observatory:

- It is a program by the US Space Agency, NASA consisting of a series of artificial satellite missions and scientific instruments in Earth orbit. It is designed for long-term global observations of the biosphere, land surface, atmosphere, and oceans. Satellite component of this program was launched in 1997.



DRDO developed Advanced Chaff Technology

- The Defence Research and Development Organisation recently developed an Advanced Chaff Technology to safeguard naval ships against missile attacks.
- The Chaff technology is used in Naval ships worldwide to self-defend against enemy radar and radio frequency missile seekers.

About Chaff

- Chaff is a passive expendable electronic countermeasure technology used worldwide to protect naval ships from enemy's radar and Radio Frequency (RF) missile seekers.
- The importance of this development lies in the fact that very less quantity of chaff material deployed in the air acts as a decoy to deflect enemy's missiles for safety of the ships.
- Defence Laboratory Jodhpur, a DRDO laboratory, has indigenously developed three variants of this critical technology:
 - Short Range Chaff Rocket
 - Medium Range Chaff Rocket
 - Long Range Chaff Rocket

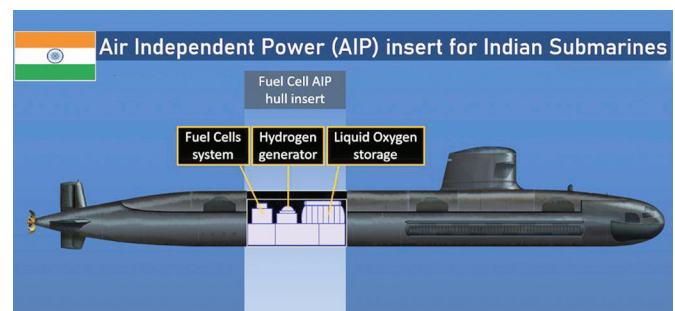


DRDO test new Air Independent Propulsion System

- 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.



CAATSA : US warned India for procuring defence equipments from Russia



- The United States recently imposed sanctions on Turkey according to section 231 of the Anti-Missile American Adversaries Act, CAATSA. Sanctions were imposed for the acquisition of Russian anti-Missile S400 devices.
- The United States has reiterated its warning to India and other countries over the procurement of equipment from Russia.

Key Features of CAATSA:

- Section 231 of the CAATSA states that at least 12 sanctions, as defined in section 235, shall be enforced on an individual or country who, knowingly, participates in or operates for or on behalf of the Russian security or intelligence business.
- The following of the five sanctions is imposed under section 235 of the Act
- Prohibition on the issuance of a US export licence for moved products or technologies.
- Prohibition on deposits or loans by the United States Financial Institutions worth more than USD 10 million for a 12-month period.
- Ban on assistance from the United States export-import Bank.
- Requirement for the United States to oppose loans from International Financial Institutions.
- VISA restrictions.

Govt. approved Amendment to FDI Policy in Defence Sector

- The Union Government has approved Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) of 74 % in Defence Sector.
- This FDI has been allowed under the automatic route in the defence sector.

Key Points:

- This announcement was made by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)
- Before it, 49% were allowed under the automatic route. Above 49% FDI was allowed through the government's approval.
- Now, 49% share under the automatic route has been -increased to 74%.

Note

- India is the third largest country in the world in terms of allocating the defence budget.
- India is having the second largest armed force in the world.
- Ordnance Factory Board OFB is the largest government-operated production organisation in the world.

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.

SRIJAN: Online Portal launched to promote Defence Production

- The Ministry of Defence launched “SRIJAN”, an online portal to promote indigenization of Defence production.

Key Points:

- The portal is to display those items that are currently being imported by Indian Defence Industry.
- This will help domestic industries of the country to learn and focus more on these specific items.
- The GoI is also providing high incentives and flagship programmes to boost the design, development and manufacturing of these items.

SRIJAN

- The Defence Public Sector Units and the Ordnance Factory Board shall display items that are being imported on the portal.
- The Defence Ministry also signed two Memorandum of Understandings with IITs and Defence Public Sector Undertakings. The plan is to equip India using its own technologies rather than importing or relying from other countries. This is to be achieved through joint ventures.

India joined Hypersonic Missile Club

- India has become the fourth country after the United States, Russia and China to develop and successfully test Hypersonic Test Demonstrator Vehicle (HSTDV).
- It has been developed by Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).

How does it work?

- The HSTDV cruise vehicle is mounted on a solid rocket motor, which will take it to a required altitude, and once it attains certain Mach numbers for speed, the cruise vehicle will be ejected out of the launch vehicle.
- Subsequently, the scramjet engine will be ignited automatically.








Scramjet Engine

- A scramjet (supersonic-combustion ramjet) is a ramjet engine in which the airflow through the engine remains supersonic, or greater than the speed of sound.
- Scramjet powered vehicles are envisioned to operate at speeds up to at least Mach 15.






About HSTDV



- The HSTDV is an unmanned scramjet demonstration aircraft for hypersonic speed flight.
- The vehicle having weight up to 1-metric-ton and length 5.6-meter is a landmark progress in aero vehicle technology.
- This vehicle features a flattened octagonal cross section with mid-body stub-wings and raked tail fins and a 3.7-meter rectangular section air intake.
- HSTDV is designed to voyage at Mach 6 speed with a scramjet engine up to an altitude of 32.5 km in 20 seconds.
- These can be used for launching satellites at low cost and also for long-range cruise missiles in the future.

*Recently***DEFENCE EXERCISES / OPERATIONS**

Defence Exercises / Operations	Descriptions
JIMEX 2020 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fourth edition of India-Japan Maritime bilateral exercise (JIMEX) held in the North Arabian Sea. • JIMEX 2020 showcased a high degree of interoperability and joint operational skills. • The Navies conducted several advanced exercises, across the spectrum of maritime operations. • The Indian navy was represented by indigenously built stealth destroyer Chennai, Teg Class stealth frigate Tarkash and Fleet Tanker. • JIMEX exercise commenced in 2012. It is conducted biennially between the Indian Navy and Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF).
India-Australia Naval Exercise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indian and Australia conducted two-days mega naval exercise in the Indian Ocean. This included various anti-aircraft drills, complex naval maneuvers, and helicopter operations. • The exercise involved advanced surface and anti-air exercises. It also includes seamanship exercises, weapon firings, cross-deck flying operations, and naval manoeuvres. • HMAS Hobart was deployed in the exercise by the Royal Australian Navy. It is a lead-ship of the Hobart-class air warfare destroyers.
PASSEX Exercise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The US Navy carrier USS Nimitz conducted maritime drills with Indian warships in the Middle East. • The PASSEX exercise comes during a period when India and China are locked in a tense border. • The Indian Navy has conducted similar PASSEX with Japan Maritime Self Defence Force and French Navy. PASSEX is a passage exercise. A passage exercise is normally conducted when there is an opportunity in contrast to pre-planned maritime drills. • The PASSEX was conducted even while Malabar exercise is fast approaching.
Operation Samudra Setu 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In an effort to repatriate Indian Citizens from overseas, the Operation Samudra Setu was launched by the Indian Navy. • The Operation Samudra Setu lasted over 55 days in which 3,992 Indian Citizens were brought back to their homeland by the sea route by the Indian Navy. • Naval Ships participated in Samudra Setu: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Amphibious transport dock -INS Jalashwa, and 3 Landing Ship Tanks- INS Airavat, INS Shardul, and INS Magar. ♦ Under the Operation, these 4 Indian Navy Ships have streamed more than 23,000 kilometers to bring back the Indian Citizens during the COVID-19 pandemic from Maldives, Sri Lanka, and Iran.
INDRA 2020 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • India and Russia conducted bilateral naval exercise INDRA 2020 in Andaman Sea, close to the strategic Strait of Malacca. • The exercise comes just after India withdrew from the Kavkaz-2020 multinational exercise that is to be held in Russia. India withdrew mainly due to the presence of China and Pakistan in the exercise. • As China is increasing its presence in the Andaman Sea, it is important for the Indian Navy to involve in such frequent naval drills with its close defence partners.




Defence Exercises / Operations	Descriptions
Operation Samudra Setu II 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indian Navy has launched Operation Samudra Setu-II to augment the ongoing national mission for meeting the Oxygen requirements. Seven Indian Naval ships viz. Kolkata, Kochi, Talwar, Tabar, Trikanth, Jalashwa and Airavat have been deployed for shipment of liquid medical oxygen-filled cryogenic containers and associated medical equipment from various countries. Two ships, the INS Kolkata and INS Talwar, have entered the Port of Manama, Bahrain, to carry back 40 tonnes of liquid oxygen to Mumbai.
Shantir Ogroshena, 2021 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The international military exercise "Shantir Ogroshena, 2021" held in Bangabandhu, Bangladesh. The exercise held to celebrate Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's birth centenary. The exercise also included the Sri Lankan Army, the Royal Bhutan Army, and the Bangladesh Army.
Khanjar 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The "Khanjar" joint Special Forces Military Exercise was held by India and Kyrgyzstan. The exercise was held in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan's capital. It will concentrate on counter-terrorism training as well as high-altitude and mountain training. Since 2011, India and Kyrgyzstan have held an annual Khanjar exercise. India and Kyrgyzstan concluded four deals in 2015. The negotiations aimed to increase defense cooperation. Kyrgyzstan is a Central Asian nation. India has been looking for various ways to expand its trade in the area.
Exercise Sea Vigil 2021 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The second edition of coastal Defence Exercise Sea Vigil-21 was recently conducted. The Sea Vigil exercise was undertaken along the 7,516 kilo metres coastline. It involved all the thirteen coastal states, Union Territories and the Exclusive Economic Zone. Also, the exercise involved the fishing and coastal communities. The exercise was conducted by the Indian Navy. The Sea Vigil is a build-up towards the major theatre level exercise TROPEX that the Indian Navy conducts every two years.
Exercise TROPEX-21 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The biennial Theatre Level Operational Readiness Exercise (TROPEX 21) which was the largest wargame of the Indian Navy held in January 2021. The exercise observed the involvement of all operating units of the Indian Navy, such as submarines, ships and aircraft. The Indian Army, Indian Air Force and Coast Guard units also engage in the biennial exercise.
Ex-Desert Knight 21 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> India and France held Ex-Desert Knight 21 exercise, a bilateral air exercise to provide operational exposure. Under the Indo-French Defence Cooperation, the French Air and Space force and the Indian Air Force have so far held six editions of air exercise called "Garuda". The main objective of the exercise is to provide operational exposure and share best practices. From the Indian Air Force, Su-30 MKI, Mirage 2000 and IL-78 flight refuelling aircraft participated in the exercise.
Exercise Kavach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Indian Army held a large-scale joint Kavach military drill in the Andaman Sea and the Bay of Bengal. The Kavach Joint Military Drill included the Indian Navy, the Indian Army, the Indian Air Force and the Indian Coast Guard. At the drill, the Joint Forces enforced high density offensive and defensive initiatives in the Andaman Sea and the Bay of Bengal.







Defence Exercises / Operations	Descriptions
Yudh-Abhyas Exercise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 16th edition of Indo-US joint military exercise 'Yudh Abhyas' held in Rajasthan recently. The exercise took place along the border between India and Pakistan. It was held with the goal of improving coordination and interoperability between the Indian and US armies. The drill between India and USA was held in the backdrop of the five days drill between Air Forces of India and France in Rajasthan in January 2021.
AMPHEX 21 Exercise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Indian Armed Forces performed a large-scale tri-service AMPHEX – 21 joint amphibious exercise in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. In this drill, Naval ships, Army amphibious forces and numerous types of aircraft from the Air Force participated. The exercise was carried out with the intention of validating the ability of India to defend the territorial integrity of the island territories.
DUSTLIK-II Exercise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The India-Uzbekistan joint military exercise "DUSTLIK II" recently held at Ranikhet in Uttarakhand. It is the second edition of the annual bilateral joint exercise of both the armies. During the exercise, both the armies shared their expertise and skills with respect to the counter-terrorism operations under the mandate of United Nations in Mountainous or Urban or Rural scenarios.
Iran-Russia Maritime Security 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> India joined the 2021 Iran-Russia Maritime Protection Belt, a two-day naval exercise. The exercise took place in the northern portion of the Indian Ocean. Forces and warships from the navy branches of both the Iranian Army and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps participated in the exercise. Several warships from the Russian Navy also participated in the drilling.
SLINEX Military Exercise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 8th edition of annual India and Sri Lanka bilateral naval maritime exercise, SLINEX-20 will be held at Trincomalee, Sri Lanka. The drill includes a series of anti-air weapons firing, cross deck flying operations to fine tune high degree of interoperability. Indian Navy is to deploy INS Kiltan and INS Kamorta, Chetak helicopters and Dornier maritime patrol aircrafts in the exercise. Trincomalee is a port city on the northeast coast of Sri Lanka. The port of Trincomalee was offered to India by Sri Lanka in 2017. Sri Lanka wants to maintain neutral stand between India and China.
Malabar Exercise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The second phase of Malabar Exercise was held in the Northern Arabian Sea. The first phase of Malabar exercise was held in Bay of Bengal. The exercise is important since the four countries together form the QUAD group. At the latest meeting of the QUAD Group in October 2020, the countries agreed on a free and open Indo-Pacific zone. The Indian, Japanese, Australian and US Navy will engage in the second phase of the Malabar Exercise.






Defence Exercises / Operations	Descriptions
SIMBEX 2020 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recently, the Indian and Singapore Navy held maritime exercise SIMBEX-20 in the Andaman Sea. The exercise has been conducted between the countries since 1994. The Indian Navy ships to participate in the exercise are destroyer Rana along with Chetak helicopter, corvettes Kamorta and Karmuk. Also, submarine Sindhuraj and P81 reconnaissance aircrafts are to participate in the exercise.
SITMEX 2020 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The trilateral Naval exercise, SITMEX-20 between India, Singapore and Thailand was held in the Andaman sea. The SITMEX-20 Naval exercise was scheduled in a "non-contact at sea only format" due to covid-19 restrictions. The main objective of the exercise is to increase the interoperability between the three navies. The exercise will also enhance multifaceted Maritime operations.

Recently

DEFENCE EQUIPMENTS

Defence Equipments	Descriptions
INS Sarvekshak 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> INS Sarvekshak, a hydrographic survey ship, is on a deployment to Mauritius for undertaking joint hydrographic surveys along with their Mauritian counterparts. It will also provide training to the Mauritian personnel on advanced hydrographic equipment and practices during the deployment. During the deployment, training of Mauritian personnel on advanced hydrographic equipment and practices will also be undertaken.
Python 5 Air to Air Missile 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recently, India's Indigenous Light Combat Aircraft Tejas has added capability of firing Israeli-origin Python-5 air-to-air missile (AAM) after concluding successful tests. Trials were also aimed to validate the enhanced capability of the already integrated Derby Beyond Visual Range (BVR) AAM on Tejas. It is a Python missile of the fifth century. Rafael Advanced Defence Systems, an Israeli arms maker, developed the air-to-air missile.
STARStreak Air Defence System 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thales, a French Multinational Company has signed an agreement with the Bharat Dynamics Limited, a Government of India enterprise to jointly work on STARStreak Air Defence System. The STARStreak is a short-range surface-to-air missile. It was formerly named the Shorts Missile System. It flies at Mach 3 speed, that is, the speed of the rocket is three times the speed of the sound. STARStreak has been in the possession of the British Army since 1997. The minimum range of the system is 0.3 km and the maximum range is 7 km. The range of the STARStreak System II variant is more than 7 km.

Defence Equipments	Descriptions
Akash-NG Missile 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has successfully test-fired the surface-to-air Akash-NG (New Generation) Missile off the Odisha coast. Akash-NG is a medium-range mobile surface-to-air missile defense system. It has been developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO). The missile has the capability of targeting the aircraft up to 50-60 km away at altitudes of 18,000 m. The missile can neutralize the aerial targets such as the fighter jets, cruise missiles and air-to-surface missiles.
VL-SRSAM 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO) has successfully deployed the two natively planned and produced Vertical Launch-Short Range Surface to Air Missile (VL-SRSAM). The missiles were launched using static vertical launchers. They were launched from the Integrated Test Range, Chandipur off the coast of Odisha. Vertical Launch-Short Range Surface to Air Missile (VL-SRSAM) was originally developed and engineered by DRDO.
INS Karanj 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Indian Navy recently inducted INS Karanj, the third Scorpene-class conventional diesel-electric submarine into the service. The submarine was built by Mazagon Dock Limited, under technology transfer from the Naval Group of France. INS Karanj is the part of Six Scorpene submarines which are being built under Project-75. The Project 75I-class submarine is a follow-on of the Project 75 Kalvari-class submarine for the Indian Navy.
INS Sindhuvir 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> India has decided to transfer INS Sindhuvir to the Myanmar Navy. After this transfer, the Myanmar Navy would be getting its first ever submarine. INS Sindhuvir is equipped with a wide range of weapons and sensors. These advanced weapons enable it to participate in various exercises. The decision was taken to take forward India's commitment to building capacities and self-reliance in the neighbouring countries. The decision also complies with India's vision of Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR) policy.
SANT missile 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indian successfully test-fired the Stand-off-Anti-tank (SANT) missile off the Odisha coast. The missile has been developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) for the Indian Air Force (IAF). The SANT missile is a version of the Nag missile. The other versions of Nag missiles are Helina (or Dhruvastra) and MP-ATGM. SANT is an improved version of HELINA.
F-18 Fighter Jets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The United States of America has provided its F-18 naval fighter jets to Indian Navy aircraft carriers to strengthen its relations with India. This announcement came during the 2 + 2 ministerial negotiations. The F-18 fighter jet is a twin-engine, supersonic, all-weather, carrier-capable, multi-role war jet. It was planned as both a fighter and an attack aircraft. The jet is also used by air forces from a variety of other countries.

Defence Equipments	Descriptions
INS Kora 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indian Navy test fired the Anti-Ship Missile (AShM) from INS Kora in Bay of Bengal. The missile was test-fired in the Bay of Bengal and it hit the target ship at maximum range with the precise accuracy. It was commissioned to Indian Navy in 1998. The corvette was designed by the Indian Navy under Project 25A. It is equipped with Kh-35 anti-ship missiles. There are three warships of Kora-class- INS Kulish, INS Kirch and INS Karmuk. It is a guided missile and has been designed for use against ships and large boats. Most of the anti-ship missiles are of the sea skimming variety. While some of them use a combination of inertial guidance and active radar homing.
INS Airavat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Indian Naval Ship (INS) Airavat entered Port Sudan, during Phase II of the Sagar Mission, the ship arrived at the harbour. INS Airavat has transported 100 tonnes of food assistance to Sudan. This was part of the aid programme for India under Mission Sagar. Under the Sagar Project, India has been providing assistance to its friendly foreign countries to help them resolve the COVID-19 pandemic and other natural disasters.
Pinaka Rocket 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Defence Research Development Organization test fired the advanced version of Pinaka rocket successfully from Chandipur, Odisha. In order to reach a longer range compared to the earlier version, the upgraded version of Pinaka was launched. The new version will replace the existing version of the Pinaka Mk-1 system that has been deployed along the India-Pakistan and India-China border control and control lines.
Vagir 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Indian Navy commissioned the fifth Scorpene submarine "Vagir" at Mazagon Dock, south of Mumbai. The submarine is capable of carrying out missions such as anti-submarine operations, anti-surface warfare, mining, intelligence gathering and ground surveillance. Vagir is one of the six Kalvari Class submarines that are being constructed in India. These submarines have been built by the French Navy and the energy company DCNS. The six submarines were constructed under Project 75 of the Indian Navy.
INS Kavaratti 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Indian Naval Ship Kavaratti was transferred to the Indian Navy in Visakhapatnam. The INS Kavaratti is one of the four indigenous anti-submarine Warfare corvettes designed under the Kamorta class Corvettes or Project 28. The ship was designed by the Directorate of Naval Design(DND) and has been built by Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers, Kolkata. INS Kavaratti has state-of-the-art weapons. It also comprises a sensor suite which is capable of "detecting and prosecuting" submarines.

Defence Equipments	Descriptions
Varunastra 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The DRDO recently flagged off the first Varunastra, the heavyweight torpedo. The torpedo was designed and developed by the BDL, Visakhapatnam Unit of Indian Navy. Varunastra is an electrically powered, heavyweight, anti-submarine torpedo ship that is capable of attacking silent submarines. It can be found in both shallow and deep-water settings. Varunastra is India's first heavy torpedo. It was first introduced into the Indian Navy in 2016. The torpedo is 1500 kilogrammes in weight.
Brahmos missiles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> India successfully launched the Brahmos supersonic missile variant of the ground attack drill. The research was shot in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. The range of missiles has been extended from 290 km to 400 km. Its speed has been boosted to 2.8 Mach, which is almost three times the speed of sound. The missile can be launched from ships, submarines, aircraft and from land platforms. Brahmos was a joint venture of DRDO and Russia. It was developed based on the Russian P-800 Oniks Cruise missile. The name of Brahmos missile was coined from the two rivers Brahmaputra of India and Moscow of Russia.
Saksham 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Goa Shipyard Limited has recently launched the fifth and final Offshore Patrol Vessel ICGS (Indian Coast Guard Ship) Saksham. It is expected to be commissioned by October 2021. The Vikram Class Offshore Patrol Vessels are being constructed by L&T at Kattupalli Shipyard. They're long-range surface vehicles. They are to be deployed for maritime and offshore patrols. Seven offshore patrol vessels are under construction. It contains ICGS Vikram, ICGS Veera, ICGS Varaha, ICGS Vighraha, ICGS Vajra, ICGS Veera and ICGS Vijaya.
ICGS Sachet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Indian Coast Guard commissioned the first Coast Guard Offshore Patrol Vessel, ICGS Sachet in Goa. ICGS Sachet is one of the five ships under CGOPV (Coast Guard Offshore Patrol Vehicle) project. The project was a follow-on project of the earlier six ship CGOPV project that was completed in 2017.
Torpedo Decoy System 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Indian Navy has inducted an Indigenously developed Maareech capable Advanced Torpedo Decoy System. The induction has provided a huge boost to the Indian Navy's Anti-Submarine Warfare Capabilities. A Torpedo is a self-propelled underwater missile that can be launched from a surface vessel, submarine, and airplane. During a Torpedo attack, the Torpedo Defence System helps in detecting a torpedo and further applying countermeasures that are required for the protection of the naval platform.
Smart Anti-Airfield Weapon 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recently, the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited successfully tested the Hawk aircraft SAAW (Smart Anti Airfield Weapon). SAAW was created by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO). SAAW is a long-range, precision-guided anti-aircraft weapon. The weapon is capable of capturing ground targets with accuracy up to a maximum of 100 kilometres. SAAW is essentially a bomb. It is designed to kill objectives such as bunkers, runways, concrete walls and aircraft braces.

Awards and Honours

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.



thousand beds. It had previously placed second in 2018-19 and seventh in 2017-18.

- AIIMS Bhubaneswar has received the best central government hospital under Category B of the Kayakalp Awards for cleanliness for the third consecutive time.

Ramanujan Prize

- **Dr Carolina Arajua** was awarded the Ramanujan Prize for Mathematicians for the year 2020. She is a mathematician from Rio de Janeiro's Institute of Pure and Applied Mathematics.
- She is the first non-Indian women mathematician to receive the prize. She has specialised in birational geometry, algebraic geometry, Fano varieties and foliations. Also, she is the Vice President at the International Mathematical Union.
- The award is sponsored by the Department of Science and Technology in cooperation with the International Centre for Theoretical Physics and the International Mathematical Union. The assets are made available through the Albel Funds.
- Every year, the prize is given to a young mathematician under the age of 45 who has conducted excellent research in a developing world. The award is given in honor of Srinivasa Ramanujan.
- It's also known as the ICTP Ramanujan Award. The International Centre of Theoretical Physics in Italy bestows this honor.
- Srinivasa Ramanujan was an Indian mathematician who lived between 1887 and 1920. He has made significant contributions to number theory, mathematical analysis, infinite series and continued fractions.



Kayakalp Awards

- The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare annually bestows the Kayakalp Awards on health facilities that meet the highest sanitation and hygiene requirements. The Kayakalp awards for 2019-20 were recently presented.



Key Highlights:

- The second prize in the Kayakalp Awards scheme went to the Jawaharlal Nehru Institute of Postgraduate Medical Education and Science (JIPMER).
- JIPMER was awarded the prize in the Group A Core facilities division, which comprises hospitals with more than a

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.

Golden Globes Awards 2021

- The 78th Golden Globe Awards ceremony recently took place in a virtual as well as in offline format. The award ceremony was filmed from Los Angeles and New York City.
- The award ceremony was co-hosted by Amy Poehler and Tina Fey consequently for the fourth time.



Winners:

- This year Netflix had received the most nominations with the total count at 42. Out of these, 22 nominations were in film categories including the Best Picture (Drama) nominations.

- The Netflix film called "Mank" and "The Trial of the Chicago 7" were nominated for the Best Picture (Drama) Nominations.
- The award for the best Motion Picture-Drama award went to Nomadland while the Best Director award went to the director of Nomadland, Chloe Zhao.
- The award for the best action in Motion picture was won by the Late American actor Chadwick Boseman for his portrayal of Levee Green in the motion picture called 'Ma Rainey's Black Bottom'.

Sahitya Akademi Award 2020

- The National Academy of Letters have announced the names for the "Sahitya Akademi Award 2020."
- The Sahitya Akademi Award is a literary honour in India. It is conferred by Sahitya Akademi which is India's National Academy of Letters.



Key Highlights:

- The award was bestowed upon the politician-writer M Veerappa Moily, poet Arundhati Subramaniam along with other 20 writers. Subramaniam has won the award for her poetry collection called "When God is a Traveller" in English.
- Veerappa Moily has been named for his epic poetry called "Sri Bahubali Ahimsa Digvijayam" in Kannada language. The list comprises seven books of poetry, five short stories, four novels, two plays, and one memoir and one epic poetry in 20 Indian languages.
- The awards for Nepali, Malayalam, Odia and Rajasthani Languages will be announced later.

Other Awardees:

- Poetry Category:** Harish Meenakshi (Gujarati), RS Bhaskar (Konkani), Anamika (Hindi), Irungbam Deven (Manipuri), Nikhileshwar (Telugu) and Rupchand Hansda (Santali).
- Novel Category:** Imaiya (Tamil), Nanda Khare (Marathi), Mahesh Chandra Sharma Gautam (Sanskrit), and Sri Hussain-ul-Haque.
- Short Story:** Apurba Kumar Saikia (Assamese), Hiday Koul Bharti (Kashmiri), Dharanidhar Owari (Bodo), Gurdev Singh Rupana (Punjab) and Kamal Kant Jha (Maithili).

Booker Prize 2020

- **Douglas Stuart** won the Booker Prize for the year 2020 for his debut novel "Shuggie Bain." The Booker Prize shortlist consisted of five more titles, such as Burnt Sugar.
- He was the only British author in the U.S.-dominated shortlist. Douglas, he was born in Glasgow.



About Booker Prize

- The Booker Award is an international literary prize for the best novel. The competition is awarded to novels written in English and published in Ireland or the United Kingdom.
- It was previously known as the Booker-McConnell Prize (1969-2001) and the Man Booker Prize (2002-2019). In 1997, Arundati Roy of India won the Booker Award for her novel The God of Small Things.
- The Booker Prize is worth 50,000 pounds of cash.

Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Prize

- **Dr. Abhijit Mukherjee**, an Associate Professor from IIT Kharagpur has been selected for 'Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar' Prize.
- The Prize is given each year for outstanding contributions to science and technology.
- The award is named after Dr. Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar, the founder Director of the Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR).
- **Eligibility:** Any citizen of India engaged in research in any field of science and technology up to the age of 45 years is eligible for the prize.
- Besides, Overseas citizen of India (OCI) and Persons of Indian Origin (PIO) working in India are also eligible. The Prize is awarded on the basis of contributions made through work done primarily in India during the five years preceding the year of the Prize.



World Food Prize

- The Indian American soil scientist **Dr Rattan Lal** has won the World Food Prize for mainstreaming and developing soil centric approach in order to increase food production.
- Dr Lal's strategy of restoring soil health has been adopted by three United Nations Climate Change Conferences.
- Dr Lal has transformed and explored techniques such as no-tillage, over cropping, mulching and agroforestry. These techniques improved long term sustainability of agro ecosystems and minimized risks of floods, drought and effects of climate change. Through his research works, Dr Lal had proved that atmospheric carbon can be sequestered in soils.
- Dr Lal will receive 250,000 USD of prize money. He is being honoured for his contributions throughout his career that spans for more than 5 decades. Around 4 continents are promoting his innovative soil saving techniques.
- The World Food Prize is equivalent to the Nobel Prize in the field of Agriculture.



**THE WORLD
FOOD PRIZE**

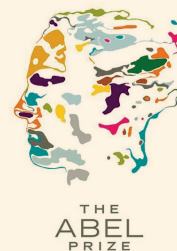
Ramon Magsaysay Award

- A Manila, Philippines based foundation that gives out Ramon Magsaysay Award announced that the awards are being cancelled due to COVID-19.
- The Ramon Magsaysay Award has been cancelled thrice in 6 decades. The awards were cancelled for the first time in 1970 due to financial crisis. It was cancelled again in 1990 due to a disastrous earthquake.
- The award is considered as the Nobel Prize of Asia. It was established in 1957. The Award recognizes and honours individuals that have achieved distinction in their field and help others generously.
- The Award has been given in five categories namely journalism, government service, public service, literature and creative communication.



Abel Prize, 2020

- The Norwegian Academy of Science is to award the Abel Prize for the year 2020 to the two great mathematicians **Hillel Frustenberg** and **Gregory Margulis**. They are being honoured for their work towards probability and dynamics in number theory, combinatorics and Group Theory.
- Hillel Frustenberg is an American-Israeli mathematician at Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He was born in Germany. His family escaped to the US before the outbreak of the Second World War.
- Gregory Margulis is a Russian-American mathematician. He is known for his works on lattices. He has received the Fields medal, wolf prize and the Abel prize becoming the fifth person to receive all the three prizes.
- The Abel Prize is a Norwegian prize that is being presented annually by the King of Norway. Every Abel Prize recipient is awarded with 7.5 million Norwegian Kroner.



Nobel Prize 2020

Winners of Nobel Prize 2020		
Category	Recipients	Given For (in the words of Nobel Foundation)
Physiology or Medicine	Harvey J Alter, Charles M Rice and Michael Houghton	Discovery of Hepatitis C Virus
Physics	Andrea M Ghez, Roger Penrose and Reinhard Genzel	Discovery and research regarding Black Hole formation and a supermassive black hole at the centre of Milky Way .
Chemistry	Emmanuelle Charpentier and Jennifer A Doudna	Development of the Gene Editing Technique called "CRISPR-Cas9 Snipping Scissors"
Economics	Paul R Milgrom and Robert B Wilson	Awarded for improvements to Auction Theory and also for inventing new auction formats
Peace	World Food Programme	WFP's role towards contributing better conditions for peace in conflict affected areas
Literature	Louise Gluck	For her unmistakable poetic voice

Persons in News

Justice N.V. Ramana

- Justice N V Ramana, recently appointed as the Chief Justice of India. He was recommended as the next top judge by the present Chief Justice of India (S A Bobde). Justice Ramana becomes the 48th Chief Justice of India.
- Justice Ramana was born in 1957 in Ponnavaaram village of Andhra Pradesh. He was enrolled as an advocate in 1983. He became the Chief Justice of Delhi High Court in 2013. In 2014, he was appointed as the judge of the Supreme Court.



- As far as the CJI is concerned, the outgoing CJI recommends his successor. The Union Law Minister forwards the recommendation to the Prime Minister who, in turn, advises the President.
- SC in the Second Judges Case (1993), ruled that the senior most judge of the Supreme Court should alone be appointed to the office of the CJI.
- The Supreme Court collegium is headed by the Chief Justice of India and comprises four other senior most judges of the court.
- The collegium system is the system of appointment and transfer of judges that has evolved through judgments of the Supreme Court (Judges Cases), and not by an Act of Parliament or by a provision of the Constitution.

Constitutional Provisions

- The Chief Justice of India and the Judges of the Supreme Court (SC) are appointed by the President under clause (2) of Article 124 of the Constitution.

Pradeep Kumar Joshi

- Professor Pradeep Kumar Joshi has been appointed as the new Chairman of the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC).
- UPSC is tasked with conducting examinations and recommending candidates for the Group 'A' services in the Central Government.
- Pradeep Kumar Joshi has been the Chairman of both Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh Public Service Commission and has joined the UPSC as a member in 2015.



Kesavananda Bharati

- Kesavananda Bharati, on whose petition the Supreme Court delivered a landmark judgement defining the Basic Structure of the Constitution, passed away recently.
- Kesavananda Bharati was the head priest of the Edneer Mutt in Kasaragod district of Kerala since 1961.
- He was a patron of education, Kannada culture and arts, including Yakshagana, music and dramas.



Background:

- Kesavananda Bharati had challenged the Kerala government's attempts to impose restrictions on the management of Edneer Mutt's property, under two State land reform acts.

Doctrine of Basic Structure

- Under this, the Supreme Court put a limitation on the amending powers of the Parliament so that the 'basic structure of the basic law of the land' cannot be amended in exercise of its 'constituent power' under Article 368 of the Constitution of India.
- Basic structure though is not exactly defined but through its contents some of its constituents are Rule of law, Sovereignty, liberty and republic nature of Indian polity, judicial review, Separation of power, secularism, and Republic nature of India etc.
- This doctrine was mentioned in the judgement order of Justice Hans Raj Khanna who was part of the 13-judge bench.

Girish Chandra Murmu

- The Central Government has appointed Girish Chandra Murmu as the new Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG).
- He was the Lieutenant Governor of Jammu and Kashmir, prior to joining this post. Murmu has been sworn-in by the President of India. He succeeds Rajiv Mehrishi in the office of CAG.
- He has wide experience in administrative, economic and infrastructure fields. He has also served in important posts in Gujarat.



Rajiv Kumar

- Rajeev Kumar took charge as the new Election Commissioner of India on September 1, 2020.
- Kumar was appointed as the new Election Commissioner by President Ram Nath Kovind. The former Finance Secretary succeeds Ashok Lavasa, who had resigned earlier.
- Rajiv Kumar is a retired 1984-batch IAS officer of the Jharkhand cadre.
- He was till recently serving as the Chairman of the Public Enterprises Selection Board (PESB). His term that had started on April 29 was scheduled to end on April 28, 2023.



Yashvardhan K Sinha

- Yashvardhan K Sinha was appointed as the Chief Information Commissioner (CIC) by President Ram Nath Kovind who also administered oath of office to Y.K. Sinha.
- The post had been lying vacant after Bimal Julka completed his term. Y.K. Sinha, a former diplomat, Joined as the Information Commissioner on January 1, 2019.
- He has served as India's High Commissioner to the United Kingdom and Sri Lanka.



K K Venugopal

- K K Venugopal was recently re-appointed as Attorney General of India. He has been appointed for a year.
- K K Venugopal, a senior advocate of Supreme Court, is 15th Attorney General of India. Besides, Tushar Mehta was re-appointed as the Solicitor General for a period of three year.
- Attorney General of India is the chief legal advisor of Indian Government. He is appointed by the President of India under Article 76.



Mary W. Jackson

- NASA has named its headquarters building at Washington D.C after its first African American Female Engineer Mary W. Jackson. The announcement was made on 24th June 2020 by the Administrator of NASA.
- The story of success of Mary W. Jackson was shown in the 2016 biographical drama Hidden Figures.
- Mary W. Jackson started her professional career as a research mathematician at the Langley Research Centre of NASA. Later she was promoted to become the first African American female engineer at NASA.
- Mary W. Jackson died in 2005. By naming the headquarters in her name, NASA has ensured that her contribution made by her for the women, African-Americans, and people of all backgrounds will be recognized for years to come.



Tirath Singh Rawat

- Tirath Singh Rawat became the new Chief Minister of Uttarakhand after the former CM Trivendra Singh Rawat resigned from the post.
- He is the Lok Sabha MP from Garhwal.
- He was also elected as an MLA from the Chaubattakhal Constituency and remained in the position from 2012 to 2017.
- He also acted as the first education minister of the Uttarakhand when it was carved out as a separate state.



Manoj Mukund Navarne

- Indian Army Chief Manoj Mukund Navarne was appointed Honorary General of the Nepal Army. During the ceremony, the President of Nepal, Bidya Devi Bhandari, presented him with a scroll and a sword.
- Chief Navarre is visiting Nepal for three days. He is in Nepal to discuss "Army-to-Army relations and bilateral defence cooperation" with his counterpart.
- The custom of granting honorary titles to the army leader of other countries has been in effect since 1950.



Ngozi Okonjo Iweala

- Ngozi Okonjo Iweala, a Nigerian economist, has been appointed Secretary-General of World Trade Organization. She is the first woman to hold this role. She is also the first African to occupy this position in the face of rising protectionism.
- The delegates of the WTO's 164 member countries elected Okonjo-Iweala as Director-General.
- The World Trade Organization (WTO) is an organization that deals with the terms of trade between nations based on signed agreements.



Himanta Biswa

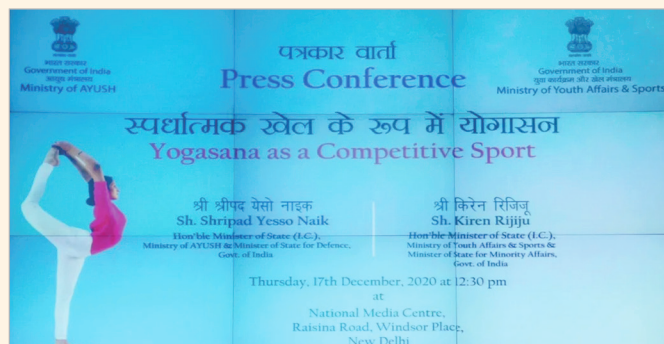
- Himanta Biswa Sarma, a senior BJP leader took oath as the Chief Minister of Assam. His oath was administered by the Governor of Assam Jagdish Mukhi.
- He was elected as the leader of BJP's Legislative Party in Assam and was announced as the next Chief Minister of the state on May 9, 2021.



Appointment of Chief Minister

- Our constitution does not specifically mention the qualification to be appointed as Chief Minister (CM). Article 164 of the Constitution envisages that the Chief Minister shall be appointed by the governor. However, this does not imply that the governor is free to appoint anyone as the Chief Minister of the state or UT.

Sports in News

Yogasana recognized as a competitive Sport in India

- Yogasana has been officially recognised as a professional sport by the Sports Ministry. As a result, the ancient tradition will be eligible to obtain federal support. This was undertaken to raise awareness of Yoga and its effects, as well as to help people develop their physical and mental well-being.

Key Highlights:

- Yogasana becomes eligible to compete in a variety of sports after it is recognized as a professional sport. Under the direction of Yoga Guru Baba Ramdev, an International Yogasana Sports Federation was created.
- In addition, the National Yogasana Sports Federation was established to maintain and grow Yoga as a competitive sport. The federation was recognized by the sports ministry as a National Sports Federation in November 2020.
- Yogasana is to be inducted with the Khelo India Games Programme.

Yogasana in Khelo India:

- The Sports Ministry will organize four competitions under Khelo India, with fifty-one medals proposed. The Yogasana sport will be split into seven groups. They are Rhythmic Yogasana, Traditional Yogasana, individual all-around championship, team championship, and artistic Yogasana. Single and pair divisions have been used in Artistic Yogasana. In Rhythmic Yogasana, pair, free flow and group Yogasana have been included.
- The National Individual Yogasana Sport Championship has also been proposed. This is to be held at district, state, national and world level.

Recognition of Gymnastics Federation of India restored

- The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports has restored the recognition of Gymnastics Federation of India (GFI) as the National Sports Federation (NSF).

**Key Highlights**

- The Sports Ministry also announced that elections for two office bearers, Sudhir Mittal as President and Kaushik Bidiwala as Treasurer, for the 2019-2023 term have been recorded.
- Furthermore, the decision to consider S Shanti Kumar Singh's election as general secretary will be made after the Manipur High Court rules on the writ petition submitted by S Shanti Kumar Singh.
- While the election of Parmeshwar Prajapat for the role of executive Member will be approved after the NOC and other evidence have been verified.
- Further, the constitution of GFI needs will be aligned with provisions of the National Sports Development Code of India, 2011 (Sports Code).

National Sports Awards, 2020

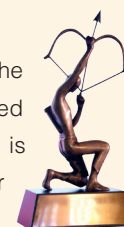
- The Government of India announced the National Sports Awards, 2020.

Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award

- The award is presented to sportspersons with most outstanding performance in the field of sports for a period of four years. The persons selected for the award for the year 2020 are:
 - Rohit Sharma
 - Para-Athlete Mariyannapn Thangavelu
 - Wrestler Vinesh Phogat
 - Indian Women Hockey Team Captain Rani Rampal

**Arjuna Award**

- 27 sports persons have been selected for the award. The winners of the award are presented with a cash prize of Rs 5 lakhs. The award is presented to motivate the sportsperson for their good performances.



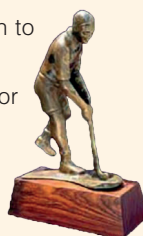
Dronacharya Award

- The award is to be presented to the following
 - Dharmendra Tiwary for Archery
 - Purushotam Rai for Athletics
 - Romesh Pathania for Hockey
 - Shiv Singh for Boxing
 - Krishan Kumar for Tennis
 - Om Prakash Dahiya for Wrestling
- This award is presented to the coaches for producing medal winners at international sports events.



Dhyana Chand Award

- The award is presented for lifetime contribution to sports development. It is to be presented to:
 - Kuldip Singh Bhullar and Jincy Philips for Athletics
 - Pradeep Sri Krishna Gandhe and Trupti Murugunde for Badminton
 - N Usha and Lakha Singh for Boxing
 - Sukhvinder Singh Sandhu for football
 - Ajit Singh for hockey
 - Manpreet Singh for Kabaddi
 - Satyaprakash Tiwari for Para Badminton
 - P Bal for tennis
 - Netarpal Hooda for Wrestling
 - Rashtriya Khel Protsahan Puraskar



Other Awards

- Oil and Natural Gas Corporation is to get the award of encouragement to sports through Corporate Social Responsibility
- Air Force Sports Control Board is to be honoured with award for employment of sportspersons
- International Institute of Sports Management is to get the award for Sports for Development.

FIFA World Cup 2022 to be held in Qatar

- The FIFA announced that the 2022 World Cup is to be held in Qatar. The governing body also released the schedule of matches.
- The 2022 FIFA World Cup will be the first world cup to be held in Arab World and also the first in a muslim-majority country. The World Cup would be the last to involve 32 teams as the teams are to be increased to 48 in the 2026 tournament.
- The tournament is to be held in November-December. The final match of the tournament has been scheduled on December 18, 2020, which is also Qatar National Day.



**FIFA WORLD CUP
Qatar 2022**

'Fit Hai to Hit Hai India' under Fit India Campaign launched

- 'Fit Hai to Hit Hai India' program was launched by Ramesh Pokhriyal (Union Minister of Human Resource Development) and Kiren Rijju (Union Minister of State I/C for Youth Affairs and Sports).
- As a part of the Fit India Campaign, the 'Fit Hai to Hit Hai India' program will be organized.
- The Fit India Campaign, to date a total of 13,868 CBSE affiliated schools from across the country have participated out of which 11,682 have also been awarded the Fit India flag.
- The objective of the program is to inspire and motivate the school children about the importance and need to stay fit during this pandemic. For this, Talk sessions named Fit India Talks will be organized.
- These Talk Sessions can be streamed live on DD Sports channel on television, Fit India Channel at Facebook and Youtube, at MyGov and at Sports Authority of India (SAI) official Facebook page.



ICC bans use of saliva to shine a Cricket Ball

- Anil Kumble led ICC (International Cricket Committee) banned the use of saliva to shine the ball. The practice meant for swing bowling is now primarily held as health risk due to the threats of COVID-19
- The former Indian Cricket player Anil Kumble is the current chairman of ICC Cricket Committee. The Committee has banned use of saliva to shine a cricket ball. However, the ICC Cricket Committee saw no harm in using sweat to shine the ball. Instead use of artificial substance to shine the ball is being considered.
- Apart from this, the committee also recommended to increase use of DRS review per innings from two to three.
- The swing of the cricket ball is mainly governed by three factors namely shiny side, climatic conditions and behaviour of the pitch.
- Ball Tampering is usually done after the ball wears away in the second half of a match.

Badminton World Federation campaign: PV Sindhu named as ambassador

- The World champion P V Sindhu was named the ambassador of the campaign "I am Badminton". The campaign was launched by Badminton World Federation (BWF).
- The campaign provides a platform for the badminton players to advocate and commit to honest and clean play. It also helps the players to express their love and respect for the game.
- P V Sindhu is an Indian professional badminton player. She rose to world rank 2 in 2017. Miss Sindhu is the first Indian to become Badminton World Champion.
- The Badminton World Federation is an international governing body of the badminton sport. It was founded by 1934 and has been recognized by the International Olympic Committee. This means one can enter the Olympics through games of BWF as well.



- It was then conducted in 2004, 2008, 2011, 2015 and 2017. The 2008 Commonwealth youth games were conducted in Pune, India.

Mark Selby becomes World Snooker Championship

- In Snooker, English professional player Mark Selby has become the World Snooker Champion for the fourth time.
- He won the Championship title after defeating fellow mate Shaun Murphy by 18-15 victory at the Crucible Theatre in Sheffield, England.



World Snooker Championship

- The World Snooker Championship is professional snooker's longest-running, most prestigious, and wealthiest tournament, with total prize money in 2021 of £2,395,000, including £500,000 for the winner. First held in 1927, it is now one of the three tournaments that make up snooker's Triple Crown Series.

Commonwealth Youth Games postponed to 2023

- The 2021 Commonwealth Youth Games is being postponed to 2023 as it faces clashes of dates with the Tokyo Olympics. The Tokyo Olympics was postponed by a year.
- The decision was taken by the Commonwealth Games Federation Executive Board. The 17th Commonwealth youth games were to be held between August 1 and August 7, 2021 in Tobago and Trinidad.
- The Commonwealth Youth Games is an international sport event that is organized by the Commonwealth Games Federation. The first commonwealth games were held in Edinburgh, Scotland. The Commonwealth games have been conducted since 2000.



Mirabai Chanu creates a new Clean and Jerk world record



- Mirabai Chanu set a new World Record in the women's 49kg Clean and Jerk with a massive 119 kg lift at Asian Weightlifting Championships in Tashkent.
- The 26-year-old Indian won the bronze medal at the event.
- The gold medal went to Hou Zhihui of China who created a new world record in snatch. Asian Games, held once every 4yrs, is the 2nd largest multi-sport event after the Olympics.

**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.

Recent

Current Affairs Questions

1. Which of the following institutions has set up a portal 'CovAid' to track aid coming from individual organisations?
 - (a) Ministry of Science and technology
 - (b) DRDO
 - (c) ICMR
 - (d) NITI Aayog
2. Bucharest Nine (B9) is a group of nine countries from which of the following international organisations?
 - (a) G 20
 - (b) UNESCO
 - (c) NATO
 - (d) NAM
3. Consider the following statements regarding 'FASTag':
 1. It can be used only for identifying the types of vehicles passing through highways.
 2. It employs Radio-frequency Identification (RFID) technology and is affixed on the vehicle's windscreen after the tag account is active.
 Which of the above statement(s) is/are correct?
 - (a) 1 only
 - (b) 2 only
 - (c) Both 1 and 2
 - (d) Neither 1 nor 2
4. Consider the following statements with reference to Scheme for Capacity Building in Textile Sector (SAMARTH):
 1. It is a skill development scheme of the Union Ministry of Textiles.
 2. it covers only Spinning & Weaving in the organised Sector.
 Which of the above statement(s) is/are correct?
 - (a) 1 only
 - (b) 2 only
 - (c) Both 1 and 2
 - (d) Neither 1 nor 2
5. The Indian armed forces have launched which operation to support anti-COVID-19 efforts of the country?
 - (a) Operation Hindustan
 - (b) Operation Sahyog
 - (c) Operation COJEET
 - (d) Operation COVID
6. Consider the following statements regarding One Nation-One Ration Card scheme:
 1. It will allow portability of food security benefits which will be available across the country.
 2. For availing the benefits under the scheme, it is not mandatory to link ration cards to Aadhaar.
 3. This means poor migrant workers will be able to buy subsidised rice and wheat from any ration shop in the country.
 Which of the above statement(s) is/are correct?
 - (a) 1 only
 - (b) 1 and 3 only
 - (c) 2 and 3 only
 - (d) 1, 2 and 3
7. Project Sashakt, which was recently seen in the news, is aimed to:
 - (a) Improve e- governance in public distribution system
 - (b) Enhance transparency and accountability in coal distribution.
 - (c) A project to accelerate deep ocean mining
 - (d) Resolve the problem of stressed assets with public-sector banks
8. "Net-Zero Banking Alliance" is convened by which of the following organisations?
 - (a) BRICS BANK
 - (b) United Nation Development Programme
 - (c) International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)
 - (d) International Finance Corporation (IFC)
9. Consider the following statements about Project Manav:
 1. Project Manav is a new human atlas initiative launched to create a unified database network of all the tissues in the human body.
 2. The project has been launched by the Department of Biotechnology.
 Which of the above statement(s) is/are correct?
 - (a) 1 only
 - (b) 2 only
 - (c) Both 1 and 2
 - (d) Neither 1 nor 2

ANSWERS

1. (d) 2. (c) 3. (b) 4. (a) 5. (c) 6. (b) 7. (d) 8. (b) 9. (c)

10. Sputnik V, the Covid-19 vaccine was launched by which of the following countries?
(a) USA (b) Japan
(c) Russia (d) England
11. Consider the following statements about Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana:
1. It is the scheme for providing Financial aid for treatments to all Senior citizens.
2. Artificial Limbs Manufacturing Corporation (ALIMCO), a PSU under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment is the sole Implementing Agency.
3. As far as possible, 30% of the beneficiaries in each district shall be women.
Which of the above statement(s) is/are correct?
(a) 1 only
(b) 1 and 2 only
(c) 2 and 3 only
(d) 1, 2 and 3
12. Consider the following statements about One Stop Centre (OSC) scheme:
1. One Stop Centres are being established to provide integrated support and assistance to women affected by violence, both in private and public spaces.
2. The OSC will support all women including girls below 18 years of age.
3. The Scheme is funded through Nirbhaya Fund.
Which of the above statement(s) is/are correct?
(a) 1 only
(b) 2 and 3 only
(c) 3 only
(d) 1, 2 and 3
13. Which space agency is associated with "Dragonfly mission" to explore Saturn's Moon Titan?
(a) Roscosmos (b) JAXA
(c) ISRO (d) NASA
14. Consider the following statements regarding 'SAFAR' (System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting):
1. It is developed by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.
2. It will monitor pollutants as well as meteorological parameters.
3. Ultimate objective of the project is to increase awareness among the general public.
Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
(a) 1 and 3 only (b) 2 and 3 only
(c) 3 only (d) All are correct
15. What is the upper limit to permit abortion to special categories of women, as per the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Bill, 2020?
(a) 18 weeks (b) 20 weeks
(c) 24 weeks (d) 26 weeks
16. Which of the following statements is/are correct with respect to the PM KISAN Scheme?
1. Under the programme, vulnerable landholding farmer families, having cultivable land up to 2 hectares, will be provided direct income support of a lump sum amount of Rs. 6,000 per year.
2. It is a Central Sector scheme.
Select the correct answer using the codes given below:
(a) 1 only
(b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2
(d) Neither 1 nor 2
17. Which of the following is/are the features of the PM SVANidhi scheme?
1. It provides affordable working capital loans to street vendors to resume their livelihoods that have been adversely affected by the COVID-19 lockdown.
2. It was launched as a part of the Atmanirbhar Bharat initiative.
3. It is implemented by the Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs.
Select the correct answer using the codes given below:
(a) 1 and 2 only (b) 2 and 3 only
(c) 2 only (d) 1, 2 and 3
18. Jason Continuity of Service (Jason-CS) mission is dedicated to:
(a) measuring the height of the ocean.
(b) monitoring of Ozone depletion.
(c) Check global warming.
(d) reduce environmental pollution due to e-waste.
19. Recently, 'Putrajaya Vision 2040' has been adopted by which of the following groups?
(a) Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)
(b) Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation
(c) BIMSTEC
(d) South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC)
20. OTPRMS certificates, which were recently in the news, are associated with the Union Ministry?
(a) Ministry of Education
(b) Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship
(c) Ministry of Labour and Employment
(d) Ministry of Science and technology

ANSWERS

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|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 10. (c) | 11. (d) | 12. (d) | 13. (d) | 14. (b) | 15. (c) | 16. (b) | 17. (d) | 18. (a) |
| 19. (a) | 20. (a) | | | | | | | |

21. Which of the following statements is/are correct about Global Depository Receipts (GDRs)?
1. GDR is a collective term for DRs issued in non-US jurisdictions and includes the DRs traded in London, Luxembourg, Hong Kong, Singapore.
 2. The first Indian issue of Global Depository Receipts (GDRs) was made by Reliance.
- 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
22. Which of the following organisations has launched a National Program and Project Management Policy Framework for the infrastructure sector?
- (a) NHAI
(b) World Bank
(c) NITI Aayog
(d) None of the above
23. 'Project Loon', sometimes seen in the news, is related to:
- (a) wireless communication technology
(b) waste management technology
(c) solar power production technology
(d) water conservation technology
24. "Clyde's Spot" is a place located in which of the following planets?
- (a) Mercury (b) Mars
(c) Earth (d) Jupiter
25. "Madhuca Diplostemon" recently in news is:
- (a) A species of plant commonly known as mangrove apple
(b) A bacteria that causes peptic ulcer
(c) A threatened species of tree in the Western Ghats
(d) A semi-aquatic frog indigenous to Western Ghats
26. COVIRAP, recently seen in news, is a:
- (a) An indigenous vaccine for COVID-19 being developed in India by the ICMR.
(b) A low-cost COVID-19 testing device developed by the Indian Institute of Technology - Kharagpur.
(c) A global alliance formed by the WHO to develop an effective vaccine against COVID-19.
(d) A mathematical forecasting model developed by John Hopkins University that is accurately forecasting the global spread of COVID-19.
27. Institute of Advanced Virology (IAV), which has been in the news, is located in which city?
- (a) Hyderabad
(b) Thiruvananthapuram
(c) Pune
(d) Bengaluru
28. Cyclamate, despite its health hazard, is popularly used as a:
- (a) Bleaching agent
(b) Artificial sweetener
(c) Food preservative
(d) Food colouring agent
29. 'KAPILA' programme, which was making news recently, is associated with which sector?
- (a) Agriculture
(b) Intellectual Property Rights
(c) Artificial Intelligence
(d) Food Processing
30. The Organization of American States (OAS) includes countries from:
- (a) North America
(b) Central America
(c) South America
(d) All of the above
31. Which organisation has recently released the '2020 State of Climate Services' Report?
- (a) World Health Organisation
(b) World Food Programme
(c) World Meteorological Organisation
(d) None of the above
32. The joint military exercise between India and Nepal is :
- (a) Surya Kiran
(b) Mitra Shakti
(c) Hand in Hand
(d) Nomadic Elephant
33. Consider the following statements with reference to Pancheshwar Multipurpose Project:
1. The Pancheshwar project will come up across the Mahakali River.
 2. It was first envisaged as part of the Mahakali treaty that India and Nepal signed in 1996.
- Which of the above statements is/are correct?
- (a) 1 only
(b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2
(d) Neither 1 nor 2
34. Which of the following is the name of COVID-19 awareness campaign launched ahead of upcoming festive seasons?
- (a) Corona Jagrukta Andolan
(b) Jan Andolan Campaign
(c) Jan Bhagidari Andolan
(d) Corona Se Bachav Campaign

ANSWERS

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|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 21. (c) | 22. (c) | 23. (a) | 24. (d) | 25. (c) | 26. (b) | 27. (b) | 28. (b) | 29. (b) |
| 30. (d) | 31. (c) | 32. (a) | 33. (c) | 34. (b) | | | | |

35. e-Sanjeevani, sometimes seen in news, is a:
 (a) Tele-Medicine platform
 (b) Technology that digitizes vaccine stocks
 (c) Cloud computing platform
 (d) COVID isolation centre data
36. The benchmark interest rate in India is fixed by which of the following?
 (a) Monetary Policy Committee
 (b) Finance Ministry
 (c) RBI Governor
 (d) SBI
37. Recently, the Union Government launched 'CSIR- Technologies for Rural Development' under which of the following missions?
 (a) Unnat Bharat Abhiyan
 (b) Swachh Bharat Abhiyan
 (c) Skill India Mission
 (d) Digital India Mission
38. Which among the following organisations has won the Nobel Peace Prize 2020?
 (a) Doctors Without Borders
 (b) World Food Programme
 (c) Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance
 (d) Red Cross
39. RUDRAM, which was in the news recently, is:
 (a) A tourism scheme connecting religious places
 (b) An operation launched by Indian Army in Ladakh
 (c) An Anti-Radiation Missile recently tested by DRDO
 (d) A scramjet engine developed by ISRO
40. Which of the following organisations has launched 'Operation My Saheli'?
 (a) National Commission for Women
 (b) Indian Railways
 (c) CSIR
 (d) Minister of Women and Child Welfare
41. Which of the following organisations has developed an R-Green Kit for diagnosis of COVID-19 infection?
 (a) Ranbaxy (b) Reliance
 (c) ICMR (d) WHO
42. The nuclear capable hypersonic missile that was test-fired recently, named as:
 (a) Prithvi (b) Shaurya
 (c) Agni V (d) Nag
43. COVID-19 Active Response and Expenditure Support (CARES) Programme is an initiative of which of the following organisations?
 (a) International Monetary Fund
 (b) World Trade Organization
 (c) The World Bank
 (d) Asian Development Bank
44. The Global Innovation Index 2020, in which India ranks at the 48th position, has been launched by:
 (a) World Trade Organization
 (b) World Intellectual Property Organization
 (c) United Nations Development Programme
 (d) None of the above
45. The Hague Code of Conduct (HCOC), often seen in news, is related to:
 (a) Prevention of the proliferation of ballistic missiles
 (b) Prohibition of biological weapon
 (c) Disciplinary actions of the International Court of Justice
 (d) COVID-19 vaccine trials
46. Bio-bubble, which was recently in news, is related to:
 (a) A safe and secure environment to minimise the risk of COVID-19 infection
 (b) Potential vaccine against COVID-19
 (c) Condition suffered by sports persons during the quarantine period
 (d) One of the major condition for Tropical Cyclone
47. Consider the following statements regarding the Sandalwood Spike Disease (SSD):
 1. It is caused by phytoplasma.
 2. It is characterized by a severe reduction in leaf size.
 Which of the above statements is/are correct?
 (a) 1 only
 (b) 2 only
 (c) Both 1 and 2
 (d) Neither 1 nor 2
48. Consider the following statements:
 1. The Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) is part of the Antarctic Treaty System.
 2. It is headquartered in Tasmania in Australia.
 3. India is a member of the Convention.
 Which of the given statement/s is/are incorrect?
 (a) 1 only
 (b) 2 and 3 only
 (c) 3 only
 (d) 1, 2 and 3
49. Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is between:
 (a) Armenia and Azerbaijan
 (b) Syria and Iran
 (c) Israel and Turkey
 (d) Armenia and Israel

ANSWERS

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|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 35. (a) | 36. (a) | 37. (a) | 38. (b) | 39. (c) | 40. (b) | 41. (b) | 42. (b) | 43. (d) |
| 44. (b) | 45. (a) | 46. (a) | 47. (c) | 48. (d) | 49. (a) | | | |

50. Consider the following statements regarding the 'Environment Impact Assessment (EIA)'?
1. The notification regarding the EIA is issued by the National Green Tribunal.
 2. The EIA notification is issued under Section 3 of the Environment Protection Act, 1986.
- Which of the above statements is/are correct?
- (a) 1 only
 - (b) 2 only
 - (c) Both 1 and 2
 - (d) Neither 1 nor 2
51. Project "Beehive" is related to:
- (a) Integrated smart network with real-time data analytics capabilities
 - (b) Bee keeping under the Mission for Integrated Horticulture (MIDH)
 - (c) Cyber-centre of excellence in cyber security
 - (d) Handicrafts Sector
52. Twin deficit in an economy means:
- (a) High Current Account Deficit and High Fiscal Deficit
 - (b) High Current Account Deficit and High Capital account deficit
 - (c) High Capital Account Deficit and High Fiscal deficit
 - (d) High Budget Deficit and High Fiscal deficit
53. Recently the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has made efforts to preserve the Hampi Stone Chariot. Consider the following statements regarding this:
1. Hampi ruins were the last capital of Vijayanagar Empire.
 2. It is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.
 3. Hampi is situated on the bank of Tungabhadra River.
- Which of the above statements is/are correct?
- (a) 2 only
 - (b) 1 and 3 only
 - (c) 2 and 3 only
 - (d) 1, 2 and 3
54. Havana Syndrome, recently seen in the news, is related to:
- (a) Neurological illness
 - (b) Cuban Missile Crisis
 - (c) Propagation of Marxism in Cuba
 - (d) A rare genetic disorder
55. Which one of the following statements is NOT correct regarding Minimum Support Price (MSP)?
- (a) Minimum support price (MSP) is a minimum price for any crop that the government considers as remunerative for farmers.
 - (b) It is also the price that government agencies pay whenever they procure the particular crop.
 - (c) MSP is fixed on the recommendations of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP).
 - (d) MSP has legal-backing once announced by the Government.
56. Laicite, recently seen in the news, refers as:
- (a) NASA's Mission for Venus
 - (b) COVID-19 vaccine in trial stage
 - (c) French version of Secularism
 - (d) None of the above
57. Juice Jacking, sometimes seen in news, is:
- (a) A fraudulent technique to clone debit/credit cards to withdraw money
 - (b) Cyber-attack during the mobile charging process
 - (c) Cyber-attack through a spam email
 - (d) A technique to feed liquid diet to critical COVID-19 patients
58. With reference to Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), consider the following statements:
1. The APEC is an inter-governmental forum that promotes free trade throughout the Asia-Pacific region.
 2. India and China are members of APEC.
- Which of the above statements is/are correct?
- (a) 1 only
 - (b) 2 only
 - (c) Both 1 and 2
 - (d) Neither 1 nor 2
59. Brain Electrical Oscillation Signature Profiling (BEOSP) is a method of interrogation in which the accused's participation in the crime is investigated by studying their brain's response. This method is also known as:
- (a) Brain fingerprinting
 - (b) Brain oscillating
 - (c) Signature oscillating
 - (d) Brain mapping
60. Consider the following statements regarding Arctic Council:
1. India has Observer status in the Arctic Council.
 2. Himadri Research Station of India is located in Norway.
 3. National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research (NCPOR) is located in Chennai.
- Which of the above statements is/are correct?
- (a) 1 only
 - (b) 1 and 2 only
 - (c) 2 and 3 only
 - (d) 1, 2 and 3

ANSWERS

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|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 50. (b) | 51. (a) | 52. (a) | 53. (d) | 54. (a) | 55. (d) | 56. (c) | 57. (b) | 58. (a) |
| 59. (a) | 60. (b) | | | | | | | |

61. International Seabed Authority (ISA) which has the mandate to ensure the effective protection of the marine environment from harmful effects, is headquartered at:
 (a) London (UK)
 (b) Kingston (Jamaica)
 (c) Montreal (Canada)
 (d) Jakarta (Indonesia)
62. Recently, India announced the construction of the Shahtoot Dam in Afghanistan. It will be built on which river?
 (a) Kabul river
 (b) Amu Darya
 (c) Helmand river
 (d) Kunduz river
63. As per RBI's Guidelines, the Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) have to provide how much percentage of their total credit under priority sector lending?
 (a) 25 percent (b) 50 per cent
 (c) 75 per cent (d) 90 per cent
64. Black Sea has been seen in the news these days. Which of the following countries does not share a boundary with it?
 (a) Russia (b) Turkey
 (c) Romania (d) Iran
65. 'Team Halo' which aims to counter the misinformation around COVID-19 vaccines, is an initiative of:
 (a) WHO
 (b) United Nations
 (c) UNICEF
 (d) None of the above
66. Which of the following ministries has implemented the Border Infrastructure and Management (BIM) Scheme?
 (a) Ministry of Rural Development
 (b) Ministry of Road Transport & Highways
 (c) Ministry of Defence
 (d) Ministry of Home Affairs
67. 'APEDA' was established under which of the following Union Ministries?
 (a) Ministry of Road Transport & Highways
 (b) Ministry of Rural Development
 (c) Ministry of Commerce and Industry
 (d) None
68. Who are the beneficiaries of 'Xcelerator Bangalore' (XB) initiative, which was launched recently?
 (a) Women entrepreneurs
 (b) Food processing industries
 (c) Fishermans
 (d) IT industries
69. The term 'rules-based international order' is often used in the context of which grouping?
 (a) BRICS
 (b) QUAD
 (c) SCO
 (d) Indian Ocean Commission
70. Which telescope is being manufactured in collaboration between NASA, ESA and CSA, as a successor of Hubble Telescope?
 (a) Celestron 21037 PowerSeeker 70EQ
 (b) Five-hundred-metre Aperture Spherical Telescope
 (c) Gran Telescopio Canarias (GTC)
 (d) James Webb Space Telescope
71. In the sense of disaster management in India, the National Crisis Management Committee has been established, chaired by:
 (a) Finance Minister
 (b) Home Minister
 (c) Chairman of NDMA
 (d) Cabinet Secretary
72. Consider the following statements:
 1. GAVI Alliance is a global partnership dedicated to 'food for all'.
 2. Its partners include UNICEF, the World Bank and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation only.
 Which of the above statement(s) is/are correct?
 (a) 1 only
 (b) 2 only
 (c) Both 1 and 2
 (d) Neither 1 nor 2
73. The Nord Stream pipeline, which was recently in the headlines, transports natural gas between which two countries?
 (a) Russia and Germany
 (b) Pakistan and Russia
 (c) India and Afghanistan
 (d) India and Iran
74. Which city emerged as the best in the million-plus population category, according to the "Ease of Living Index-2020"?
 (a) Chandigarh (b) Delhi
 (c) Bengaluru (d) Kolkata
75. Consider the following statements with respect to the 'Nai Roshni' Scheme:
 1. It is a Leadership Learning Platform intended to educate and encourage minority women.
 2. In 2012-13, the Ministry of Women and Child Welfare launched this scheme.
 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

ANSWERS

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|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 61. (b) | 62. (a) | 63. (c) | 64. (d) | 65. (b) | 66. (d) | 67. (c) | 68. (a) | 69. (b) |
| 70. (d) | 71. (d) | 72. (d) | 73. (a) | 74. (c) | 75. (a) | | | |

76. India's largest ground-based optical telescope has been installed in which state?
 (a) Rajasthan
 (b) Ladakh
 (c) Himachal Pradesh
 (d) Uttarakhand
77. Sometimes seen in the news, the term 'APASTI' is related to which of the following?
 (a) A plan adopted by ASEAN
 (b) Kamorta-class corvette
 (c) Free education for weaker sections
 (d) Alien species
78. 'Kala Namak rice' or Buddha Rice, which was making news recently, is associated with which Indian state?
 (a) Rajasthan
 (b) Punjab
 (c) Maharashtra
 (d) Uttar Pradesh
79. Who is the Chairman of the National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC)?
 (a) Arvind Saxena
 (b) Sunil Arora
 (c) N.K Singh
 (d) Bhagwan Lal Sahni
80. Which of the following is/are correct about 'K9 Vajra'?
 1. The K9 Vajra is an indigenously developed self-propelled howitzer for the Indian Army.
 2. It is based on the M777 howitzers of the USA.
 Select the correct answer using the codes given below:
 (a) 1 only
 (b) 2 only
 (c) Both 1 and 2
 (d) Neither 1 nor 2
81. Which organization initiated the Space Entrepreneurship and Enterprise Development (SEED)?
 (a) DRDO (b) NASA
 (c) ESA (d) ISRO
82. The World Sustainable Development Summit (WSDS) is the organization's annual flagship event of:
 (a) World Economic Forum
 (b) The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI)
 (c) World Bank
 (d) Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD)
83. Which of the following committees advised the formation of a Bank Investment Company (BIC)?
 (a) Rangarajan Committee
 (b) Mithilesh Kumar Committee
 (c) P J Nayak Committee
 (d) Indira sahani Committee
84. The Government of India's Sandes application is:
 (a) An alternative to WhatsApp
 (b) A travel portal for defence personals
 (c) A tool for reporting any activity related to illegal coal mining
 (d) A mobile app of Indian Railways
85. Which of the following is correct about 'Arjun Mk-1A'?
 (a) A Main Battle Tank (MBT)
 (b) An indigenously developed Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH)
 (c) A New Generation Anti-Radiation Missile (NGARM)
 (d) A surface-to-air anti-aircraft defence system
86. Recently in the news, in our solar system, Olympus Mons is the largest:
 (a) Volcano (b) Crater lake
 (c) Caldera (d) Water fall
87. An archaeological site named Pompeii is located in which of the following countries?
 (a) Italy (b) Germany
 (c) Japan (d) Iran
88. Which country has issued a draft of its "Humans in Space Policy 2021"?
 (a) China (b) Australia
 (c) India (d) Germany
89. Which of the following statements is/are correct?
 1. Mission Indradhanush was launched in 2014 to provide full immunization against eight vaccine-preventable diseases.
 2. The Intensified Mission Indradhanush 3.0 scheme has been launched to cover children and pregnant women who missed routine immunisation during the COVID-19 pandemic.
 Select the correct code given below:
 (a) 1 only
 (b) 2 only
 (c) Both 1 and 2
 (d) Neither 1 nor 2
90. Recently seen in the news, 'KAPILA' programme is associated with which of the following sectors?
 (a) Food Processing
 (b) Intellectual Property Rights
 (c) Agriculture sector
 (d) Legislation
91. 'ShadowPad' recently seen in news is a
 (a) Computer worm
 (b) Malware
 (c) Supercomputer
 (d) Spyware tool

ANSWERS

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|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 76. (d) | 77. (a) | 78. (d) | 79. (d) | 80. (a) | 81. (d) | 82. (b) | 83. (c) | 84. (a) |
| 85. (a) | 86. (a) | 87. (a) | 88. (c) | 89. (d) | 90. (b) | 91. (b) | | |

92. Consider the following statements about Global Bio India 2021

1. It is a national and international event that highlights the strength and opportunities of India's biotechnology industry.
2. The event's theme this year is "Transforming Lives," with the tagline "Biosciences to Bio-economy."

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. 'START (Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty)' is an agreement between which two countries?

- (a) India-Russia
- (b) India-USA
- (c) Russia- China
- (d) Russia- U.S.

94. Consider the following statements:

1. Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) is the flagship scheme of the Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (MSDE) implemented by National Skill Development Corporation.
2. Training Partners (TPs) are mandated to organize Kaushal and Rozgar Melas every six months for providing placement assistance to certified ones.

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

95. Which of the following statement/s is/are correct with reference to the TEQIP Project?

1. It is a project of the Government of India assisted by the World Bank.
2. The project's goal is to address the low number of female students enrolled in technical education.

Select the correct code given below:

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

96. Which of the statements is/are correct about 'Amazonia-1'?

1. The Amazonia-1 satellite was jointly developed by Brazil and India.
2. It is used to provide precise real-time positioning and timing services over Brazil and areas stretching up to 1500 kilometers around the country.

Select the correct code given below:

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

97. The '1776 Commission report' is associated with which country?

- (a) Russia
- (b) North Korea
- (c) United States
- (d) India

98. Exercise 'DUSTLIK' is a joint military exercise between India and:

- (a) Iraq
- (b) Iran
- (c) Uzbekistan
- (d) Afghanistan

99. Ice-Stupa, Swasthya Portal and Prayas Dashboard are the initiatives of which Union Ministry?

- (a) Ministry of Tribal Affairs
- (b) Ministry of Finance
- (c) Ministry of Education
- (d) Ministry of Rural Development

100. Consider the following statements with reference to 'AMPHEX-21'

1. It is a joint military exercise between India & Maldives conducted in Andaman & Nicobar Islands.

2. The purpose of the exercise is to deepen the security relationship and intelligence sharing between India & Maldives.

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. 'Sea Vigil-21' is a Defence Exercise undertaken by which of the following countries?

- (a) China
- (b) Russia
- (c) Bangladesh
- (d) India

102. 'Fatah-1' is the indigenous Rocket system of which country?

- (a) Pakistan
- (b) Uzbekistan
- (c) Afghanistan
- (d) Iran

103. NAMASTE Portal is related to:

- (a) Gems and jewellery
- (b) Government e-Marketplace (GeM)
- (c) Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)
- (d) Terminologies & morbidity codes for Ayurveda, Siddha and Unani systems

104. Which Union Ministry launched the 'Longitudinal Ageing Study of India (LASI)' report?

- (a) Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
- (b) Ministry of Tribal Affairs
- (c) Ministry of Finance
- (d) Ministry of Education

105. Secure Application for Internet (SAI), a messaging application recently seen in the news, has been developed by:

- (a) Indian Army
- (b) Indian Navy
- (c) Indian Air Force
- (d) Border Security Force

ANSWERS

92. (c)	93. (d)	94. (c)	95. (a)	96. (d)	97. (c)	98. (c)	99. (a)	100. (d)
101. (d)	102. (a)	103. (d)	104. (a)	105. (a)				

- 106.** Apurva Chandra Committee was appointed to:
- Examine the existing policy regarding financial inclusion
 - Look into the faster resolution of stressed assets
 - Conduct a comprehensive review of DRDO
 - Review the Defence Procurement Procedure (DPP)
- 107.** Parinam Manjusha, a digital academic repository, belongs to which organization?
- All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE)
 - Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE)
 - National Recruitment Agency (NRA)
 - University Grants Commission (UGC)
- 108.** Which of the statements given below is not true with reference to Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act?
- It is mandatory for all NGOs to be registered under the Act to receive foreign funding.
 - Only SBI bank is empowered to report to the Central government within 48 hours the "receipt or utilisation of any foreign contribution" by any NGO.
- Select the correct answer using the codes given below:
- 1 only
 - 2 only
 - Both 1 and 2
 - Neither 1 nor 2
- 109.** With respect to "SAHAYAK-NG", consider the following statements:
- It is India's first indigenously designed and developed Air Dropped Container.
 - It was designed by the Defence Research Development Organization.
- Which of the above statements is/are correct?
- 1 only
 - 2 only
 - Both 1 and 2
 - Neither 1 nor 2
- 110.** Which article of the Constitution deals with 'Annual Financial Statement'?
- Article 108
 - Article 112
 - Article 125
 - Article 117
- 111.** The PM addressed 125th anniversary celebrations of 'Prabuddha Bharata', a monthly journal which was started by:
- Swami Vivekananda
 - Mahatma Gandhi
 - Dayanand Saraswati
 - Vallabh Bhai Patel
- 112.** Which of the following are considered as the strategic sectors under the recently unveiled Strategic Disinvestment Policy?
- Transport
 - Telecommunications
 - Atomic energy
 - Space and Defence
- Select the correct answer using the codes given below:
- 1, 2 and 4
 - 1 and 2
 - 1, 2 and 3
 - 1, 2, 3 and 4
- 113.** Pradhan Mantri Annadata Aay SanraksHan Abhiyan' (PM-AASH(a) is an umbrella scheme to:
- ensure Minimum Support Price (MSP)
 - increase flow of credit in technology of agriculture sector
 - interest subvention scheme to farmers
 - All of the above
- 114.** The Xoo infection causes huge yield losses to the cultivation of:
- Barley
 - Rice
 - Maize
 - Cotton
- 115.** Which of the following is related to the term 'TROPEX 21'?
- Its an intercontinental ballistic missile
 - A recently launched nuclear submarine
 - A bilateral military exercise between India and Russia
 - A theatre level exercise of Indian Navy
- 116.** Recently in the news, Shoolpaneshwar wildlife sanctuary is located in which of the following States?
- Gujarat
 - Kerala
 - Andhra Pradesh
 - Tripura
- 117.** Tirekhtyakh river is found in which of the following countries?
- Brazil
 - Russia
 - Uzbekistan
 - Iran
- 118.** Fordow, Natanz and Arak are associated with which of the following?
- Nuclear Enrichment Facilities in Iran
 - Nuclear Missiles by Russia
 - Mountain ranges in Iran
 - Palestine militant groups
- 119.** Ashok Dalwai Committee is related to which of the following sectors?
- Non-Performing Assets
 - Regional connectivity
 - Doubling farmers income
 - Data protection

ANSWERS

- | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 106. (d) | 107. (b) | 108. (a) | 109. (c) | 110. (b) | 111. (a) | 112. (d) | 113. (a) | 114. (b) |
| 115. (d) | 116. (a) | 117. (b) | 118. (a) | 119. (c) | | | | |

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