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# PREFACE

*This is our special edition of Current Affairs Magazine for UPSC Civil Services Examination & Other Central & State Government Job Examinations, released for the month of January 2021.*

*The Magazine is divided into three sections:*

***Section 1: Topic Wise Current Affairs in Short .....Page 2 to Page 132***

*The first section is dedicated for Topic Wise 1 Liner Current Affairs to provide information about all major happenings in this month.*

***Section 2: Detailed Analysis of important events .....Page 133 to Page 171***

*The Second Section is dedicated to Civil Services Aspirants and covers some major happenings in this month along with analysis. The Content part has been created as per the present shift in the examination pattern of the Civil Services Examination. The magazine will cover your syllabus of 'General Studies - II & General Studies - III'. The content has been covered from various online & offline sources including reputed newspapers like The Hindu, Indian Express etc. All the news topics have been explained keeping in mind their underlying issues. Every issue has been covered comprehensively. Some of the information provided may not be directly relevant for the examination. As the content is very wide, we have only covered a limited set of issues. You can utilize it smartly along with the Daily Study of News Papers as well as your other sources.*

***Section 3: Practice Questions.....Page 172 to Page 209***

*The Third Section contains 100 Multiple Choice Questions based on daily current affairs.*



# SECTION 1

## Topic Wise Current Affairs in short

**IMPORTANT DAYS**

**DRDO Celebrates 63rd Foundation Day on 1st January 2021**

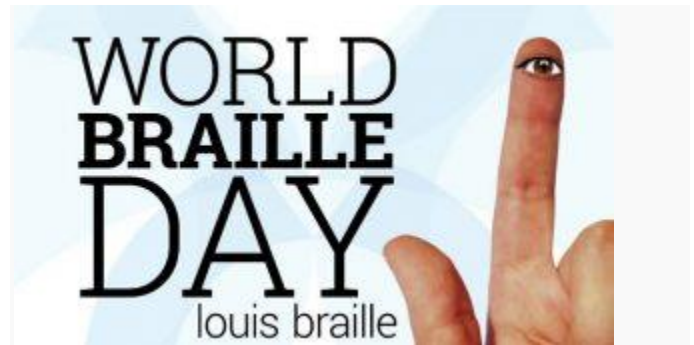


- The **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** observed the **63rd Foundation Day** of its establishment on **January 01, 2021**.
- DRDO was established in **1958** with just 10 laboratories to enhance the research work in the Defence sector. At that time, it was tasked with designing and developing cutting edge defence technologies for **Indian Armed Forces**.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Secretary Department of Defence Research and Development & Chairman DRDO: Dr G Satheesh Reddy.
- DRDO Headquarters: New Delhi.
- DRDO Established: 1958.

**World Braille Day: 4 January**



- **World Braille Day** is observed globally on **4th January** since 2019. The day is celebrated to raise awareness of the importance of Braille as a means of communication in the full realization of the human rights for blind and partially sighted people.
- The day is marked remembering the birth anniversary of **Louis Braille**, the inventor of Braille – for people with visual disabilities. Louis Braille was born on **4th January 1809** in the town of Coupvray in northern France.

**PravasiBharatiya Divas celebrated on 9 January**



- **PravasiBharatiya Divas or NRI Day** is celebrated every year on **January 9** to mark the contribution of the overseas Indian community in the development of India. The day is celebrated every year



to mark the contribution of the overseas Indian community in the development of India.

- The aim of celebrating the day is to provide a platform for NRI to express their perceptions about India and thereby involve them in Indian developmental activities. The theme of 16th PravasiBharatiya Divas Convention 2021 is **“Contributing to Aatmanirbhar Bharat”**.
- The PravasiBharatiya Divas is celebrated on **January 9**, as Mahatma Gandhi returned from South Africa on the day in **1915**. In 2015, the day was declared biennial. In 2018, the day was widely celebrated in Singapore. In 2019, the event was celebrated in Varanasi.

**“World Hindi Day” celebrated globally on 10th January**



- The **World Hindi Day** is celebrated annually on **January 10** since **2006** to promote the language at the global stage.
- The day marks the anniversary of first **World Hindi Conference** which was inaugurated on **January 10, 1975**, by the then prime minister Indira Gandhi.
- However, the celebration of first World Hindi Day was commenced on 10 January 2006 by former Prime Minister **Dr Manmohan Singh**. It must

be noted that the **National Hindi Day** is celebrated in India on **September 14** every year. On that day in 1949, the constituent assembly adopted Hindi, written in **Devanagari script**, as the official language of the Union.

**National Youth Day: 12 January**



- **National Youth Day** is celebrated in India every year on **12 January** to commemorate the birth anniversary of **Swami Vivekananda**.
- The day was declared by the Government of India in **1984** while the event was first celebrated in **1985**.
- The main aim behind this is to make sure that the students across the country can be encouraged to learn about the life, the ideas and philosophy of Swami Vivekananda and apply them in their lives.
- In 2021, we are observing **158th birth anniversary** of Swami Vivekanand (12 January 1863). The theme for National Youth Day 2021 is **‘Channelizing Youth Power for Nation Building’**.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Swami Vivekananda founded the Ramakrishna Math and Mission on 1 May 1897.
- In 1898, he established Belur Math.

**National Road Safety Month 2021: 18**

**January – 17 February**



- The **Ministry of Road Transport & Highways** observes the **National Road Safety Week** every year in the **second week of January**.
- However, in 2021, the Government has decided to observe **National Road Safety Month** instead of **National Road Safety Week**.
- Accordingly, the **National Road Safety Month** will be observed from **18th January, 2021' to 17th February' 2021**.
- During this period nation-wide various activities will be conducted throughout the country in association with the **Central/ State Governments/ UT administrations, and other stakeholders**.

**Armed Forces Veterans Day: 14 January**



- In India, the **Armed Forces Veterans Day** is observed each year on **14 January** since **2017** to acknowledge and honour the selfless devotion and sacrifice of our veterans in the service of the nation. The day was initially called **Armistice Day**. **2021** marks the **5th Armed Forces Veterans Day**.
- The day is observed as a mark of respect and recognition of the services rendered by **Field Marshal KM Cariappa OBE**, the first Indian Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Armed Forces who retired on **14 January 1953**.

**Indian Army Day: 15 January**



- The **Army Day in India** is celebrated on **15 January** every year, to salute the valiant soldiers who sacrificed their lives to protect the country and its citizens. This year marks the **73rd Indian Army Day**.
- The **Army Day** is celebrated at all **Army Command headquarters** to honour our country's soldiers who set the greatest example of selfless service and brotherhood, and above all, love for the country.
- The day is marked to commemorate the day when **General (later Field Marshal) KM Cariappa** took over the command



of Army from General Sir FRR Bucher, the last British Commander-in-Chief in **1949** and became the first Commander-in-Chief of Indian Army post Independence.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- 28th Chief of Army Staff: General Manoj Mukund Naravane.

**NDRF Celebrates its 16th Raising Day**



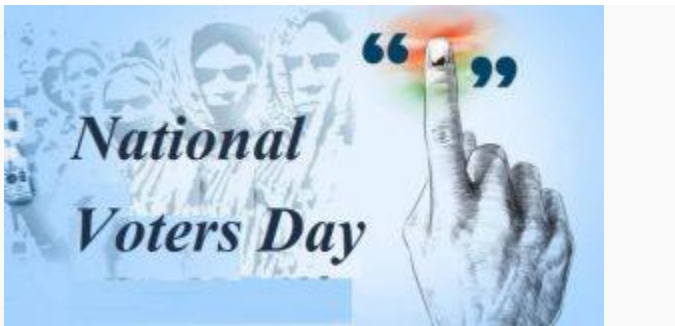
- The **National Disaster Response Force (NDRF)** celebrated its **16th Raising Day** on **18th January**.
- National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), a specialized multi-skilled, humanitarian force of the country, came into existence on **January 19th, 2006** has been playing a vital role in Disaster Management and Community awareness for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) in the country.

**Parakramdiwas is celebrated on 23 January**



- **Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose's**, 125th birth anniversary on **23 January 2021** is observed as **ParakramDiwas**. The day is celebrated to honour and remember Netaji's indomitable spirit and selfless service to the nation.
- Netaji' was born on **January 23, 1897, in Cuttack in Odisha**. He graduated from Kolkata and proved his mettle by becoming an Indian Civil Services (ICS) officer. But he left the comfort and amenities that came with his job and decided to be part of the freedom struggle.
- With the slogan "**Give me blood and I will give you freedom**", he awakened the country towards fighting against the British.
- Netaji built a force known as the **Azad Hind Fauj (Indian National Army)** giving the slogan of "**DilliChalo**". Thousands of soldiers of his 60,000-strong army sacrificed their lives for the country.

**National Voters' Day observed on 25 January**

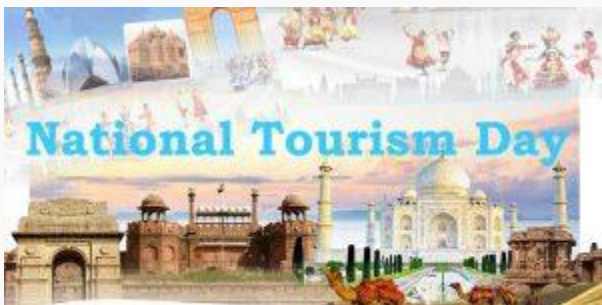


- India observes “**National Voters’ Day**” every year on **January 25** to encourage more young voters to take part in the political process. 2021 marks the **11th National Voters’ Day (NVD)**.
- The theme of NVD 2021 is, ‘**Making Our Voters Empowered, Vigilant, Safe and Informed**’.
- The day has been started from January 25, 2011, to mark the Foundation day of Election Commission of India (ECI), which was established on **25th January 1950**.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- 1st Chief Election Commissioner of Independent India- Sukumar Sen.
- Sunil Arora is the current 23rd Chief Election Commissioner.

**National Tourism Day of India: January 25**

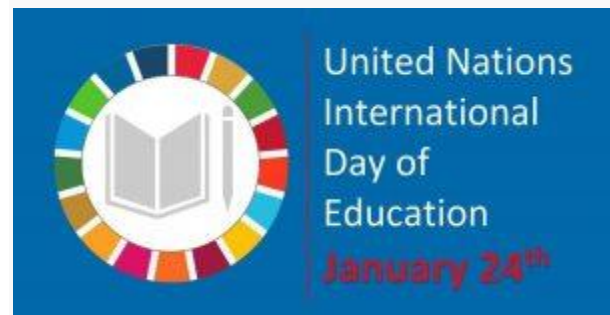


- The Indian government established **January 25** as the **National Tourism Day** to raise awareness about

the importance of tourism for the country’s economy.

- The day is observed to cultivate awareness among the global community on the importance of tourism and its social, political, financial and cultural worth.
- India offers several forms of tourism such as cultural, nature, heritage, educational, business, sports, rural, medical, cruise, and eco-tourism.
- The ministry of tourism is the nodal agency in India to form national policies for the promotion and development of tourism. It also coordinates with central, state agencies and the public sector.

**International Day of Education: 24 January**



- The **United Nations General Assembly** proclaimed **24 January as International Day of Education**, in celebration of the role of education for peace and development.
- The first-ever International Day of Education was celebrated on **24 January 2019** as per the resolution passed by the United Nations General Assembly on **December 3rd 2018** to celebrate the role of education in development.
- The third International Day of Education will be marked under the theme ‘**Recover and Revitalize Education for the COVID-19 Generation**’.
- Now is the time to power education by



stepping up collaboration and international solidarity to place education and lifelong learning at the centre of the recovery.

**National Girl Child Day: January 24**



- In India, the **National Girl Child Day (NGCD)** is observed annually on **January 24**. The day aims to focus on the inequalities faced by girls, to promote the education, health & nutrition of the girl child, and to spread awareness about the rights of a girl child.
- The day was observed for the first time in 2008 as an initiative by the Ministry of Women and Child Development and the Government of India.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Minister of Women and Child Development: Smriti Zubin Irani.

**International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust**



- **International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust** (International Holocaust Remembrance Day) is observed on **27 January** every year since **2006** to commemorate the anniversary of the tragedy of the Holocaust that occurred during the Second World War.
- A genocide occurred during World War II in which Nazi Germany, aided by its collaborators, systematically murdered some six million European Jews, around two-thirds of the Jewish population of Europe, between **1941 and 1945**.
- The theme of the International Holocaust Remembrance Day 2021 is **“Facing the Aftermath: Recovery and Reconstitution after the Holocaust”**.
- United Nations designated the day in **2005** to serve as a date for the official commemoration of the victims of the Nazi regime and to promote Holocaust education throughout the world.

**International Customs Day: 26 January**



- The **International Customs Day (ICD)** is observed on **26 January** every year. The day is celebrated to recognise the role of customs officials and agencies and focus on the working conditions and challenges that customs officers face in their jobs.
- This year International Customs Day theme: “**Customs bolstering Recovery, Renewal and Resilience**”.
- The day was instituted by the World Customs Organization (WCO) to commemorate the day in **1953** when the inaugural session of the Customs Cooperation Council (CCC) was held in **Brussels, Belgium**.
- In 1994 the CCC was renamed World Customs Organization (WCO).

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- World Customs Organization headquarter: Brussels, Belgium.
- World Customs Organization Membership: 182 countries.
- World Customs Organization Secretary-General: Kunio Mikuriya.

**73rd Martyrs’ Day observed on 30 January**



- **Martyr’s Day or Shaheed Diwas** is observed every year on **January 30** in the memory of **Mahatma Gandhi**, who was assassinated at Gandhi Smriti in the Birla House by **Nathuram Godse** in **1948**.
- The day is observed to remember the sacrifices made by freedom fighters in the struggle for India’s independence and to pay our respects to them.
- Notably, Martyrs’ Day is also observed in India on **March 23** to pay respect to **Bhagat Singh, Shivaram Rajguru and Sukhdev Thapar**, who was hanged death on this day in **1931**.

**AGREEMENTS**

**UNDP and PCMC join hands for ‘first social impact bond’**



- **Pimpri Chinchwad Municipal Corporation, Pune** has recently signed

an MoU with **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)** India to co-create **India's first Social Impact Bond (SIB)**.

- This is the first time that a government body will act as the 'outcome funder' in a bond, whereas traditionally most government-funded public projects require large and early investments by the government with a substantial gestation period of outcomes and involve various kinds of risks.
- A Social Impact Bond also called pay-for-success bond or pay-for-success financing or simply social bond is basically a contract with public sector authority, where it pays for better social outcomes.
- This bond is a form of outcome-based contracting and aims at improving social outcomes for a specific group of citizens.
- The PCMC administration will bear the costs of a public welfare project associated with the bond if the pre-defined project targets are fulfilled.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- UNDP Headquarters: New York, New York, United States.
- UNDP Head: Achim Steiner.
- UNDP Founded: 22 November 1965.

**Indian Army inks pact with Goa Shipyard to get 12 fast patrol boats**



- **Indian Army** has inked a contract with **Goa Shipyard Limited (GSL)** to procure **12 Fast Patrol Boats** for surveillance and patrolling of large water bodies, including those in high altitude areas like Pangong Tso lake in Ladakh.
- Pangong Tso's 134-km length is divided into eight 'fingers', military parlance for mountain spurs jutting into the water body that is contested by both sides. The lake is frozen with the onset of winters, and the Army plans to deploy around two dozen such boats by next summer.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Chief of Army Staff: General Manoj Mukund Naravane.

**Tata Power partners with SIDBI to offer easy & affordable financing scheme for MSME**





- **Tata Power**, India's largest integrated power company, announced its partnership with **SIDBI (Small Industries Development Bank of India)** to offer easy and affordable financing scheme for **MSME** customers in the rooftop solar segment.
- This scheme will empower MSMEs to adopt sustainable energy for their businesses and promote greener.
- Easy and affordable financing has been one of the barriers for **penetration of Solar** in the MSME sector in the country.
- In order to address this challenge, Tata Power and SIDBI have joined hands to design a unique Solar financing solution for the MSME customers helping them switch to rooftop solar without any collateral at an interest rate less than **10%**.
- This will also be complemented with a quick sanction and disbursement process (**within 7 days with disbursement in 4 days**).
- This financing scheme is exclusively for MSME customers of **Tata Power for both off-grid and on-grid connections**.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Small Industries Development Bank of

- India (SIDBI) set up on 2nd April 1990.
- SIDBI Headquarters: Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh.
- SIDBI Chairman & MD: Devendra Kumar Singh.
- Tata Power CEO: Praveer Sinha.
- Tata Power Headquarters: Mumbai, Maharashtra.

**10. PNB Collaborates with IIT Kanpur to set up Fintech Innovation Centre**



- **Punjab National Bank** has partnered with **IIT Kanpur** and the **Foundation for Innovation & Research in Science & Technology (FIRST)** to set up a '**Fintech Innovation Centre (FIC)**' at the institute's campus.
- PNB and IIT Kanpur will jointly work to set up this innovation centre as a vehicle for research and development of technological solutions, with the help of FIRST, to address challenges and explore opportunities in the **Banking, financial services and insurance (BFSI)** space.
- PNB intends to create new products or solutions with technological innovations by creating an FIC involving IITK's experienced faculty members with the help of FIRST.
- The collaboration of technical prowess

from IIT Kanpur and financial expertise of PNB makes it an apt “**Fin-Tech**” **partnership** that will help build innovations and entrepreneurial excellence.

- The FIC will be supported by a holistic ecosystem of financial institutions, academia, VC funds, technology companies and key government organisations.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Punjab National Bank Headquarters: New Delhi.
- Punjab National Bank CEO: S. S. Mallikarjuna Rao (1 Oct 2019–).
- Punjab National Bank Founded: 19 May 1894, Lahore, Pakistan.
- Punjab National Bank Founders: Lala Lajpat Rai, Dyal Singh Majithia.

**IREDA-NHPC Partnership in Green Energy Projects**



- **NHPC Limited** has signed an MOU with the **Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency (IREDA)** for providing assistance in setting up renewable energy (RE) projects for the next **5 years**.

- The agreement was signed in the presence of Abhay Kumar Singh, NHPC CMD, and IREDA, CMD, Pradip Kumar Das.
- NHPC will help in the knowledge and technology transfer and provide consultancy and research services.
- NHPC has undertaken an ambitious plan to make a significant impact on the renewable energy landscape of the country.
- Under the plan, NHPC will develop **7.5 GW** of renewable energy projects in the next 3 years.
- NHPC has already successfully commissioned a renewable capacity of **102.5 MW** on an ownership basis and has contracted **2000 MW** as an intermediary procurer basis.

**Bharat Biotech inks pact with Precisa Med to supply Covaxin to Brazil**



- **Bharat Biotech** has announced that it has signed an agreement with **Precisa Medicamentos** for the supply of its indigenously manufactured **Covid-19 vaccine ‘Covaxin’ to Brazil**.
- The supplies of Covaxin will be prioritized for the public market, through direct procurement by Brazil government.

- A team from PrecisaMedicamentos had visited the Bharat Biotech facility in Genome Valley near here last week to discuss export of **COVAXIN**, India's first indigenous vaccine for Covid-19.

## Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- Bharat Biotech Founded: 1996.
- Bharat Biotech Headquarters location: Hyderabad.
- Bharat Biotech Executive director: Dr V Krishna Mohan.

## NITI Aayog and Flipkart collaborate to enhance WEP



- **NITI Aayog and Flipkart**, have come together to launch the revamped **Women Entrepreneurship Platform**.
- The **Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP)** is a unified access portal which brings together women from different parts of India to realise their entrepreneurial aspirations.
- The idea of the platform was first mooted by **Amitabh Kant, CEO, NITI Aayog** who announced the setting-up of a **Women Entrepreneurship Platform** in NITI Aayog at the conclusion of the **8th Global Entrepreneurship Summit (GES)** held

in Hyderabad in 2017, with an overarching theme of **'Women first, prosperity for all'**.

## Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- NITI Aayog Formed: 1 January 2015.
- NITI Aayog Headquarters: New Delhi.
- NITI Aayog Chairperson: Narendra Modi.
- Flipkart headquarters: Bengaluru, Karnataka.
- Flipkart CEO: Kalyan Krishnamurthy.

## FSS and IPPB join hands to promote financial inclusion



- **Financial Software and Systems (FSS)**, a leading payment processor and provider of integrated payment products, has partnered with **India Post Payments Bank (IPPB)** to promote financial inclusion among underserved and unbanked segments.
- IPPB will use **FSS' Aadhaar Enabled Payment System (AePS)** to deliver interoperable and affordable doorstep banking services to customers across India.
- Customers of any bank can access their Aadhaar-linked bank account by simply using their fingerprint for cash



withdrawal, balance enquiry and transfer of funds into an operating IPPB account, right at their doorstep.

- This strategic partnership offers significant opportunities to bring millions of unbanked customers into the financial mainstream. Currently, there are nearly **410 million** Jan Dhan accounts in India.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- MD and CEO of India Post Payments Bank (IPPB): J Venkatramu.
- India Post Payments Bank (IPPB) Headquarters: New Delhi.

**India and Japan inks MoU to enhance cooperation in ICT**



- **India and Japan** have signed an MoU to enhance cooperation in the field of **Information and Communications Technologies (ICT)** via videoconferencing.
- The MoU was signed between Union Minister for Communications, Electronics and IT **Ravi Shankar Prasad** and the Japanese Minister for Internal Affairs and Communications **Takeda Ryota**.
- Both countries will enhance mutual cooperation in the field of 5G technologies, telecom security,

submarine optical fibre cable system to islands of India, spectrum management, smart cities, high altitude platform for broadband in unconnected areas, disaster management and public safety etc.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Japan Capital: Tokyo.
- Japan Currency: Japanese yen.
- Japan Prime minister: Yoshihide Suga.

**India and Japan inks MoC to promote movement of skilled workers**



- **India and Japan** signed a Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) a Basic Framework for Partnership for Proper Operation of the System Pertaining to **Specified Skilled Worker (SSW)**, to promote the movement of skilled workers from **India to Japan**.
- The MoC was signed between Foreign Secretary **Harsh Vardhan Shringla** and Ambassador of Japan to India **Suzuki Satoshi**.
- The MoC covers **14 categories** of specified skills. The skilled workers from India who meet these skills requirement and Japanese language tests would be eligible for employment in Japan on a contractual basis.

- These workers would be granted the status of Specified Skilled Worker by Japan.

## Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- Japan Capital: Tokyo.
- Japan Currency: Japanese yen.
- Japan Prime minister: Yoshihide Suga.

## India Inks Strategic Partnership Agreement with IEA



- **India** has inked a strategic partnership agreement with the **International Energy Agency (IEA)**, the world's premier energy monitor, on 27 January 2021.
- The objective of the MoU is to strengthen cooperation in global energy security, stability and sustainability as well as strengthen mutual trust and cooperation between IEA members and the Government of India.
- The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between Power Secretary **Sanjiv Nandan Sahai** and IEA Executive Director **Fatih Birol**. This deal will help India to gain full membership of IEA.

## Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- International Energy Agency headquarters: Paris, France.

- International Energy Agency Member Countries: 30.
- International Energy Agency Establishment: November 1974.

## Prakash Javadekar launches 2021 as Indo-French Year of the Environment



- The Union Minister of Environment, Forest & Climate Change **Prakash Javadekar** has launched the **Indo-French Year of the Environment**, along with **Barbara Pompili**, the French Minister for Ecological Transition in **New Delhi**.
- The basic objective of this partnership is to strengthen Indo-French cooperation in sustainable development, increase the effectiveness of actions in favour of global environment protection and give them greater visibility.
- This collaboration and the **Indo-French Environment year** will be held under the Ministry of Ecological Transition, in association with the Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs along with the support of the Embassy of France in Delhi and its partners from the French side.

## Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- France Capital: Paris.

- France President: Emmanuel Macron.
- France Prime minister: Jean Castex.
- France Currency: Euro.

**APPOINTMENTS**

**Umesh Sinha named deputy election commissioner**



- **Umesh Sinha** has been named as the **deputy election commissioner** in the **Election Commission of India**.
- Sinha, a 1986-batch IAS officer (retired) is at present serving as secretary-general in the commission.
- The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet cleared the extension in the term of reemployment of Sinha as deputy election commissioner on contract basis for a period of six months beyond December 31, 2020.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Chief Election Commissioner of India: Sunil Arora.
- Chief Election Commissioner Formed: 25 January 1950.
- Chief Election Commissioner Headquarters: New Delhi.

**ISRO Chairman K Sivan gets one year extension up to 2022**



- The Central Government has approved the extension of the term of ISRO Chairman **K Sivan**, for a period of **one year**. He was due to retire on **January 14, 2021**.
- Sivan will now continue as ISRO Chairman and Secretary, Department of Space up to **January 14, 2022**. He joined ISRO in **1982**, has been the chairman of the space agency since **January 2018**.
- ISRO chief has imminent knowledge in Aerospace engineering, Space Transportation Systems Engineering, Launch vehicles, mission simulation software design and many other operations related to Space programs.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- ISRO Chairman: K.Sivan.
- ISRO Headquarters: Bengaluru, Karnataka.
- ISRO established: 15 August 1969.

**Soma Mondal takes charge as new SAIL Chairman**





- **Soma Mondal** has taken over as the new **Chairman of Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL)** with effect from **January 01, 2021**.
- She is the first-ever women-head of the body. She replaces **Anil Kumar Chaudhary**, who superannuated on 31 December 2020. She joined SAIL in 2017 as the director (commercial).

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- SAIL Headquarters: New Delhi.
- SAIL founded: 19 January 1954.

**Suneet Sharma takes over as new Chairman & CEO of Railway Board**



- The appointments committee of the Cabinet has approved **Suneet Sharma** appointment as **Chairman &**

**CEO of Railway Board, Ministry of Railways and ex-officio Principal Secretary to Government of India.**

- He took over in his new role with effect from **January 01, 2021**. The extended one-year tenure of Sharma's predecessor, **Vinod Kumar Yadav**, who also became the restructured Board's first CEO, ended on December 31, 2020.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Railway Board Founded: March 1905.
- Headquarters of Railway Board: New Delhi.

**Pankaj Mithal sworn in as CJ of J&K, Ladakh Court**



- **Justice Pankaj Mithal** has been appointed as the new **Chief Justice (CJ) of the Common High Court for the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir and Union Territory of Ladakh** in Jammu on January 04, 2021.
- Chief justice Mithal has been appointed in view of the retirement of chief justice **Gita Mittal** recently. Chief Justice Mithal was administered the oath of office by Lieutenant Governor of J&k, Manoj Sinha.

**GJC elects Ashish Pethe as New Chairman**



- The **All India Gem and Jewellery Domestic Council (GJC)**, the national apex body of the gems and jewellery industry, has announced the appointment of **Ashish Pethe** as chairman and **Saiyam Mehra** as vice chairman for a period of two years.
- Pethe has been closely associated with GJC and was the Zonal Chairman West, which he will continue even after this new position.
- The entire e-Voting election process was conducted by an authorised independent person (Chief Election Authority), and the voting platform was created by a digital agency, both appointed by GJC.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- All India Gem and Jewellery Domestic Council HQ: Mumbai, Maharashtra.
- All India Gem and Jewellery Domestic Council Founded: 2005.

**Sanjay Kapoor elected All India Chess Federation president**



- **Sanjay Kapoor** was elected president of the **All India Chess Federation (AICF)** while **Bharat Singh Chauhan** retained the **secretary's post**.
- Kapoor, representing Uttar Pradesh Chess Association, defeated incumbent PR Venketrama Raja in a close contest.
- Kapoor received 33 votes as against 31 of Raja. Chauhan beat Ravindra Dongre 35-29. Apart from the president, secretary and treasurer, six vice-presidents and six joint secretaries were also elected.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- All India Chess Federation Headquarters: Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium; Chennai.
- All India Chess Federation Founded: 1951.

**Lt Gen Shantanu Dayal to take charge as Deputy Chief of Army Staff**



- **Lt Gen Shantanu Dayal** has been named the new **Deputy Chief of Army Staff (DCOAS)**. Lt Gen Dayal is the Corps Commander of the Tejpur based 4 Corps. He will take the place of **Lt Gen SS Hasabnis** who superannuated on December 31 as soon as his replacement arrives.
- **Indian Army** has undergone a major reshuffle at the top within the Army Headquarters and at the various other formations including the Corps Commanders, administrative and training institutions witnessing the change of guard.
- The other significant change is in the newly-created Department of Military Affairs (DMA) with Chief of Defence Staff as its first Secretary.
- **Lt Gen Taranjit Singh**, the first Army officer to join as the Additional Secretary in the **Department of Military Affairs (DMA)** under the Ministry of Defence.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Chief of the Army Staff: General Manoj Mukund Naravane

**Karan Bajwa to head Google Cloud in Asia Pacific**

- **Google Cloud** has announced the elevation of **Karan Bajwa** as its new leader for the **Asia Pacific**.
- Presently, Bajwa leads Google Cloud in India. He will lead all regional revenue and go-to-market operations for Google Cloud, including on **Google Cloud Platform (GCP)** and **Google Workspace**. He succeeds **Rick Harshman** who leaves the organisation for a new opportunity.
- At present, Bajwa is based in **Gurgaon** but will relocate to **Singapore in 2021**. He will continue to lead Google Cloud in India until a new senior leader for the business is appointed.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- CEO of Google: Sundar Pichai; Headquarters: California, United States.

**Arup Kumar Goswami sworn in as CJ of Andhra Pradesh High Court**





- **Arup Kumar Goswami** was sworn in as the **Chief Justice (CJ)** of **Andhra Pradesh High Court** by Governor **Biswabhusan Harichandan** in the presence of Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy.
- Justice Goswami was transferred from the Sikkim High Court a few days ago. He replaced **J.K. Maheswari** who has been posted as the Chief Justice of Sikkim High Court.
- Chief Justice Goswami began his career as an advocate with the Bar Council of **Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura** in 1985.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh: YS Jagan Mohan Reddy; Governor: BiswaBhusanHarichandan.

**Hima Kohli appointed as 1st Woman Chief Justice of Telangana High Court**



- The senior-most judge of Delhi High Court, Justice **Hima Kohli** has been appointed as the new **Chief Justice of Telangana High Court**. She is the first woman to be sworn in as CJ of Telangana HC.
- Justice Kohli was administered the oath of office by Telangana Governor Dr **Tamilisai Soundararajan**. She replaces **CJ Raghendra Singh Chauhan**, who has been appointed as the **CJ of Uttarakhand HC**.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Chief Minister of Telangana: K Chandrasekhar Rao; Governor: Tamilisai Soundararajan.

**JK Maheshwari sworn in as Chief Justice of Sikkim High Court**



- Justice **Jitendra Kumar**

**Maheshwari** was sworn in as the new **Chief Justice of Sikkim High Court**.

- Governor Ganga Prasad administered the oath of office to Justice Maheshwari during a function held in Raj Bhavan.
- Chief Justice **Arup Kumar Goswami** of the Sikkim High Court has now been transferred for appointment as the Andhra Pradesh High Court's Chief Justice.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Chief Minister of Sikkim: PS Golay.
- Governor of Sikkim: Ganga Prasad.

**Justice Sudhanshu Dhulia appointed as Chief Justice of Gauhati High Court**



- **Justice Sudhanshu Dhulia** appointed as **Chief Justice of the Gauhati High Court** informed the Ministry of Law and Justice.
- The President of India, **Ram Nath Kovind** in the exercise of the power conferred by **clause (1) of Article 217** of the Constitution of India, appointed Justice Sudhanshu Dhulia, Judge of the **Uttarakhand High Court**, as Chief Justice of the Gauhati High Court.
- Justice Sudhanshu Dhulia, was enrolled as an Advocate on July 7, 1986, and

practised in the Allahabad and Uttarakhand High Courts in Civil, Constitutional, Service, and Labour matters and has specialized in Service and Constitutional matters.

- He was appointed as a permanent judge of the Uttarakhand High Court on November 1, 2008.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Chief Minister of Assam: Sarbananda Sonowal; Governor: Prof. Jagdish Mukhi.

**Abhishek Yadav appointed as AIFF's first Deputy General Secretary**

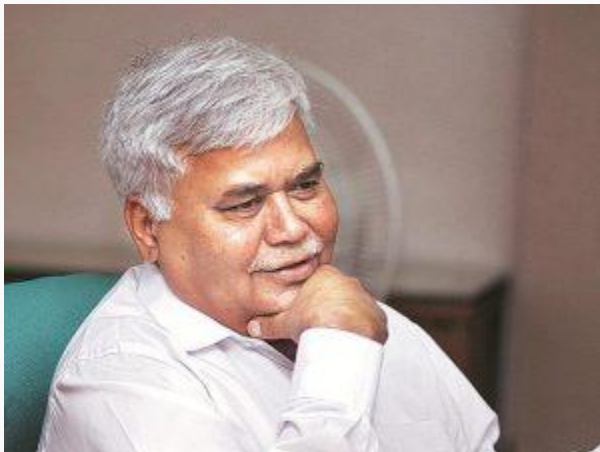


- Former India striker **Abhishek Yadav** has been appointed as the first deputy general secretary of **All India Football Federation (AIFF)** after the sports body decided to create a new post in its hierarchy.
- The 40-year-old former international, who has played with the likes of Bhaichung Bhutia, Sunil Chhetri, Mahesh Gawli and Climax Lawrence, has been serving as national team's director since January 2018.
- Yadav has also served as the Chief Operating Officer (COO) of the 2017 U17 Indian World Cup team, collaborating closely with Luis Norton de Maros, the head coach.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- All India Football Federation President: Praful Patel.
- All India Football Federation Vice-President: Subrata Dutta.
- All India Football Federation Founded: 23 June 1937.
- All India Football Federation Headquarters: Dwarka, Delhi.

**RS Sharma to head empowered panel for Covid-19 vaccine**



- The Union government has appointed **RS Sharma**, former Trai chief, as the chairperson of an empowered committee for the administration of **Covid-19 vaccine**. A ten-member team has been constituted to be headed by Sharma.
- This has come days ahead of the mega vaccination drive is to start in India. He has also been included as a member of the **National Expert Group on Vaccine Administration of Covid-19 that was formed in August 2020**.

- RS Sharma was the first person to officially initiate a discussion on vaccination delivery in the government in the summer of 2020 when Covid-19 cases peaked.
- The top **health ministry and UIDAI** officials are part of the empowered committee.
- The panel can invite eminent persons as and when required to ensure delivery of the vaccine through the Co-Win technology platform.

**Dushyant Dave resigns as SC Bar Association (SCBA) President**



- **Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA)** president, **Dushyant Dave** has resigned from his post with immediate effect, he has forfeited his right to continue.
- Acting SCBA Secretary **Rohit Panday** confirmed the development that the senior advocate has resigned with immediate effect.
- The SCBA is an Indian bar association, comprising the practising lawyers of the Supreme Court of India.
- The SCBA has been in the vanguard of the movement for upholding, maintaining and consolidation of the constitutional values of democracy, rule of law and independence of Judiciary. In its meeting dated **4th May 1951**.
- The Committee in its resolution observed that no attempt should be



made to abridge or limit the Fundamental Rights.

- The Committee further pointed out that the Constitution was in operation only for a short period of sixteen months and the Supreme Court had no occasion to pronounce on the validity of various State laws.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Supreme Court Bar Association Headquarters: New Delhi, India.

**Intel appoints Pat Gelsinger as new CEO**



- Intel has appointed **Pat Gelsinger** as its new **Chief Executive Officer**, effective Feb. 15, 2021. Gelsinger will also join the **Intel board of directors** upon assuming the role.
- He will succeed **Bob Swan**, who will remain CEO until Feb. 15.
- Gelsinger is an industry veteran with more than four decades of technology and leadership experience, including 30 years at Intel where he began his career.
- Pat is a proven technology leader with a distinguished track record of innovation, talent development, and deep knowledge of Intel.
- He will continue a values-based cultural

leadership approach with a hyper-focus on operational execution.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Intel Founded: 18 July 1968.
- Intel Headquarters: Santa Clara, California, United States.
- Intel Founders: Gordon Moore and Robert Noyce.

**TEPC appoints Sandeep Aggarwal as new Chairman**



- The **Telecom Equipment and Services Export Promotion Council (TEPC)** has appointed **Sandeep Aggarwal** as the new Chairman. Aggarwal, the Managing Director and Promoter of Delhi-based Paramount Communications, will take over from **Shyamal Ghosh**, ex-Telecom Secretary.
- TEPC is an independent body set up by the government to promote and develop the export of telecom equipment and services.

**Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw selected as one of USIBC vice-chair**



- The **US-India Business Council (USIBC)** has selected three top corporate leaders as the **Vice-Chairs of 2021 Global Board of Directors** of USIBC with immediate effect.
- The three new appointees will now work with USIBC President **Nisha Biswal** and the Council's policy directors, for strengthening US-India commercial relationship for the future.

**The three newly appointed VCs are**

- Biocon Executive Chairperson: **Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw.**
- Amway CEO: **Milind Pant.**
- Vice-chair at Nasdaq: **Edward Knight.**

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- US-India Business Council Founded: 1975.
- US-India Business Council Headquarters: Washington, D.C., United States.

**Vishwavir Ahuja re-appointed as RBL Bank chief**



- The board of directors of **RBL Bank** has approved the re-appointment of **Vishwavir Ahuja** as the **Managing Director and CEO** of the bank for three years.
- The re-appointment is with effect from **June 30, 2021, to June 29, 2024**, and the same is being recommended to the Reserve Bank of India and shall be subject to their approval, the bank said in a regulatory filing. He has been MD & CEO of RBL Bank since June 30, 2010.
- Prior to joining RBL Bank, he was the MD & CEO of Bank of America, India, from 2001 to 2009. As per the regulatory filing, under Ahuja's leadership, the deposits of the bank have grown almost 40 times, while advances have grown more than 45 times since 2011.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- RBL Bank Ltd Incorporated: 1943, under the Indian Companies Act, 1913
- RBL Bank Ltd Headquarters: Mumbai, Maharashtra.
- RBL Bank Ltd Tagline: Apno Ka Bank.

**Kiren Rijju gets additional charge of AyushMinistry**



- Ministry for Sports and Youth Affairs, **Kiren Rijju** has been given the additional charge of the **Ayush Ministry**. He will hold the fort till Shripad Yesso Naik recovers from an accident.
- The President has directed that this arrangement may continue till Shri Shripad Yesso Naik resumes his work related to **Ministry of AYUSH.**”
- The President, as advised by the Prime Minister, has directed that during the hospitalisation and treatment of Shri **Shripad Yesso Naik**, Minister of State (Independent Charge) of Ministry of Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homeopathy (AYUSH); and Minister of State in Ministry of Defence, following a road accident, his portfolio related to Ministry of AYUSH, be **temporarily assigned** to Shri Kiren Rijju, Minister of State (Independent Charge) in addition to his existing portfolios.

**Govt appoints Siddhartha Mohanty as managing director of LIC**



- The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has appointed **Siddhartha Mohanty** as the managing director of India's largest insurer **Life Insurance Corporation (LIC)** from February 1 onwards.
- He is currently CEO of LIC Housing Finance Limited. He will serve as the MD of LIC till his superannuation on **June 30, 2023**. He will be replacing **TC Suseel Kumar**, who is set to retire on **January 31, 2021**.
- LIC has four MDs and one chairman. Currently, MR Kumar is serving as the chairman of the corporation and **TC Suseel Kumar, Vipin Anand, Mukesh Kumar Gupta, and Raj Kumar** are serving as the MDs of LIC.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Life Insurance Corporation Founded: 1 September 1956.
- Life Insurance Corporation Headquarters: Mumbai.

**ACC appoints Sanjeev Kumar as new CMD of TCIL**





- The **Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC)** has approved the appointment of **Sanjeev Kumar** as the new **Chairman & Managing Director (CMD)** of **Telecommunications Consultants India Limited (TCIL)**.
- According to an order from the Department of Personnel & Training (DoPT), Kumar has been appointed to the post for a **period of five years** from the date of assumption of the charge of the post, or till the age of superannuation, or until further orders, whichever is earlier. He is currently serving as Director (Technical) in **Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited (MTNL)**.
- Telecommunications Consultants India Limited (TCIL) is a Miniratna PSU under the administrative control of the Department of Telecommunications, Ministry of Communications. TCIL, a premier telecommunication consultancy and engineering company is making available its vast and varied telecom expertise to friendly developing countries.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Telecommunications Consultants India Limited Founded: 1978.
- Telecommunications Consultants India Limited Headquarters: New Delhi.

**Sundaram Finance names Rajiv Lochan as MD**



- The board of **Sundaram Finance** has named **Rajiv Lochan** (director Strategy) as **managing director** with effect from April 1. **Sundaram Finance Ltd** has made top-level changes as the current managing director **T.T. Srinivasaraghavan** will be retiring on **March 31, 2020**.
- While the current deputy managing director **Harsha Viji** will assume the office of executive vice-chairman, and take responsibility for the overall strategy and direction of Sundaram Finance Ltd., and other group companies in financial services.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Sundaram Finance Ltd Founded: 1954.
- Sundaram Finance Ltd Founder: T.S.Santhanam.
- Sundaram Finance Ltd Headquarters: Chennai, Tamil Nadu.

**Dhanlaxmi Bank Board approves appointment of J K Shivan as MD and CEO**



- Board of Directors of Kerala-based **Dhanlaxmi Bank** have given the approval to appoint **J K Shivan** as **managing director and CEO** of the Bank. It may be recalled that the shareholders of the Kerala-based had voted against MD & CEO **Sunil Gurbaxani** On September 30, 2020. Then, in December that year, the lender appointed Shivan as the new MD & CEO.
- However, the banking regulator, **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)**, had asked the Dhanlaxmi Bank Board to get shareholders' approval before appointing J K Shivan as the next chief of the bank.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Dhanlaxmi Bank  
Headquarters: Thrissur, Kerala.
- Dhanlaxmi Bank Founded: 1927.

**Swaminathan Janakiraman and Aswini Kumar Tewari appointed as MDs of SBI**

- The appointments committee (ACC) of the Cabinet has approved the appointment of **Swaminathan Janakiraman** and **Ashwini Kumar Tewari** as new **Managing Directors (MDs)** of **State Bank of India (SBI)** for a period of three years.
- Prior to this, Swaminathan Janakiraman was the deputy managing director (Finance) at SBI and Ashwini Kumar Tewari was serving as MD & CEO of SBI Card, a subsidiary of SBI.
- SBI is headed by a Chairman and four managing directors. **Dinesh Kumar Khara** is the current Chairman of the bank. The other two MDs of the bank are **C.S. Setty** and **Ashwani Bhatia**. The two posts were vacant since October 2020.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- State Bank of India Headquarters: Mumbai; Founded: 1 July 1955.

**AWARDS**

**AIIMS Bhubaneswar receives Kayakalp Award for 3rd time**



- The **All India Institutes of Medical Sciences (AIIMS)** in **Bhubaneswar** has proved its mettle once again for promoting cleanliness, hygiene and creating sustainable practices in public health facilities by winning the **Kayakalp Award Scheme**.
- AIIMS Bhubaneswar will get an award of **Rs 2 crore** for the performance. The institute has been adjudged as the best central government hospital under B category for cleanliness for a **third consecutive year**.
- It had earlier received the award in **2018** as well as in **2019** for becoming second cleanest hospital in the country among category B hospitals (less than 1000 beds) and received **Rs one crore** as prize money.

**Biswajit Chatterjee conferred 'Indian Personality of the Year' award at IFFI**



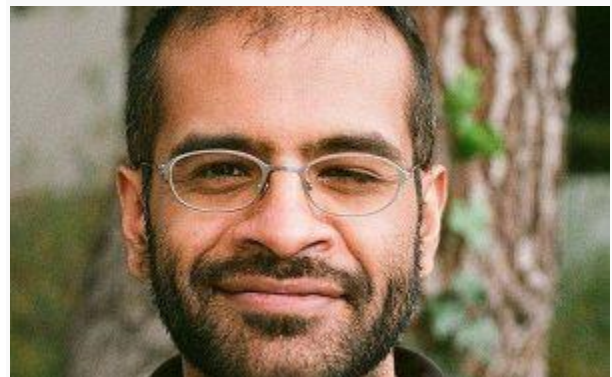
- Union Minister for Information and

**Broadcasting Prakash**

**Javadekar** announced veteran actor, director and singer **Biswajit Chatterjee** as the recipient of the **'Indian Personality of the Year' award**.

- The 84-year-old actor is known for featuring in films like "Bees Saal Baad", "Night In London" and "April Fool".
- Chatterjee started his career in the late 1950s and went on to work in films like "BiwiAurMakan", "Sagaai", "Kohra" among others. In 1975, he directed and produced "Kahte Hain Mujhko Raja", featuring himself along with Dharmendra, Hema Malini and Rekha.

**Nikhil Srivastava named joint winner of Michael and Sheila Held Prize**



- **Nikhil Srivastava**, a young Indian mathematician, has been named winner of the prestigious **2021 Michael and Sheila Held Prize** along with two others for solving long-standing questions on the Kadison-Singer problem and on Ramanujan graphs. Srivastava is currently Associate Professor of Mathematics at the University of California.
- Srivastava from the University of California, Berkeley, **Adam Marcus**, the Ecole Polytechnique Federale de Lausanne (EPFL) and **Daniel Alan**



**Spielman** from Yale University will receive the 2021 Michael and Sheila Held Prize.

**Shyam Srinivasan is Business Standard Banker of the Year**



- **Shyam Srinivasan**, managing director and chief executive officer (CEO) of **Federal Bank**, is the **Business Standard Banker of the Year for 2019-20**.
- The award was given for his bank's consistent healthy performance at a time when most of its peers witnessed large stress on asset quality, registered losses, or even invited regulatory actions.
- The unanimous decision was taken by a high-profile jury of five, chaired by former RBI deputy governor **S S Mundra**. He was chosen for his bank's consistent healthy performance at a time when most of its peers witnessed losses or other issues.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Federal Bank Founder: K.P Hormis.

- Federal Bank Founded: 23 April 1931.

**Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar 2021**



- The **Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar (PMRBP)** for the year 2021 has been conferred to 32 children, hailing from 32 districts of 21 States/UTs.
- The PMRBP award is given by the Government of India to the children with exceptional abilities and outstanding accomplishments, in the fields of innovation, scholastic, sports, arts & culture, social service and bravery.

**Ministry of Home Affairs Padma Awards 2021 announced**



- The **Ministry of Home Affairs** has announced a list of **119 personalities** who will be conferred the Padma Awards by **President Ram Nath Kovind** this year.
- These awards cater to various disciplines including art, social work, public affairs, science and engineering, trade and industry, medicine, literature and education, sports and civil service.
- While 'Padma Shri' is awarded for distinguished service in any field, '**Padma Bhushan**' is awarded for distinguished service of a high order.
- On the other hand, '**Padma Vibhushan**' is awarded for exceptional and distinguished service. Among the **2021 awardees, 29 are women, one is a transgender, 10 are foreigners/NRIs/OCI and 16 have passed away.**
- There will be no recipient of the **Bharat Ratna in 2021**. The Padma Awards shall be formally conferred by the President in the Rashtrapati Bhawan in March or April.

**51st International Film Festival of India Concludes**



- The **51st edition of International Film Festival of India (IFFI)** was held from

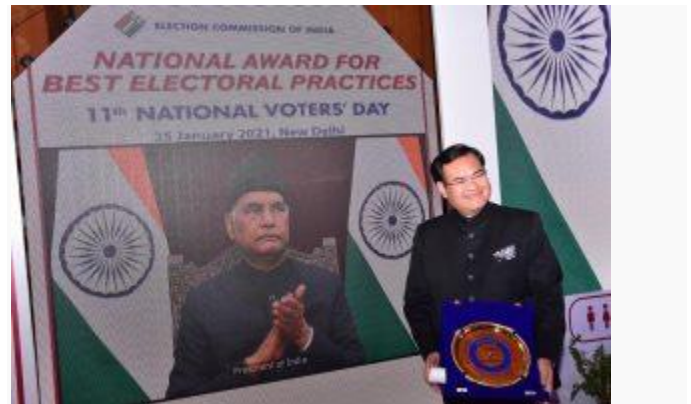
16 January to 24 January 2021 at Shyamaprasad Stadium near **Panaji in Goa.**

- Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the festival was held in hybrid mode, there was the physical and virtual screening of 50 films out of 224 films across various categories.
- **Bangladesh** was a country of focus at the festival. Four films of Bangladesh was included in '**country of focus**' section.

**The winners of the IFFI awards are listed below:**

- Golden Peacock Award for Best Film: Into the Darkness
- Silver Peacock Award for Best Actor (Male): Tzu-Chuan Liu, The Silent Forest
- Silver Peacock Award for Best Actor (Female): ZofiaStafiej, I Never Cry
- Silver Peacock Award for Best Director: Chen-Nien Ko, The Silent Forest
- Best Debut Director Award: Cássio Pereira dos Santos, Valentina
- Special Mention Award: Kripal Kalita, Bridge
- Special Jury Award: KaminKalev, February
- ICFT UNESCO Gandhi Award: Ameen Nayfeh's 200 Meters
- Indian Personality of the Year Award: Biswajit Chatterjee
- Lifetime Achievement: Vittorio Storaro (Italian cinematographer).

**Rajendra Kumar Bhandari wins Subhash Bose AapdaPrabandhanPuraskar 2021**



- The **Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar 2021** has been conferred upon **Dr Rajendra Kumar Bhandari** in the Individual category and **Sustainable Environment and Ecological Development Society (SEEDS)** in Institutional category.
- The award carries a cash prize of **Rs 51 lakh** and a certificate for an institution and **Rs 5 lakh** and a certificate in case of an individual.
- The Government of India announces the award every year on **January 23**, the birth anniversary of **Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose**, to recognise and honour the invaluable contribution and selfless service rendered by individuals and organisations in India in the field of disaster management.

**Meghalaya wins National Award for Best Electoral Practices 2020**

- The **Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, Meghalaya** was selected for a Special Award for Information Technology applications in Elections by the **Election Commission of India (ECI)**, in the **National Best Electoral Practices Awards-2020**.
- President **Ram Nath Kovind** virtually conferred the award to Meghalaya CEO **F.R. Kharkongor** at the National Voters' Day Award function held in New Delhi.
- The award recognises the sustained and consistent IT application efforts in electoral activities being made by the Office of the CEO in the entire Enrolment to Elections (E2E) process and for leveraging technology for the benefit of all categories of voters, both general and persons with disabilities (PWDs).
- The ECI has consistently been championing the use of technology covering the non-election period, such as voter portal, voter helpline app, SMS, 1950 helpline, political party registration and online tracking.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Meghalaya Capital: Shillong.
- Meghalaya Governor: Satya Pal Malik.
- Meghalaya Chief minister: Conrad Sangma.



**Ram Temple tableau of Uttar Pradesh on Republic Day wins 1st prize**



- The **Ram Temple** tableau of **Uttar Pradesh** that was on display during the **Republic Day 2021** has bagged the **first prize** among all tableaux. The theme of Uttar Pradesh’s tableau was **‘Ayodhya: Cultural Heritage of Uttar Pradesh’**.
- The cultural heritage of ancient holy town Ayodhya, a replica of a Ram temple, a glimpse of ‘Deepotsav’ and various stories from Ramayana epic were depicted in the tableau.
- The **Tripura** tableau won the **second prize** for the Republic Day parade. **Uttarakhand’s** tableau on the theme **‘Dev Bhoomi — The Land of the Gods’** was adjudged third among the states and union territories.
- The tableau of **Central Public Works Department (CPWD)**, with the theme **‘Amar Jawan’**, bagged a special prize for paying tribute to the fallen heroes of the armed forces.



- **Reserve Bank of India** has launched a **Digital Payments Index (DPI)** to capture the extent of digitization of digital/electronic payments across the country.
- This RBI-Digital Payments Index (DPI) has **5 broad parameters** that will be used for the measurement of deepening and penetration of digital payments.
- The RBI-DPI comprises of 5 broad parameters that enable measurement of deepening and penetration of digital payments in the country over different time periods.
- These parameters are – (i) Payment Enablers (weight 25%), (ii) Payment Infrastructure – Demand-side factors (10%), (iii) Payment Infrastructure – Supply-side factors (15%), (iv) Payment Performance (45%) and (v) Consumer Centricity (5%).
- The base period for RBI-DPI is March 2018. This means that the DPI score for March 2018 is set at **100**. RBI has calculated the DPI for March 2019 and March 2020 at **153.47** and **207.84** respectively, indicating appreciable growth. RBI-DPI shall be published on a semi-annual basis from **March 2021** onwards with a lag of 4 months.

**BANKING**

**RBI introduces the RBI-Digital Payments Index**

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- RBI 25th Governor: Shaktikant Das; Headquarters: Mumbai; Founded: 1 April 1935, Kolkata.

**IDBI Bank launches video KYC facility for opening savings bank accounts**



- **IDBI Bank** announced the launch of video **KYC account opening (VAO) facility** for savings bank accounts. Through the facility, a customer can open a savings account with the lender from the convenience of his/her home or office as there are no physical forms to be filled or visits to be made to the branch.
- Video KYC is a quick and easy way to open a savings account from the comforts of your home. It ensures that the online journey for opening savings account remains safe, simple, and fast eliminating the need to visit the branch for KYC.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- IDBI Bank CEO: Rakesh Sharma.
- IDBI Bank Headquarters: Mumbai, Maharashtra.

**RBI introduces Legal Entity Identifier for**

**NEFT, RTGS transactions above Rs 50 crore**



- The **Reserve Bank of India** has introduced **Legal Entity Identifier (LEI)** for all payment transactions of value **Rs 50 crore** and above undertaken by entities (non-individuals) via **Real Time Gross Settlement (RTGS)** and **National Electronic Funds Transfer (NEFT)**.
- Real-Time Gross Settlement (RTGS) and National Electronic Funds Transfer (NEFT) are the Centralised Payment Systems operated by RBI. This instruction shall come into effect from **April 01, 2021**.
- The Legal Entity Identifier (LEI) is a **20-digit number** used to uniquely identify parties to financial transactions worldwide.
- Reserve Bank has introduced LEI in a phased manner for participants in the **over the counter (OTC)** derivative and non-derivative markets as also for large corporate borrowers.
- LEI can be obtained from **Legal Entity Identifier India Ltd. (LEIL)** which is wholly owned subsidiary of **Clearing Corporation of India Ltd (CCIL)**.

**Important takeaways for all competitive**

**exams:**

- RBI 25th Governor: Shaktikant Das; Headquarters: Mumbai; Founded: 1 April 1935, Kolkata.

**SMCB becomes India's 1st urban co-operative bank to transition to SFB**



- Uttar Pradesh-based, **Shivalik Mercantile Co-operative Bank (SMCB)** has become the first **urban co-operative bank (UCB)** in India to receive a licence from **RBI** to operate as a **Small Finance Bank (SFB)**.
- The RBI had given an 18-month timeline to commence business.
- SMCB received the commercial banking license from banking regulator Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on January 06, 2021, to transition to an SFB, under the voluntary transition scheme. The Shivalik Small Finance Bank (SSFB) will start its banking operations from **April 2021**.
- SSFB operates through 31 branches and over 250 banking agents in Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Delhi, and Uttarakhand with 400,000 customers. As on March 31, 2020, the total deposit base of the bank stood at **Rs 1,140 crore** and total advances stood at **Rs 719 crore**.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Suveer Kumar Gupta, MD & CEO of Shivalik Mercantile Cooperative Bank.
- Shivalik Mercantile Cooperative Bank HQ: Saharanpur, Uttar Pradesh.

**RBI sets up College of Supervisors chaired by N S Viswanathan**



- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has set up an academic advisory council called '**College of Supervisors (CoS)**' to further strengthen supervision over regulated entities.
- The Cos will be headed by former deputy governor **N S Viswanathan** and will have five other members.
- The objective of the council will be to identify areas where skill building/upskilling are required, plan and develop curricula of all programmes, benchmark the programmes with international standards/best practices, and develop appropriate teaching methods, etc.

**Other members include:**

- Arijit Basu, State Bank of India Managing Director
- Paresh Sukhankar, former HDFC Bank



Deputy Managing Director

- S Raghunath of Bangalore IIM
- TadhagathaBandyophyay of Ahmedabad IIM and
- Subrata Sarkar of IGIDR, Mumbai.

**IDFC Mutual Fund unveils new investor awareness campaign #PaisonKoRokoMat**



- **IDFC Mutual Funds** has launched its latest pan-India investor awareness campaign titled **#PaisonKoRokoMat**. With this new campaign, IDFC Mutual Fund aims to shift the conversation regarding wealth creation from the traditional to the contemporary.
- This new campaign of **IDFC Mutual Fund** urges savers to become investors and explore the smart and modern mutual fund vehicle for their investments.
- The **360-degree campaign** focuses on looking beyond the traditional ways of growing your money and using your goals to allocate your money across asset classes and investment solutions.
- The campaign has been conceptualised and created by **TBWAIndia**.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- IDFC First Bank CEO: V. Vaidyanathan.
- IDFC First Bank Headquarters: Mumbai.

- IDFC First Bank Founded: October 2015.

**RBI cancels the licence of Vasantdada Nagari Sahakari Bank**



- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has cancelled the licence of Maharashtra-based **Vasantdada Nagari Sahakari Bank**, with immediate effect.
- Vasantdada Nagari Sahakari Bank Ltd will now not be allowed to conduct the business of 'banking', including acceptance of deposits and repayment of deposits, with effect from the close of business on **January 11, 2021**.
- RBI has requested the Commissioner for Cooperation and Registrar of Cooperative Societies (RCS), Maharashtra to issue an order for winding up the bank and appoint a liquidator for the bank.
- The Bank has failed to comply with the requirements of **Section 11(1)** read with **Section 56** of BR Act and thus would be unable to pay its present depositors in full in its current financial position.
- With the cancellation of licence and commencement of liquidation proceedings, the process of paying the depositors of Vasantdada Nagari

Sahakari Bank Ltd., Osmanabad, Maharashtra as per the **DICGC Act, 1961** will be set in motion.

- Every depositor is entitled to repayment of his/her deposits up to **Rs 5,00,000** from the DICGC. More than **99%** of the depositors of the bank will get full repayment of their deposits from DICGC.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation Establishment: 1978.
- Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation Chairman: Michael Debabrata Patra (Deputy Governor, RBI).
- Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation Headquarter: Mumbai, Maharashtra.
- Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Headquarters: Mumbai, Maharashtra.
- Reserve Bank of India Establishment: 1 April 1935.
- Reserve Bank of India Governor: Shaktikanta Das.
- Reserve Bank of India Deputy Governors: 4 (Bibhu Prasad Kanungo, Mahesh Kumar Jain, Michael Debabrata Patra, and M Rajeswar Rao).

**RBI slaps Rs 2 crore fine on Deutsche Bank for non-compliance**



- The **Reserve Bank of India** has imposed a penalty of **Rs 2 crore** on **Deutsche Bank AG** for non-compliance with certain provisions of directions concerning interest rate on deposits.
- The central bank said the statutory inspection of Deutsche Bank’s financial position as on **March 31, 2019**, and the **Risk Assessment Report** revealed non-compliance with the ‘**Reserve Bank of India (Interest Rate on Deposits) Directions, 2016**’.
- The action was based on the deficiencies in regulatory compliance and was not intended to pronounce upon the validity of any transaction or agreement entered into by the bank with its customers.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Deutsche Bank CEO: Christian Sewing.
- Deutsche Bank Headquarters: Frankfurt, Germany.
- Deutsche Bank Founded: 10 March 1870.

**YES Bank launches wellness themed credit card**



- **Yes Bank** has announced its partnership with **Aditya Birla Wellness Private Limited** to launch the ‘**YES BANK Wellness**’ and ‘**YES BANK Wellness Plus**’ **Credit Cards** – aimed at the holistic health, self-care and wellness of consumers.
- This is an innovative step to encourage and promote self-care, mental and physical well-being.
- Consumers can now enjoy the bouquet of complementary health benefits by simply registering on the **Aditya Birla Multiply App**.
- Benefits include reward points, diet plans, consultations etc
- The mobile app allows consumers to avail complimentary benefits such as annual health check-up, round the clock doctor or counsellor helpline, in-studio or home-based workout sessions, personalized diet plans, among others, right at their fingertips.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- YES bank HQ: Mumbai, Maharashtra.
- YES bank MD & CEO: Prashant Kumar.

**ICICI Bank ties up with fintech Niyto to issue prepaid cards to MSMEs**

- **ICICI Bank**, a leading Indian private sector bank, and **Niyto**, a new age fintech company announced a tie-up to issue prepaid cards to **Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)** workers.
- MSMEs will now be able to get ‘**ICICI Bank Niyto Bharat Payroll Card**’ powered by Visa, for their blue-collar workers.
- With this, **MSMEs** can upload the salaries of their workers on the card, which the workers can then utilise as per their need seamlessly.
- These workers are mostly under-banked and are deprived of banking facilities.
- The ‘**ICICI Bank Niyto Bharat Payroll Card**’ allows an individual to receive funds up to **Rs 1 lakh** into the card account. It offers convenience and safety of digital banking to the blue-collar workforce while providing a state-of-the-art salary disbursement solution to the employers.
- Any MSME can tie-up with Niyto to avail of the prepaid card. After the tie-up, cards are issued to the workers at their workplace itself while their **KYC verification** is done simultaneously using a biometric device.
- Once activated, workers can use the card to withdraw funds at **ATMs**, make online transactions on e-commerce portals and make payment by swiping the card at **Point of Sale (PoS) machines**.



### Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- ICICI Bank Headquarters: Mumbai, Maharashtra.
- ICICI Bank MD & CEO: Sandeep Bakhshi.
- ICICI Bank Tagline: Hum Hai Na, Khayal Apka.

### ICICI Bank launches 'InstaFX' mobile app



- **ICICI Bank** has launched a new mobile application '**InstaFX**' for authorised money changers to help customers of any bank get '**ICICI Bank Forex Prepaid Card**' swiftly. ICICI is the bank is the first in the country to offer such facility to money changers.
- A money changer is a person or organization whose business is the exchange of coins or currency of one country, for that of another.
- The '**InstaFX**' app will enable the authorised money changers, who are partners of the Bank, to complete the KYC verification and validation of customers digitally and on a real-time basis.
- The '**ICICI Bank Forex Prepaid Card**' gets activated swiftly within a few hours, as against the industry practice of up to two-days, thus it will significantly improve customer convenience, even if they are not customers of ICICI bank.

### Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- ICICI Bank Headquarters: Mumbai, Maharashtra.
- ICICI Bank MD & CEO: Sandeep Bakhshi.
- ICICI Bank Tagline: Hum Hai Na, Khayal Apka.

### Airtel Payments Bank launches 'Airtel Safe Pay'



- To protect Airtel customers from the growing incidents of online payment frauds, **Airtel Payments Bank** has launched '**Airtel Safe Pay**', a safe way to pay digitally.
- With '**Airtel Safe Pay**', Airtel customers making UPI or net banking-based payments through Airtel Payments Bank, no longer have to worry about money flowing out of their accounts without their explicit consent.
- An India-First innovation, '**Airtel Safe Pay**' leverages Airtel's '**telco exclusive**' strength of network intelligence to provide an additional layer of payment validation, compared to the industry norm of two-factor authentication.
- This offers the highest level of protection from potential frauds such as phishing,

stolen credentials or passwords, and even phone cloning that catches customers unaware.

- Using 'Airtel Safe Pay', Airtel Payments Bank customers can make secure digital payments across millions of merchants, online retailers and utilities, and even send money.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Airtel Payments Bank CEO: Anubrata Biswas.
- Airtel Payments Bank Headquarters Location: New Delhi.
- Airtel Payments Bank Founded: 2017.
- Airtel Payments Bank Parent organization: Bharti Airtel.

**RBI slaps penalty of Rs 2 crore on Standard Chartered Bank**



- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has imposed a monetary penalty of **Rs 2 crore** on **Standard Chartered Bank**–India for delays in reporting of frauds.
- The penalty has been imposed on the bank for non-compliance with certain directions issued by it contained in the 'Reserve Bank of India (Frauds –

**Classification and Reporting by commercial banks and select FIs) Directions 2016'**

- The notice was issued to the bank advising it to show cause as to why penalty should not be imposed on it for such non-compliance with the directions.
- After considering the bank's reply to the notice and oral submissions made in the personal hearing, the RBI concluded that the charge of non-compliance with the aforesaid RBI directions was substantiated and warranted imposition of monetary penalty.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Standard Chartered Bank CEO: Bill Winters.
- Standard Chartered Bank Headquarters: London, United Kingdom.
- Standard Chartered Bank Founded: 1969.

**SBI, ICICI Bank, HDFC Bank remain as (D-SIBs)**



- The RBI state-owned **SBI**, along with private-sector lenders **ICICI Bank** and **HDFC Bank** continue to be **Domestic**

**Systemically Important Banks (D-SIBs)** or institutions which are ‘too big to fail’.

- SBI, ICICI Bank, and HDFC Bank continue to be identified as Domestic Systemically Important Banks (D-SIBs), under the same bucketing structure as in the **2018 list of D-SIBs**.
- SIBs are subjected to higher levels of supervision so as to prevent disruption in financial services in the event of any failure.
- The Reserve Bank had issued the framework for dealing with D-SIBs in **July 2014**.
- The D-SIB framework requires the central to disclose the names of banks designated as D-SIBs starting from 2015 and place these lenders in appropriate buckets depending upon their **Systemic Importance Scores (SISs)**.
- SIBs are seen as ‘**too big to fail (TBTF)**’, creating the expectation of government support for them in times of financial distress. These banks also enjoy certain advantages in funding markets.



- **Axis Bank** has unveiled a credit ‘**AURA**’ exclusively loaded with several health and wellness benefits for its users at an affordable price.
- Axis Bank has partnered with Poshvine to offer benefits and specialists such as **Decathlon, Practo, Fitternity, IndushealthPlus, 1MG etc.**, to offer a complete and unique health & wellness solution to the cardholders.
- Cardholders will get a discount on annual medical checkup through **IndushealthPlus**.
- It offers up to 4 free online video consultations for a month, with round the clock access to doctors on all 21 specialities. This is offered by Practo.
- It also offers **4 free online** interactive fitness sessions for a month by Fitternity.
- Through this card, the users can have access to 16 recorded training sessions for one month and can choose from a wide range of sessions such as yoga and cross-functional training programs, etc.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Headquarters: Mumbai, Maharashtra.
- Reserve Bank of India Establishment: 1 April 1935.
- Reserve Bank of India Governor: Shaktikanta Das.

**Axis Bank launches Aura Credit Card with health, wellness benefits**

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Axis Bank Commenced operations: 1994.
- Axis Bank Headquarters: Mumbai, Maharashtra.
- Axis Bank Tagline: Badhti Ka Naam Zindagi Managing.



- Axis Bank MD and CEO: Amitabh Chaudhry.

## HSBC inaugurates international banking unit in Gujarat



- Global financial services major **HSBC** has inaugurated its **International Banking Unit (IBU)** branch at **GIFT City** near **Gandhinagar** city in **Gujarat**.
- HSBC is one of the earliest global financial institutions setting up a branch at India's GIFT City and was the first bank to get a licence from the newly set up **International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA)**.
- HSBC's IBU branch at **Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT City)** will be operational for customer transactions with effect from January 27.
- HSBC has been present in the country for more than **160 years** and its fourth branch globally was opened in India. HSBC operates in all of the leading international financial service hubs in the world and looks forward to the development of GIFT City as a globally competitive international financial centre.

### Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- HSBC Bank India CEO: Surendra

Rosha.

- HSBC Bank India HQ: Mumbai, Maharashtra.

## Bharti AXA General Insurance launches 'Krishi Sakha' App for farmers



- **Bharti AXA General Insurance** has launched **Krishi Sakha App**, a one-stop-shop for Indian farmers that offers them relevant information to cater to their daily farming needs. It also provides guidance to farmers to adopt best farming practices and enhance their productivity.
- The farmers through this app will also have access to the **Pradhan Mantri FasalBima Yojana (PMFBY)** portal for crop insurance-related information.
- Bharti AXA 'Krishi Sakha' aims at helping Indian farmers make informed decisions through customized information related to their farming requirements.
- It shares relevant information about the scientific way of farming, crop cultivation, sowing, or harvesting of major crops. It guides the farmers about weather forecasting, market and crop prices and government schemes related to insurance and agriculture.

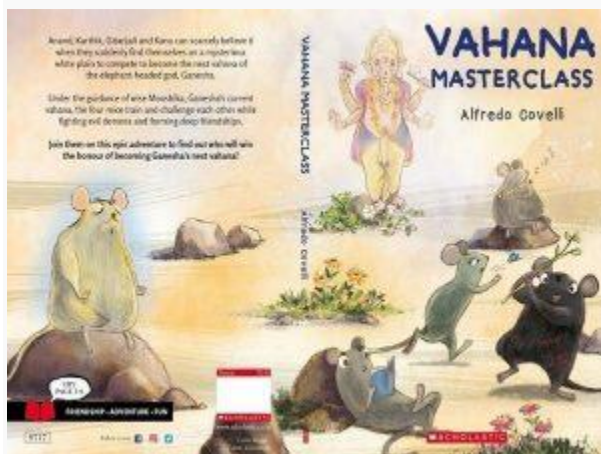
### Important takeaways for all competitive

**exams:**

- Bharti AXA General Insurance Established: 2008.
- Bharti AXA General Insurance Headquarters: Mumbai, Maharashtra.
- Bharti AXA General Insurance MD and CEO: Sanjeev Srinivasan.
- Bharti AXA General Insurance Tagline: Suraksha ka Naya Nazariya.

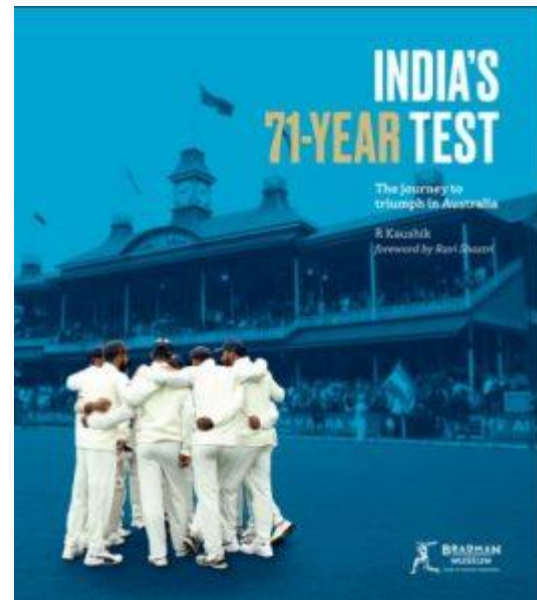
**BOOKS & AUTHORS**

**A book titled “Vahana Masterclass” launched by Italian Writer Alfredo Covelli**



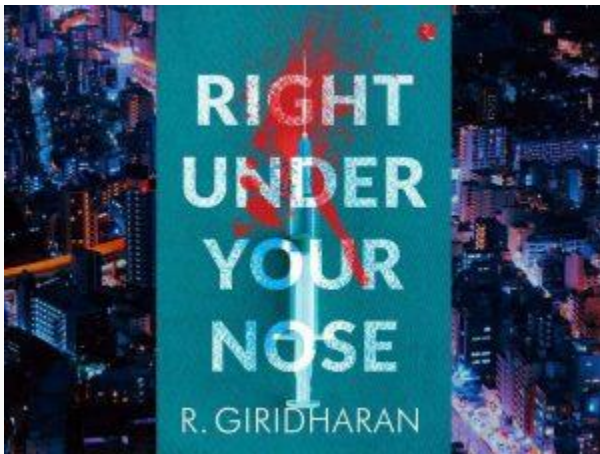
- **Alfredo Covelli**, an Italy based author has launched his new book **Vahana Masterclass** for children and Young Audience.
- The books will be illustrated and published by Scholastic India. Alfredo had a keen interest in our Indian culture and mythology which inspired him to write a story on Lord Ganesha for children.
- The book narrates the story of the Ganesha looking for a new vahana to accompany him to all the great adventures around the cosmos.

**A book on India’s tours Down Under by R. Kaushik**



- A book titled ‘**India’s 71-Year Test: The Journey to Triumph in Australia**’ and one which reflects on India’s previous 12 tours Down Under, was launched.
- The book, a **Bradman Museum** initiative, is authored by senior cricket scribe **R. Kaushik**, and it chronicles a rivalry that has given a fillip to Test cricket.

**RBI officer Giridharan pens novel ‘Right Under our Nose’**



- A general manager at RBI, **R Giridharan** has authored his debut book **"Right Under our Nose"**.
- In **"Right Under Your Nose"**, a murderer eliminates scientists right under the nose of the police and leaves forensics baffled.
- In response, the chief minister calls upon Vijay, who is given an impossible deadline to solve the case before Parliament resumes in a week.

**"Modi India Calling – 2021" Book Released**



- A coffee table book named **"Modi India Calling – 2021"** has been released on the occasion of 16th PravasiBharatiya Divas.
- The book contains various photographs of Prime Minister Narendra Modi captured during his **"107 overseas and bilateral visits"**.

- The book is the idea of BJP leader **Vijay Jolly** and it was released by **Adesh Gupta**, the Delhi BJP president.
- The book has been published by **Maneesh Media** and has 450 pages containing thousands of photographs of the PM Modi.
- Jolly has also said that he wishes to form a similar book on **Rahul Gandhi** and **Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal**.

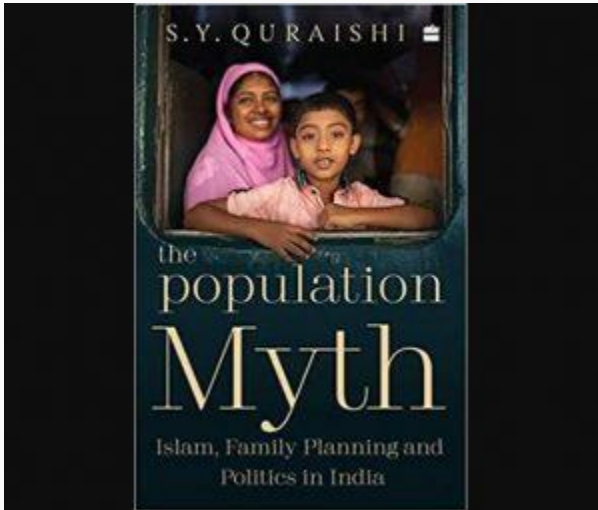
**Manipur Guv released book "Making of a General A Himalayan Echo"**



- Manipur Governor, **Dr Najma Heptulla** has virtually released a book titled **"Making of a General-A Himalayan Echo"** authored by (Retd) Lt General **Konsam Himalaya Singh** at Durbar Hall, Raj Bhavan, Imphal.
- The book elegantly summons the essence and imperatives of superior command of one of the most formidable forces in the world.
- The book is the memoir of Lt Gen (Dr) **KonsamHimalay Singh** who has traced his journey from a small village in Manipur to becoming the first person from North East India to hold the rank of a Three-Star General of the Indian Army. The book has also highlighted about Manipur, the **"Land of Emeralds"**.



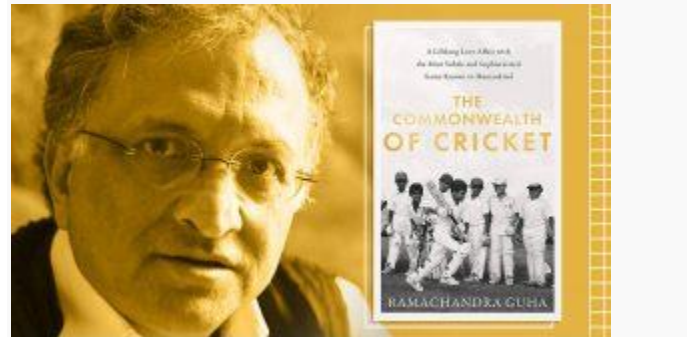
**A book titled “The Population Myth: Islam, Family Planning and Politics in India” by Ex-CEC**



- Former chief election commissioner (CEC) **S Y Quraishi** has come out with his book titled “**The Population Myth: Islam, Family Planning and Politics in India**”.
- The book will hit the stands on February 15, 2021. It has been published by HarperCollins India.
- The book evaluates India’s demographics from a religious perspective and seeks to demolish two basic myths that **‘Islam is against family planning’** and **”Muslim rate of growth”** is linked to capture political power.
- The book is a detailed analysis of the **‘Muslim rate of growth’** in the light of population data and national and international reports.
- The book examines the crucial and urgent question of the politicisation of demography in India.

**Ramchandra Guha’s latest book ‘The**

**Commonwealth of Cricket’**



- **Ramchandra Guha’s** latest book **‘The Commonwealth of Cricket’** would be launching virtually in the Tata Literature Live (The Mumbai Lit fest) this month.
- His latest book juxtaposes his life with his abiding love for the game & this conversation could not come at a better time with India and Australia in the midst of an enthralling test series.
- In his upcoming book, **‘The commonwealth of cricket: The most subtle and sophisticated game known to mankind’**, Guha has penned down his personal account of being intimately involved with the game starting from the time he was a child growing up in Dehradun to his days in college, from his encounters with the best Indian and foreign cricket players to becoming part of the BCCI.

**Goa CM releases book ‘Manohar Parrikar – Off the Record’**



- Goa Chief Minister, **Pramod Sawant** has released a book '**Manohar Parrikar- Off the Record**' at a function organized at Institute Menezes Braganza hall in the city. The book has been written by senior journalist **Waman Subha Prabhu**.
- The book 'Manohar Parrikar- Off the Record' is a collection of memories of Mr Prabhu who happened to be with late Parrikar during the journey of his life.
- In the book, the author has endeavoured to narrate the multi-faceted personality of late Manohar Parrikar. Chief Minister Pramod Sawant, while speaking, said Late Manohar Parrikar was a great visionary who had dreamt to serve Goa.



- Indian multinational two-wheeler and three-wheeler manufacturing company, **Bajaj Auto** has become the most valuable two-wheeler company in the world, after it crossed a market capitalization of more than **Rs. 1 lakh crore**, on January 01, 2021.
- Bajaj's share price on NSE closed at **Rs. 3,479 per share** on the first day of 2021, leading to a market capitalization of more than **Rs 1,00,670.76 crore**.
- Thus, Bajaj Auto is not only the most valued company in the two-wheeler segment but also the first-ever two-wheeler company in the world to have reached this market cap milestone.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Headquarter of Bajaj Auto: Pune, Maharashtra.
- Managing Director of Bajaj Auto: Rajiv Bajaj.

**BUSINESS**

**Bajaj Auto becomes world's most valuable two-wheeler company**

**DEFENCE**

**GRSE delivers 8th landing craft utility ship to Indian Navy**



- Kolkata-based **Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE)** has delivered the Landing Craft Utility (LCU) MK IV class vessel '**IN LCU L-58**' (Yard 2099) to the **Indian Navy**.
- The amphibious ships, to be based in the strategic location of **Andaman and Nicobar Islands**, which is close to various routes leading to the **South China Sea**.
- LCU L-58 is the final ship in the series of 8 LCUs being manufactured by GRSE for the Indian Navy.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- GRSE Chairman & Managing Director: Rear Admiral V K Saxena.
- GRSE Headquarters: Kolkata, West Bengal.

**BEL and Indian Navy inks pact for initial supply of Laser Dazzlers**



- The **Indian Navy** has signed a contract with the **Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL)**, to procure Light Amplification by **Stimulated Emission of Radiation Dazzlers (Laser Dazzlers)**.
- Initially, agreement has been signed for 20 Laser Dazzlers. The Laser dazzler technology has been developed by **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** and would be manufactured by **BEL, Pune plant**.
- It is the first time that this unique product is indigenously designed and developed for the Armed Forces.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Bharat Electronics Limited Chairman & Managing Director: M V Gowtama.
- Bharat Electronics Limited Headquarters: Bengaluru.
- Bharat Electronics Limited Founded: 1954.
- Chief of Naval Staff: Admiral Karambir Singh.
- Indian Navy Founded: 26 January 1950.

**India & Israel successfully test MRSAM air defence system**





- **India and Israel** successfully tested a **Medium-Range Surface-to-Air Missile (MRSAM)** defence system.
- The MRSAM missile defence system has been developed jointly by DRDO and **Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI)** to deal with airstrikes by enemy countries.
- Currently being used by all three wings of the Indian Army as well as Israel Defence Forces (IDF), the air and missile defence system was a joint venture of the **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** and the IAI.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Secretary Department of Defence Research and Development & Chairman DRDO: Dr G Satheesh Reddy.
- DRDO Headquarters: New Delhi.
- DRDO Established: 1958.
- President and CEO of Israel Aerospace Industries: Boaz Levy.

**Harsh Vardhan launches Coastal Research Vessel Sagar Anveshika**



- Union Minister for Earth Sciences, **Harsh Vardhan** has launched Coastal Research Vehicle (CRV) '**Sagar Anveshika**' at the Chennai Port.
- The vehicle will be used to carry out environment indexing and bathymetric (mapping underwater features) in both coastal and offshore waters.
- It will be used for research purposes by the **National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT)** and has been built by **Titagarh Wagons, Kolkata, West Bengal**.
- NIOT already has 6 Research Vessels – Sagar Kanya, Sagar Sampada, Sagar Nidhi, Sagar Manusha, & Sagar Tara.
- Anveshika has been built under the **Indian Register of Shipping (IRClass)** and is a DP (**Dynamic Positioning**)-Capable vessel.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- National Institute of Ocean Technology Director: Dr G A Ramadass.
- National Institute of Ocean Technology HQ: Chennai, Tamil Nadu.

**Coastal defence exercise “Sea Vigil 21” kicks off**



- A major exercise to test military readiness at sea along the coastline of the country starts. This is the **second edition** of the biennial pan-India coastal defence exercise “**Sea Vigil-21**” will be conducted on **January 12 and 13**.
- The two-day exercise involving all stakeholders, states and Central government agencies will set the tempo of operations, including “**transition from peace to conflict**”.
- The exercise, inaugural edition of which was conducted in January 2019, will be undertaken along the entire **7,516-km coastline and Exclusive Economic Zone of India**.
- It will involve all 13 coastal states and Union Territories along with other maritime stakeholders, including the fishing and coastal communities.
- Exercise ‘**Sea Vigil-21**’ is expected to provide a realistic assessment of our strengths and weaknesses and thus will help in further strengthening maritime and national security. The exercise is being coordinated by the Indian Navy.
- The entire coastal security set up was re-organised after the **26/11 terror attack** at Mumbai which was launched using the sea route.
- Assets of the **Indian Navy, Coast Guard, Customs** and other maritime agencies will participate in the exercise.

**Important takeaways for all competitive**

**exams:**

- Chief of Naval Staff: Admiral Karambir Singh.
- Indian Navy Founded: 26 January 1950.

**Dr Ajay Kumar co-chairs 13th India-Vietnam Defence Security Dialogue**



- The **13th India-Vietnam Defence Security Dialogue** was held in a virtual format. The virtual event was co-chaired by Defence Secretary **Dr Ajay Kumar** along with Vietnamese Sr **Lt Gen Nguyen Chi Vinh**, Deputy Defence Minister, Socialist Republic of Vietnam.
- Defence Secretary and the Deputy Defence Minister expressed satisfaction at the ongoing defence cooperation between the two countries in spite of the limitations imposed by **COVID 19**.
- Both countries exchanged views on the plan of action from the recently concluded Virtual Summit between Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam H.E. Nguyen Xuan Phuc in December 2020.
- Both the sides reviewed the progress on various bilateral defence cooperation initiatives and expressed commitment to further elevate engagements between the Armed Forces under the framework of the **Comprehensive Strategic Partnership**.
- Both sides agreed that in the recent past

our respective countries have made notable strides in **Defence Industry and Technology cooperation** and look forward to even greater cooperation in this field.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Vietnam Capital: Hanoi.
- Vietnam Currency: Vietnamese dong.
- Vietnam Prime Minister: Nguyen Xuan Phuc.

**Indian Army inks \$20 mn contract to buy SWITCH drones**



- The **Indian Army** has recently signed a contract with Mumbai-based drone manufacturing company, **ideaForge**, to procure high-altitude variant of **SWITCH** unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs). The total cost of the deal is approximately **USD 20 million**.
- However, the quantity of UAVs to be procured is not disclosed. These UAVs will be delivered to the Indian Army over a period of one year.
- SWITCH UAV is an indigenous system built to cater for the most demanding surveillance operations of the Indian Forces.

- This Fixed-Wing VTOL (Vertical Take-off and Landing) UAV can be deployed at high altitude and harsh environments for day and night surveillance in Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) missions.
- It is man-portable and has the highest time on target compared to any other UAV in its class.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- IdeaForge CEO: Ankit Mehta.
- IdeaForge HQ: Mumbai, Maharashtra.

**DRDO develops India’s first Indigenously-Developed 9mm Machine Pistol**



- India’s first indigenous **9mm Machine Pistol** has been jointly developed by **DRDO and Indian Army**.
- Infantry School, Mhow and **DRDO’s** Armament Research & Development Establishment (ARDE), Pune have designed and developed this weapon using their respective expertise in the complementary areas.
- The weapon has been developed in a record time of four months. The weapon is aptly named “**Asmi**” meaning “**Pride**”, “**Self-Respect**” & “**Hard Work**”.
- The Machine Pistol fires the in-service



9mm ammunition and sports an upper receiver made from aircraft-grade Aluminium and lower receiver from carbon fibre.

- The **3D Printing process** has been used in designing and prototyping of various parts including trigger components made by metal **3D printing**.
- The weapon has huge potential in Armed forces as a personal weapon for heavy weapon detachments, commanders, tank and aircraft crews, drivers/dispatch riders, radio/radar operators, Closed Quarter Battle, counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism operations etc.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Secretary Department of Defence Research and Development & Chairman DRDO: Dr G Satheesh Reddy.
- DRDO Headquarters: New Delhi.
- DRDO Established: 1958.

**DRDO hands over Motor Bike Ambulance Rakshita to CRPF**



- Defence Research and Development Organisation has handed over Motor

Bike Ambulance **Rakshita** to the **Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF)**. The bike ambulance will help in overcoming the problems faced by Indian security forces and emergency health care providers.

- The bike ambulances will provide life-saving aid for the evacuation of injured patients from low-intensity conflict areas.
- Rakshita is fitted with a customized reclining **Casualty Evacuation Seat (CES)**, which can be fitted in and taken out as per requirement.
- Other major features are the head immobilizer, safety harness jacket, hand and foot straps for safety, adjustable footrest, physiological parameter measuring equipment with wireless monitoring capability and auto warning system for the driver.
- The bike ambulance will help in overcoming the problems faced by Indian security forces and emergency health care providers. The bike ambulances will provide life-saving aid for the evacuation of injured patients from low-intensity conflict areas.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Director-General of CRPF: Dr A P Maheshwari.
- Secretary Department of Defence Research and Development & Chairman DRDO: Dr G Satheesh Reddy.
- DRDO Headquarters: New Delhi.
- DRDO Established: 1958.

**India to procure 21 MiG-29 and 12 Sukhoi-30MKI fighter aircraft from Russia**



- The **Government of India** is set to procure **21 MiG-29** and **12 Sukhoi-30MKI** fighter aircraft from **Russia**. Apart from this, the Centre will also purchase the upgrades of the existing fleets of aircraft from Russian state-run defence export arm **Rosoboronexport**.
- The new set of **21 MiG-29** will add to existing 59 such jets already with the Indian Air Force (IAF) and the **12 Sukhoi-30MKIs**, on the other hand, will add to the existing fleet of **272 such fighter aircraft**.

**Indo-French Exercise Desert Knight-21 begins**

- **Indian Air Force** and **French Air and Space Force** are conducting a bilateral Air exercise, **Ex Desert Knight-21** in Jodhpur, Rajasthan.
- The exercise marks an important milestone in the series of engagements between the two Air forces. It is unique as it includes fielding of Rafale aircraft by both sides and is indicative of the growing interaction between the two premier Air Forces.
- The French side will participate with Rafale, Airbus A-330 Multi-Role Tanker Transport, A-400M Tactical Transport aircraft and approximately 175 personnel.
- The Indian Air Force aircraft participating in the exercise will include Rafale, Mirage 2000, Sukhoi-30 MKI among other aircraft.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- France President: Emmanuel Macron.
- France Capital: Paris.
- France Currency: Euro.

**Andaman and Nicobar Command to conduct joint military exercise 'Kavach'**



- The **Indian Army** is to conduct a large scale joint military exercise **Kavach** in the **Andaman Sea and Bay of Bengal**. The exercise is to be held under the aegis of Andaman and Nicobar Command.
- The Joint Military Exercise Kavach will involve **Indian Navy, Indian Army, Indian Air Force and Indian Coast Guard**.
- During the exercise, the joint forces will execute high-density offensive and defence measures in the **Andaman sea and Bay of Bengal**. Also, they will carry out amphibious landing operations, helicopter-borne insertion of special forces from sea culminating in tactical follow-on operations on land.
- The exercise is to fine-tune the joint war capabilities of all the three forces of India.
- **Kavach Exercise** will also involve coordinated air and maritime strikes, synergized application of maritime surveillance assets, air defence and landing operations.
- Along with Kavach Exercise, the Joint **Intelligence Surveillance Reconnaissance (ISR)** Exercise will also be held. The ISR will validate the capabilities of intelligence gathering. Also, it will validate the capabilities of information sharing from space, land, air and sea.

**DRDO Successfully Test Flights indigenously developed "SAAW"**



- The **DRDO** successfully conducted captive and release trial of indigenously developed **Smart Anti-Airfield Weapon (SAAW)** from **Hawk-I** aircraft of **Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL)** off the Odisha coast.
- This was the 9th successful mission of SAAW conducted by DRDO till now and the first test conducted from the Hawk-i aircraft.
- The **125 Kg** class smart weapon SAAW was successfully test-fired from Indian **Hawk-Mk132** of **HAL**.
- SAAW is indigenously designed and developed by **DRDO's Research Centre Imarat (RCI) Hyderabad**.
- It is capable of engaging ground enemy airfield assets such as radars, bunkers, taxi tracks, and runways among others, up to a range of **100 km**.

**BSF launches Operation 'Sard Hawa' at Rajasthan border**





- The **Border Security Force (BSF)** has launched “**Operation Sard Hawa**” on the western international border of **Rajasthan**.
- The Operations aims to check the instances of infiltration due to the dense fog cover in the region and increase security on the border areas in Jaisalmer.
- The week-long operation has been launched on **21 January 2021** and will continue till **27 January 2021**, keeping in view **Republic Day of India**.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- BSF Director General: Rakesh Asthana.
- BSF Headquarters: New Delhi.

**Indian Navy conducts exercise AMPHEX – 21 with Army and Air Force**

- A large-scale tri-service joint amphibious exercise **AMPHEX – 21** was held in **Andaman & Nicobar group of islands**. The exercise involved the participation of troops of Army, Navy as well as the **Indian Air Force**.
- The exercise was aimed at validating India’s capabilities to safeguard the territorial integrity of its island territories. The joint force executed multi-domain, high-intensity offensive and defensive manoeuvres in the **Andaman Sea and Bay of Bengal**.
- The exercise involved multi-faceted maritime operations by synergised employment of amphibious assault ships, surveillance platforms, execution of maritime airstrikes and complex manoeuvres at sea.

**DRDO successfully conducts maiden test launch of Akash-NG Missile**



- The **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** conducted successful maiden launch of **Akash-NG (New Generation)** Missile from Integrated Test Range off the coast of Odisha.
- Akash-NG is a new generation **Surface-to-Air Missile** for use by Indian Air Force (IAF) with an aim of intercepting high manoeuvring aerial threats. The launch met all the test objectives by performing high manoeuvres during the trajectory.

**Lt Gen Chandi Prasad Mohanty appointed as new Army Vice-Chief**



- Lieutenant General **Chandi Prasad Mohanty** has been appointed as the

new **Vice-chief of Army staff**. He would assume the office on February 1, 2021, from **Lt General SK Saini**, who is superannuating on 31 January 2021.

- Lt General CP Mohanty is an alumnus of Rashtriya Indian Military College, Dehradun, and National Defence Academy. He is a June 1982 batch Infantry Officer from the Rajput Regiment.
- Vice-Chief of Army Staff is the deputy head and the second-highest-ranking officer of the Indian Army. The position is held by the senior officer in the rank of Lt-General, of the Commander in Chief grade.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- 28th Chief of Army Staff: General Manoj Mukund Naravane.
- The motto of Indian Army: "Service Before Self".
- Headquarters of Indian Army: New Delhi.

**ECONOMY**

**World Bank Projects Indian Economy to Contract By 9.6% in 2020-21**



- **World Bank** has projected the Indian economy to contract by **9.6 per cent** in

the fiscal year 2020-21, in its Global Economic Prospects report. World Bank estimates Growth to recover to **5.4 per cent** in 2021.

- Apart from this, the global economy is estimated to expand by **4 per cent** in 2021 by the **World Bank**. According to the report, global growth is projected to moderate to **3.8 per cent** in 2022.

**NSO Projects India’s GDP to contract 7.7% in FY21**



- The **GDP of India** is expected to contract by **7.7 per cent** in the current fiscal year 2020-21, as per the first advanced estimates released by the **National Statistical Office (NSO)**, under the **Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MOSPI)** on January 07, 2021.
- The first advance estimates of GDP of a financial year are released before the Union Budget. This data helps in the budget-making process.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Minister of State IC of the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation: Rao Inderjit Singh.

**IHS Markit: Indian economy to rebound with 8.9% growth in FY22**



- London-based financial services company **IHS Markit** has projected the Indian economy to rebound by **8.9 per cent** in the fiscal year **2021-22**, beginning April 2021.
- This upward estimate is based on the backdrop of the significant improvement in domestic economic activity in the fourth quarter of 2020 by India.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- IHS Markit CEO: Lance Uggla.
- IHS Markit Headquarters: London, United Kingdom.
- IHS Markit Founded: 1959.

**Bandhan Bank unveils account for army personnel**





- Private lender **Bandhan Bank** has signed an agreement with the **Indian Army** to provide banking services to the personnel of the force.
- The bank got the mandate to maintain and a **Bank Shaurya Salary Account** of the Army personnel. Bandhan Bank Shaurya Salary Account will have a zero balance facility. The Shaurya Salary Account also offers protection for self and assets.
- They will be offered other preferential services such as six per cent interest on balance over Rs one lakh, unlimited free ATM transactions across ATMs, waiver of issuance and annual charge on **Shaurya Visa Platinum Debit Card** and unlimited free **NEFT/RTGS/IMPS/DD transactions**.
- This includes free personal accident insurance of **Rs 30 lakh**, air accident cover of **Rs 1 crore** and free educational benefit of up to **Rs 1 lakh per year** for four years to a dependent child in case of accidental death of the account holder.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Bandhan Bank MD & CEO: Chandra Shekhar Ghosh.
- Bandhan Bank HQ: Kolkata, West Bengal.

- Bandhan Bank Founded: 2001.

**ICRA Projects India’s real GDP to expand by 10.1% in FY22**



- Domestic rating agency **ICRA Ratings** expects the real **gross domestic product (GDP)** of India to grow by **10.1%** in the financial year **2021-22 (FY2022)**.
- The rating agency ICRA had earlier projected a contraction of **7.8%** for the ongoing **fiscal 2020-21**.
- The seemingly-sharp expansion will be led by the continued normalisation in economic activities as the rollout of Covid-19 vaccines gathers traction and the low base.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- ICRA Headquarters: Gurgaon, Haryana.
- ICRA Non-Executive Chairman and Director: Arun Duggal.

**INTERNATIONAL**

**U.S. Congress passes ‘Malala Yousafzai**

**Scholarship Act'**



- The **U.S. Congress** has passed the '**Malala Yousafzai Scholarship Act**' to increase the number of scholarships for Pakistani women in higher education under merit and needs-based programme.
- The bill was passed by the United States Senate by a voice vote on January 1. The bill now heads to the White House for U.S. President **Donald Trump** to sign into law.
- The bill requires the **U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)** to award at least **50% of scholarships** under a Pakistan-based higher education scholarship programme to Pakistani women, from 2020 to 2022, across a range of academic disciplines and in accordance with existing eligibility criteria.
- The bill also requires USAID to consult with and leverage investments by the Pakistani private sector and Pakistani diaspora in the United States to improve and expand access to education programmes in Pakistan.

**Indian-American Raj Iyer becomes U.S. Army's first CIO**



- Indian-American Dr **Raj Iyer** has taken over as the first **Chief Information Officer of the US Army**, after the Pentagon created the position in July 2020.
- Dr Raj Iyer is one of the highest-ranking Indian-American civilians in the US Department of Defence.
- Dr Iyer holds a PhD in Electrical Engineering had been serving as the Principal Advisor to the Secretary of the Army and directs representation of the secretary in matters relating to information management/information technology (IT). The position of CIO is equivalent to a three-star General.

**Pakistan successfully test-fires "Fatah-1" Rocket System**



- The **Pakistan Army** successfully conducted the test flight of an indigenously developed Guided Multi Launch Rocket System, **Fatah-1**.

- The Fatah-1 weapon system is capable of precisely delivering conventional warheads deep into “enemy territory.”
- According to Director General of Army, Media Wing, Major General Babar Iftikhar, Fatah-1 weapon system can hit targets up to a range of **140 km**.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- President of Pakistan: Arif Alvi.
- Prime Minister of Pakistan: Imran Khan.

**Central African Republic president Touadera wins reelection**



- **Faustin-Archange Touadera** was re-elected as the president of the **Central African Republic** with more than **53% votes**.
- The 63-year-old president has been in power since 2016 but has struggled to seize control of vast parts of the nation from armed militias.
- The Central African Republic, a producer of **gold and diamonds**, has a population of **4.7 million**.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Central African Republic Capital: Bangui;
- Central African Republic Currency:

Central African CFA Franc.

**Joe Biden names two Indian-Americans in US National Security Council**



- US President-elect **Joe Biden** named Indian-American **Sumona Guha** as **senior director** for **South Asia** and **Tarun Chhabra** as senior director for **Technology and National Security**.
- Guha was co-chair of the South Asia foreign policy working group on the Biden-Harris campaign and serves on the transition’s State Department Agency Review Team.
- During the Obama-Biden Administration, Chhabra served on the National Security Council staff as director for Strategic Planning and director for Human Rights and National Security Issues, and at the Pentagon as a speechwriter to the Secretary of Defence.

**Indonesian Jetliner crashes into the sea after takeoff**





- A passenger plane of **Indonesia's Sriwijaya Air** carrying 62 people on board crashed into waters off **Jakarta**. The **Boeing 737-500** was on an estimated 90-minute flight from Jakarta to Pontianak, capital of West Kalimantan province on Indonesia's Borneo island.
- The Sriwijaya Air disappeared from radars four minutes into its journey to Pontianak in West Kalimantan province. It is thought to have dropped more than 3,000m (10,000ft) in less than a minute.



- **Twitter Inc** has deleted new tweets posted by **U.S. President Donald Trump** on official government account **@POTUS** and suspended the account of his presidential campaign, after booting his personal account of the platform permanently.
- **@POTUS** Twitter account is an official Twitter account of **US President Donald Trump**. The Account is named President Trump.
- The POTUS Twitter account is in the news because President Trump used the account to tweet against "Twitter" after the company permanently banned and suspended the **@realDonaldTrump of Trump**.
- Trump tweeted that Twitter has conspired with his rivals and suspended his account to silence him.
- Earlier, Twitter released an official statement about the permanent suspension of the **@realDonaldTrump** Twitter account.
- After the tweets by Trump through the **@POTUS** account, Twitter deleted his tweets.
- **@POTUS** account has **33.4 million** followers at present.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Capital of Indonesia: Jakarta.
- The currency of Indonesia: Indonesian rupiah.
- President of Indonesia: Joko Widodo.

**Twitter deletes new Trump tweets on @POTUS, suspends campaign account**

**SadyrJaparov wins the presidential election in Kyrgyzstan**



- The frontrunner in **Kyrgyzstan’s** presidential election, **Sadyr Japarov**, has won by a landslide. According to the **Central Election Commission**, Mr Japarov had won **79%** of votes cast.
- Mr Japarov, who served time in jail for taking a rival hostage, will also have sweeping new presidential powers after voters by a similar margin opted to amend the constitution in a referendum.
- Kyrgyzstan has been in crisis since parliamentary elections last October. The results of those elections were disputed, leading to protests and the resignation of then-President **Sooronbay Jeenbekov**.



- **President Donald Trump** was impeached by the U.S. House for a historic **second time** on January 13, charged with **“incitement of insurrection”** over the deadly mob siege of the Capitol in a swift and stunning collapse of his final days in office.
- He was first impeached in **2019** over his Ukraine dealings. The House voted **232-197** to impeach Mr Trump.
- The proceedings moved at lightning speed, with lawmakers voting just one week after violent pro-Mr. Trump loyalists stormed the U.S. Capitol, urged on by the President’s calls for them to **“fight like hell”** against the election results.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Kyrgyzstan Capital: Bishkek;
- Kyrgyzstan Currency: Kyrgyzstani som.

**Donald Trump becomes the first U.S. President to be impeached twice**

**Indian-American Garima Verma named digital director in Office of the First Lady**



- Incoming First Lady, **Jill Biden** has named Indian-American **Garima Verma** as her digital director and **Michael LaRosa** press secretary,

the Biden transition team has announced.

- She served as audience development and content strategist on the **Biden-Harris campaign**.
- Before joining the campaign, Verma was a volunteer with the content team, designing graphics for distribution to Biden-Harris volunteers across the country.

**UN Rights Body elects Fiji in First-Ever Presidential Vote**



- The **UN Human Rights Council** elected **Fiji's ambassador as its 2021** president in an unprecedented secret ballot after a diplomatic stand-off blocked the usual consensus decision.
- Fiji's ambassador in Geneva, **Nazhat Shameem Khan**, who served as the council's vice president in 2020 and is considered a rights champion, won with **29 out of 47 votes**.
- She ran against two other candidates from the UN's Asia-Pacific regional group of countries: Bahrain's ambassador **Yusuf AbdulkarimBucheeri** and his counterpart from Uzbekistan, **Ulugbek Lapasov**, who received 14 and four votes respectively.

**Important takeaways for all competitive**

**exams:**

- UN Human Rights Council Founded: 15 March 2006.
- UN Human Rights Council Headquarters: Geneva, Switzerland.

**US designates UAE, Bahrain as 'Major Strategic Partners'**



- The **United States** has recently designated the **Kingdom of Bahrain** and the **United Arab Emirates (UAE)** as the "major strategic partners" of the country.
- This has been announced before the formal transition of the president's office from **Donald Trump to Joe Biden**. This announcement of "major strategic partners" was done by **Kayleigh McEnany**, the White House Press Secretary.
- Designation as strategic partners will strengthen the existing partnership between the United States, the Kingdom of Bahrain, and the United Arab Emirates.
- Both the countries have been designated for their commitment to countering violent extremism across the region, **exceptional security partnership, and exemplified by their hosting thousands of United States airmen, soldiers, marines, and**



sailors.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- President of UAE: Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan.
- Capital of UAE: Abu Dhabi; Currency: United Arab Emirates dirham.
- King of Bahrain: Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa.
- Capital of Bahrain: Manama; Currency of Bahrain: Bahraini Dinar.

**Pakistan Permits Dubai Royals to Hunt ‘Houbara bustard’**



- **Pakistan** has issued special permission to **Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum**, the Dubai Ruler; the crown prince, and 5 members of the royal family for hunting **houbara bustard** during the 2020-21 hunting season.
- After the permission, 11 members of the United Arab Emirates’ royal family reached the **Panjgur district in Balochistan, Pakistan** for hunting the highly vulnerable and internationally protected houbara bustard under Pakistan’s foreign ministry license.
- The houbara bustard is a terrestrial bird found in parts of the **Middle East, Asia, and Africa**. The Asian houbara

(Chlamydotismacqueenii) and North African houbara (Chlamydotisundulata) are separate species.

- After breeding in central Asia during spring, the Houbara bustards migrate south to spend the winter in Pakistan.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- President of Pakistan: ArifAlvi.
- Prime Minister of Pakistan: Imran Khan.

**Yoweri Museveni wins the sixth term as Uganda’s President**



- **Uganda’s** incumbent President **Yoweri Museveni** has been declared as the winner of the country’s **presidential election for 2021**.
- Museveni secured **58.64 per cent** of the total votes cast, to win the sixth term as the President. The 76-year-old leader is serving as the President of the Republic of Uganda since 1986 and is one of Africa’s longest-serving presidents.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Uganda Capital: Kampala; Currency:

Ugandan shilling.

**Netherlands PM Mark Rutte and his entire cabinet quits**



- The Dutch Prime Minister, **Mark Rutte** and his entire Cabinet has **resigned** recently over the childcare subsidies scandal, in which thousands of families were wrongly accused of child welfare fraud.
- However, the Rutte government will stay on in a caretaker role until parliamentary elections in **March 2021**.
- The resignation brings to an end a decade in office for Rutte, although his party is expected to win the election, putting him first in line to begin talks to form the next government. If he succeeds in forming a new coalition, Rutte would most likely again become prime minister.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

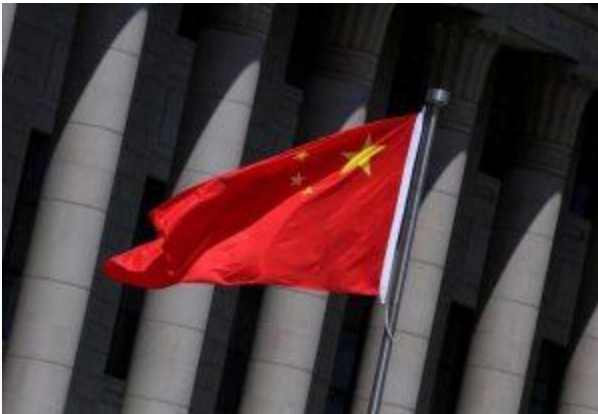
- Netherlands  
Capital: Amsterdam; Currency: Euro

**Joe Biden takes oath as 46th US President**



- **Joe Biden** became the **46th president** of the **United States**. He swore the oath of office moments after **Kamala Harris**, who became **America's first woman vice president**, turning the page on **Donald Trump's** tumultuous four years.
- At **78**, Biden is the oldest president in US history and only the second Roman Catholic president. Biden, who was vice president under **Barack Obama** and first ran for president in **1987**, plans to kick off his tenure with a flurry of **17 orders**.
- Biden will immediately rejoin the Paris climate accord and stop the US exit from the **World Health Organization** and set new paths on **immigration, the environment, Covid-19 and the economy**.

**China overtakes Germany to run world's largest current account surplus**



- **China** overtook **Germany** to become the country with the world's largest current account surplus in the year 2020, as per a survey by the **Munich-based Ifo institute**.
- The current account surplus of China more than doubled to **\$310 billion in 2020**, while the current account surplus of Germany shrank for the fifth year in a row in 2020 to \$261 billion.
- The United States remained the country with the world's largest current account deficit which rose roughly by a **third to \$635 billion** in 2020 or 3.1% of economic output. **Japan** ranked third with a current account surplus of **\$158 billion**.
- Ifo (Information and Forschung) Institute for Economic Research is a research institution based in Munich, Germany, which analyses economic policy.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- China Capital: Beijing.
- China Currency: Renminbi.
- China President: Xi Jinping.

**2. Mongolian Prime Minister KhurelsukhUkhnaa & his Government Resigns**

- The Prime Minister of Mongolia, **KhurelsukhUkhnaa**, has resigned along with his entire government, following protests and public outrage over the government's handling of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The 52-year-old served as the Prime Minister of Mongolia from **4 October 2017 to 21 January 2021**.
- Prime Minister KhurelsukhUkhnaa has submitted his resignation and a proposal to dissolve his government after hundreds gathered outside the parliament building to demonstrate against the policies.
- Parliament, which is controlled by **Khurelsukh's Mongolian People's Party**, voted overwhelmingly to accept his resignation.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Mongolia Capital: Ulaanbaatar.
- Mongolia President: Khaltmaagiin Battulga.
- Mongolia Currency: Mongolian Togrog.

**Portugal President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa wins second term**





- The incumbent President of **Portugal**, **Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa** has won a second five-year term after winning the **2021 Portuguese presidential election** with a landslide victory.
- The 72-year-old former leader of the **Social Democratic Party** won **61 per cent** of the total votes. He is serving as the President of the country since 9 March 2016 and would start his second term on March 9, 2021.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Portugal Capital: Lisbon; Currency: Euro.

**Kaja Kallas to become Estonia's first female prime minister**



- **Kaja Kallas**, the leader of the Reform Party will become **Estonia's first**

**female prime minister.**

- The Reform Party, led by Kallas, won the 2019 parliamentary election in Estonia with **34 MPs** in the country's 101-seat parliament, Riigikogu.
- Estonia would thus currently become the only country in the world where both the president **Kersti Kaljulaid** and the prime minister are women.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Estonia Capital: Tallinn.
- Estonia Currency: Euro.

**Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte resigns**



- Italian Prime Minister, **Giuseppe Conte** resigned after losing his Senate majority, plunging the country into political uncertainty just as it's battling the pandemic and a recession.
- He tendered his resignation to President **Sergio Mattarella**, the ultimate arbiter of Italian political crises, who invited him to stay on in a caretaker capacity pending discussions on what happens next.
- Italy was the first European country to face the full force of the **Covid-19 pandemic** and has since suffered badly, with the economy plunged into recession and deaths still rising by around **400 a day**.

- Parts of the country remain under partial lockdown, the vaccination programme has slowed and a deadline is looming to agree on plans to spend billions of euros in European Union recovery funds.

## Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- President of Italy: Sergio Mattarella.
- Capital of Italy: Rome; Currency of Italy: Euro.

## MISCELLANEOUS

### FSCA becomes Associate Member of IOSCO



- The **International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA)** has become an Associate Member of the **International Organization of Securities Commissions (IOSCO)**. The Headquarter of IOSCO is at **Madrid, Spain**.
- The IOSCO is the international organization of the world's securities regulators, covering more than **95%** of the world's securities markets, and is also the global standard-setter for the securities sector.
- With this new membership, IFSCA will get the platform to exchange information at the global level and regional level on

areas of common interests and help to learn from the experiences and best practices of the regulators of other well established financial centres.

### Delhi government sets up Tamil Academy



- **Delhi government Department of Art, Culture, and Language** has set-up a **Tamil academy** to promote the language and culture of the southern state of **Tamil Nadu**.
- Delhi has a large population of people from Tamil Nadu and we want to present a platform to the people of Delhi to get a taste of the art and culture of Tamil Nadu.
- The Delhi government has appointed a former councillor and member of Delhi Tamil **Sangam N Raja** as the Vice-Chairman of the academy.
- The Department of Art, Culture, and Language of the Delhi govt has decided that the new academy will introduce various awards to promote and reward the good works of people in Tamil language and culture.
- The government will also provide language courses through this academy. The Delhi government will also celebrate and organise cultural festivals for the people of Tamil Nadu.

## Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- Chief Minister of Delhi: Arvind Kejriwal;  
Governor of Delhi: Anil Baijal.
- Delhi Minister of Art, Culture, and Language: Manish Sisodia.

**Oscar nominee ‘Another Round’ to be opening movie at 51st IFFI**



- The **51st International Film Festival of India (IFFI)** will open on 16th January, with the Indian premiere of the movie **‘Another Round’** by **Thomas Vinterberg**.
- The movie starring Cannes Best Actor Award winner Mads Mikkelsen is among a star-studded line up of movies being showcased at IFFI.
- The movie is also Denmark’s official entry to the Oscars. The festival will also witness the **World Premiere of ‘Mehrunisa’**. The film by **Sandeep Kumar** will premier mid-fest.
- The festival will close on 24th January with the India Premiere of the historical drama **‘Wife of a Spy’** by **Kiyoshi Kurosawa**.

**Amit Shah released the inaugural issue of “National Police K-9 Journal”**

- Home Minister **Amit Shah** has released the inaugural issue of the **National Police K-9 Journal** in **New Delhi**. It is the first such publication in the country on the subject of **Police Service K9s, Police Dogs**.
- This is a unique initiative that will further enrich the subjects related to Police Service Dog, K-9, PSK teams in the country.
- A special Police K9 Cell was established in **November 2019**, under the Police Modernization Division of the Ministry of Home Affairs with the mandate of **Mainstreaming and Augmentation of Police Service K9s in the country**.
- The publication of the Police K9 Journal is another step in creating an ecosystem in the country to train and learn on augmenting this vital resource.
- The journal comprises different sections in **Hindi and English**. It is a biannual journal which will be released in April and October every year.

**Argentine filmmaker Pablo Cesar to head 51st IFFI’s International Jury**





- The International Jury for **51st edition of International Film Festival of India** has been announced with eminent filmmakers from across the world.
- According to the Information and Broadcasting Ministry, the Jury will comprise **Pablo Cesar** of Argentina as **Chairman**, **Prasanna Vithanage** of Sri Lanka, **Abu Bakr Shawky** of Austria, **Priyadarshan** of India and **Rubaiyat Hossain** of Bangladesh.
- Pablo Cesar is an Argentine filmmaker. He has contributed to the African cinema by making the critically acclaimed films, Equinox, the Garden of the Roses, Los dioses de agua and Aphrodite, the Garden of the Perfumes.

**40th Indian Scientific Expedition to Antarctica flagged off**



- The **40th Indian Scientific Expedition to Antarctica** was flagged off on **January 05, 2021**, from **Mormugao**

**Port, Goa.**

- The chartered ice-class vessel **MV VasiliyGolovnin** has been chosen for the prestigious **40th Indian Scientific Expedition to Antarctica (ISEA)** mission journey and will reach Antarctica in 30 days.
- The expedition journey has **43 members onboard**.
- India's major fuel supplier, **Indian Oil Corporation Ltd. (IOCL)** has supplied **Jet A1 fuel**, lubes and **Marine Gas Oil (MGO)** for the mission.
- Apart from its scientific mission, this expedition shall carry out the humanitarian responsibility of bringing back the 48-strong winter crew from their 15-month tenure, and resupply the bases with food, fuel, provisions and spares for operations and maintenance of life support systems.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Goa Capital: Panaji.
- Governor of Goa: Bhagat Singh Koshyari.
- Chief Minister of Goa: Pramod Sawant.

**FSSAI's new policy limits trans fats to 2% in all oils & fats by Jan 2022**



- The **Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)** has capped the amount of **trans fatty acids**

(TFA) in oils and fats to **3% for 2021 and 2% by 2022** from the current permissible limit of 5% through an amendment to the **Food Safety and Standards (Prohibition and Restriction on Sales) Regulations**.

- It was in 2011 that India first passed a regulation that set a TFA limit of 10% in oils and fats, which was further reduced to 5% in 2015.
- The country's food regulatory body notified the amendment on December 29, more than a year after it issued a draft on the subject for consultation with stakeholders.
- The revised regulation applies to edible refined oils, vanaspati (partially hydrogenated oils), margarine, bakery shortenings, and other mediums of cooking such as vegetable fat spreads and mixed fat spreads.

#### Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- FSSAI Chairperson: Rita Teatota.
- FSSAI Chief Executive Officer: Arun Singhal.
- FSSAI Founded: August 2011.
- FSSAI Headquarters: New Delhi.

#### PM Modi inaugurates Kochi-Mangaluru natural gas pipeline



- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** has inaugurated the **450-km Kochi-Mangaluru natural gas pipeline** built at a cost of **Rs 3,000 crore** via video conferencing. The event marks an important milestone towards the creation of **One Nation One Gas Grid**.
- Natural gas pipeline network will be doubled in 5-6 years and CNG stations will be raised to **10,000 from current 1,500**.
- The pipeline will carry natural gas from Kochi in Kerala through **Ernakulam, Thrissur, Palakkad, Malappuram, Kozhikode, Kannur and Kasargod** districts to Mangaluru in Dakshina Kannada district of Karnataka.
- It has been built by **GAIL (India) Limited**. It will carry natural gas from the LNG Regasification Terminal at Kochi. The pipeline will supply environment-friendly PNG.
- The pipeline grid will help improve clean energy access as well as also aid in the development of city gas projects.

#### J&K LG, Manoj Sinha launches Mobile Application 'SatarkNagrik'



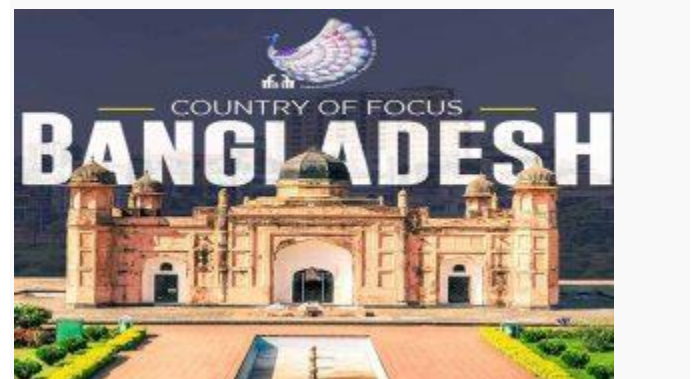
- Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor, **Manoj Sinha** has launched Mobile Application ‘**SatarkNagrik**’ and **Departmental Vigilance Officers Portal** of J&K Anti Corruption Bureau.
- The Lt Governor observed that the UT Government is taking comprehensive measures for ensuring transparent, accountable, and responsive governance.
- The mobile application launched today has been developed with a purpose to facilitate seamless flow of information about corruption and enable citizens to submit their grievances with ease and mobility.
- The **Departmental Vigilance Officers (DVO) Portal** has been designed to enable an online communication channel with the DVOs of various departments.



- The second session of the **7th Trade Policy Review (TPR) of India** concluded at the **World Trade Organization (WTO)**.
- This was the final session of the 7th trade policy review. Trade Policy Review is a key mechanism under the monitoring function of WTO.
- During this trade policy review, WTO examines the trade and related policies of the member countries with an aim to improve their adherence to WTO rules and to provide constructive feedback.
- The official delegation of India for the 7th TPR was headed by **Anup Wadhawan**, the Commerce Secretary.
- The Commerce Secretary also urged the members to provide a permanent solution to Public Stock Holding (PSH) for food security.

**India’s 7th Trade Policy Review (TPR) at WTO**

**Bangladesh declared as ‘Country in Focus’ for 51st IFFI**





- **Bangladesh** has been chosen as the ‘**Country in Focus**’ for the **51st International Film Festival of India (IFFI)**.
- The festival will be held at **Goa from January 16 to January 24, 2021**. The Country in Focus is a special segment that recognizes the cinematic excellence and contributions of the country.
- This section at the 51st IFFI will showcase four films from Bangladesh.
- The International Film Festival of India (IFFI), is being held annually since 1952, in Goa.
- The event is organised jointly by the Directorate of Film Festivals (under Ministry of Information and Broadcasting) and the state Government of Goa.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Prime Minister of Bangladesh: Sheikh Hasina; Capital: Dhaka; Currency: Taka.
- President of Bangladesh: Abdul Hamid.

**Oldest living Olympic champion Agnes Keleti turns 100**



- The oldest surviving Olympic champion, **Ágnes Keleti**, celebrates her

100th birthday. She is one of her country’s most successful Olympians, having won 10 medals for Hungary in gymnastics, at the **Olympic Games Helsinki 1952 and Melbourne 1956**.

- Her haul included five golds. Keleti won the floor event in Finland before producing an astonishing display in Australia, winning four golds – in the uneven bars, balance beam, floor, and team event. At 35, she became the **oldest female gymnast to win an Olympic title**.

**First-ever Ice climbing festival celebrated in Nubravally**



- In **Leh**, the first-ever **Ice climbing festival** was celebrated in **Nubra valley**. The Seven Day event was organized by **Nubra Adventure Club**.
- Ice climbing is a popular winter sport abroad. To promote winter tourism in Nubra valley, Nubra Adventure Club, with the help of Social activist Dr NordanOtzer, has organized the Seven Day Ice Climbing Festival.
- Trainer Rigzin Tsewang said that Nubra has the potential to be the ice climbing capital in the Himalayas.

**Suriname’s Indian-origin President to be**

**Republic Day chief guest**



- President of the Republic of Suriname, **Chandrikapersad Santokhi**, will be the chief guest at India's Republic Day parade on **January 26**.
- India had initially invited Boris Johnson to be the chief guest but the British PM had to cancel his visit in view of the grim coronavirus situation back home.
- Earlier this week, Santokhi was the chief guest at the **Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Convention**, held by the Ministry of External Affairs and he delivered the keynote address.
- He was sworn in as the president of Suriname in July 2020, when his party, the Progressive Reform Party, won 20 of the 51 seats in the elections.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Suriname Capital: Paramaribo.
- Suriname Currency: Suriname Dollar.
- Suriname Continent: South America.

**Tesla sets up India subsidiary in Bengaluru**



- **Elon Musk**-owned electric vehicle (EV) company **Tesla** has registered a fully-owned subsidiary in **Bengaluru, Karnataka**.
- Tesla, the world's most valued carmaker has incorporated a fully owned subsidiary ahead as a first step to set up an R&D unit and a manufacturing plant for its electric vehicles in the country.
- Tesla's global senior director **David Jon Feinstein**, chief accounting officer **Vaibhav Taneja** and Bengaluru-based entrepreneur **Venkatrangam Sreeram** are on the board of the India unit, Tesla India Motors and Energy Pvt Ltd.
- The office, situated on Lavelle Road in Bengaluru, is registered with a total paid-up capital of **Rs 1,00,000** and authorised share capital of **Rs 15 lakh**.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Tesla Founded: 1 July 2003.
- Tesla Headquarters: California, United States.

**IFFI 2021 to celebrate the work of legendary filmmaker Satyajit Ray**



- The **51st International Film Festival of India (IFFI)** will be celebrating the work of legendary filmmaker **Satyajit Ray** by screening five of his classics.
- As part of the tribute, the festival will showcase Ray's acclaimed "**PatherPanchali**", the first film of his **The Apu Trilogy**, 1964 romantic drama "**Charulata**", "**Sonar Kella**", his 1977 Hindi directorial debut "**Shatranj KeKhilari**" and "**GhareBaire**" (1984). 12 films for Festival Kaleidoscope & 50 films for World Panorama section were unveiled too.

**Rajnath Singh unveils India's 1st indigenously developed driverless metro car**



- Union Defence Minister, **Rajnath Singh** has unveiled India's first '**Driverless Metro Car**' on 15 January 2021 during a function held at **BEML's Bangalore Complex**.
- The indigenously designed & developed

state-of-the-art Driverless Metro trains are being manufactured at BEML Bangaluru manufacturing facility, for **Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA)**.

- BEML recently opened its Depot office at Charkop Metro Depot, MMRDA, Mumbai for commissioning, testing and round-the-clock services for Driverless Metro cars.
- BEML bagged a total order of **576 cars** for Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA)'s MRS1 project and the supply is scheduled progressively up to **January 2024**.

**India's first COVID-19 Vaccine recipient is Manish Kumar**



- **Manish Kumar**, a sanitation worker in Delhi, became the first person to receive the **COVID-19 vaccine** in India after PM Modi flagged off the nationwide vaccination drive on **16 January 2021**.
- Manish Kumar was given the injection at **AIIMS in Delhi** while Union Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan was also present.
- PM Modi launched the nationwide vaccine drive via videoconferencing and congratulated the people of India on getting two Made in India vaccines.
- India's vaccination programme is based on a very important principle that those



who are in need of the vaccine will get vaccinated first. Our doctors, nurses, medical & paramedical staff, sanitation workers in hospitals – be it private or hospital are entitled to get vaccinated. This will be done on priority.

**PM Modi appointed chairman of Somnath Temple Trust**



- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** was appointed the new **chairman** of the trust which manages the world-famous **Somnath Temple** at **Prabhas Patan town in Gujarat's Gir-Somnath district**, becoming the second PM to hold the post.
- After former PM **Morarji Desai**, Narendra Modi is the second Prime Minister who has been appointed the chairman of the temple trust. As per trust records, PM Modi has become the **eighth chairman of the trust**. As per the records, Desai had served as the chairman between **1967 and 1995**.
- The post of the Somnath Trust's chairman fell vacant after the death of the incumbent, former Gujarat Chief Minister **Keshubhai Patel**, in October last year.
- Patel had served as the chairman for 16 years (2004-2020). Other trustees include BJP leader LK Advani, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Gujarat-based scholar JD Parmar and

businessman Harshvardhan Neotia.

**India's 1st Labour Movement Museum to be set up in Kerala**



- The first-of-its-kind **Labour Movement Museum**, in India, would be launched in **Alappuzha in Kerala**, to showcase the history of the world labour movement.
- The museum will portray the growth of the world labour movement and the history of Kerala's labour movement, through pictures, documents and other exhibits. Alappuzha is famous as the global houseboat tourism hub.
- The **New Model Cooperative Society Limited**, previously run by the **Bombay Company**, has been converted into the **Labour Movement Museum**.
- It will portray, through pictures, documents and other exhibits, the growth of the world labour movement and the history of Kerala's labour movement.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Kerala CM: Pinarayi Vijayan.
- Kerala Governor: Arif Mohammad Khan.

**Bhawana Kanth to become 1st woman**

**fighter pilot at R-Day parade**



- Flight lieutenant **Bhawana Kanth** will become the **1st woman fighter pilot** to take part in the **Republic Day parade**.
- She will be a part of the **Indian Air Force's tableau** in the 2021 Republic Day Parade that will showcase mock-ups of the light combat helicopter, light combat aircraft, and the Sukhoi-30 fighter plane.
- At present, Bhawana is posted in **Rajasthan** and flies the **MiG-21 Bison fighter plane**.
- Bhawana is also one of the first women fighter pilots to be inducted into the Indian Air Force in the year **2016**.
- She was inducted into IAF in 2016 along with **Mohana Singh** and **Avani Chaturvedi**.
- Since then **10 women** have been commissioned as fighter pilots in IAF.
- Induction of Bhawana and other two women fighters was an experimental scheme of induction of women in IAF's combat stream introduced in the year 2015.

**Howrah-Kalka Mail Renamed as "Netaji Express"**



- One of the oldest trains of Indian Railways, the **Howrah-Kalka Mail** has been renamed as the '**Netaji Express**'.
- Indian Railways have renamed the train just a few days before the birth anniversary of **Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose on January 23**.
- Howrah-Kalka Mail was started in the 19th Century as one of the early commercial passenger train services in India.
- The Kalka mail has always been popular for connecting Howrah with Kalka and has enjoyed steady patronage.
- It is believed that Netaji took this train from Bihar's Gomoh after escaping from his house in Kolkata in the year **1941**.

**JSW Sports signs cricketer Rishabh Pant to manage commercial interests**



- **Rishabh Pant** was signed by **JSW Sports**, the sports arm of **JSW Group**. The multi-year association between the two parties will see JSW Sports manage all commercial interests and marketing rights of the 23-year-old cricketer, who most recently played a starring role in India’s magnificent Test series win in Australia.
- As part of the association, JSW Sports will manage the athlete’s image positioning and all his commercial engagements, including brand endorsements and appearances, social media monetisation, and business deals.
- Ever since its inception in 2012, JSW Sports has worked towards maximising India’s sporting potential by working with promising Indian talents across Olympic sports, football, and kabaddi; including Olympic medalist **Sakshi Malik** and wrestling star **Bajrang Punia**.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- JSW Group Founder: Sajjan Jindal.
- JSW Group Founded: 1982.

**India’s longest Road Arch Bridge inaugurated in Meghalaya**



- **Meghalaya** Chief Minister, **Conrad K. Sangma** has inaugurated India’s

longest road arch bridge “**Wahrew Bridge**” at Sohbar in East Khasi Hills district of **Meghalaya** on 22 January 2021.

- The project was sanctioned in 2013 and, the work started in 2014. The construction of the bridge was completed in December 2018.
- The arch bridge has been constructed at an estimated cost of **Rs 49.395 crore** under the **Non-Lapsable Central Pool of Resources (NLCPR)** of the Ministry of Development of North East Region (DoNER). The iconic structure is expected to boost the tourism sector in the State.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Meghalaya Capital: Shillong.
- Meghalaya Governor: Satya Pal Malik.
- Meghalaya Chief minister: Conrad Sangma.

**Indian Railways’ longest freight train ‘Vasuki’ sets a new record**



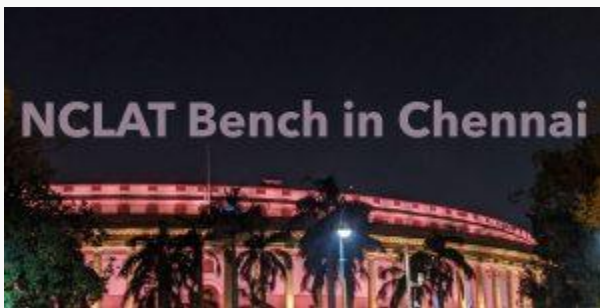
- The **South-East Central Railways (SECR)** zone in **Chhattisgarh** breaks its own previous record by successfully operating the longest ever freight train by amalgamating five rakes of goods



trains as one unit of around **3.5 km**.

- Named as **'Vasuki'**, it covered the distance of **224 km** between the railway stations of **Bhilai and Korba** and took about seven hours.
- The **'Vasuki'**, comprising of **300 wagons** of long haul rake of five goods trains, ran with the help of one pilot, one assistant loco pilot and a guard.

**Union Minister Nirmala Sitharaman opens NCLAT Chennai Bench**



- Union Minister for Finance and Corporate Affairs **Nirmala Sitharaman** has virtually inaugurated the Chennai Bench of the **National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT)**. This will be the second NCLAT Bench in the country, after the Principal Bench in **New Delhi**.
- The NCLAT has jurisdiction over matters under the **Companies Act, the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code and the Competition Commission of India**.
- Fresh appeals against the orders of the Benches of the tribunal having jurisdiction in **Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana** and the Union Territories of **Lakshadweep and Puducherry** will have to be filed before the Chennai Bench.
- Justice **Bansi Lal Bhat**, acting Chairperson, NCLAT; **Rajesh**

**Verma**, Secretary, Ministry of Corporate Affairs; and Justice **Venugopal M**, judicial member, and **Balvinder Singh**, technical member of the NCLAT Chennai Bench, were present.

**Election Commission rolls out digital voter ID cards "e-EPIC"**



- The **Election Commission** has rolled out the electronic version of the voters' photo identity card **e-EPIC**, which can be stored on mobile phones and downloaded on personal computers.
- The physical card takes time to print and reach the voter, and the idea is to provide faster delivery and easy accessibility to the document.
- The e-EPIC is a secure **portable document format (PDF)** version of the EPIC which can be downloaded on mobile or in a self-printable form on the computer.
- The voter can store the card on his/her mobile, upload it as a PDF on Digi locker or print it & self-laminate.
- The e-electoral photo identity card is a non-editable digital version of the electoral photo identity card and can be saved in facilities such as digital locker as well as can be printed in the PDF format.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Chief Election Commissioner of India: Sunil Arora.
- Chief Election Commissioner Formed: 25 January 1950.
- Chief Election Commissioner Headquarters: New Delhi.

**Airtel announces 5G ready network in Hyderabad**



- **Bharti Airtel** took an edge by becoming the first telecom operator in India to demonstrate **5G** services successfully. **Bharti Airtel** announced that it orchestrated live fifth-generation (5G) service over a commercial network in **Hyderabad**.
- Bharti Airtel explained that it used state of the art dynamic spectrum sharing so as to operate both **4G and 5G networks** in the same spectrum block.
- One of India’s major telecom companies managed to do this atop the existing spectrum in the 1800 MHz band through the **Non-Stand Alone (NSA)** network technology.
- Airtel claimed that it took only a few seconds to download a full-length film during its demonstration of the 5G network.

- The company said that the **5G network** could deliver ten times the speed and latency attained previously with 100 times the concurrency when compared to the technology in use.
- The government is conducting the auction of **2,251 MHz** of spectrum through the **Department of Telecommunications (DoT)** at a reserve price of **Rs 3.92 trillion** from March 1, 2021.
- The government has not included the spectrum in the **3,300-3,600 MHz** bands recommended for 5G by the telecom operators.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Bharti Airtel CEO: Gopal Vittal.
- Bharti Airtel Founder: Sunil Bharti Mittal.
- Bharti Airtel Founded: 7 July 1995.

**Environment Minister releases National Marine Turtle Action Plan**



- **National Marine Turtle Action Plan** has been recently released by the Ministry of Environment Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) in **New Delhi**. The Ministry also released the ‘**Marine Mega Fauna Stranding Guidelines**’ along with the Marine Turtle Action Plan.
- National Marine Turtle Action Plan and Marine Mega Fauna Stranding Guidelines have been released

acknowledging the need for a conservation paradigm for marine turtles and marine megafauna.

- At the launch, the minister called for conserving both floral and faunal diversity including marine biodiversity.
- Both these documents include the ways and measures to promote inter-sectoral action for conservation.
- The documents also provide guidance for enhanced coordination amongst the government, all relevant stakeholders, and civil society on the response to cases of entanglement, stranding, injury, or mortality of marine mammals. All of them should also have better coordination to chalk out plans for the conservation of marine turtles.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change: Prakash Javadekar.

**NATIONAL**

**PM Modi lays foundation stone of Light House projects (LHPs)**



- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** laid the

foundation stone of **Light House projects (LHPs)** at six sites across **six States** through video conference on **1st January 2021**.

- The LHPs will be implemented at **Indore (Madhya Pradesh), Rajkot (Gujarat), Chennai (Tamil Nadu), Ranchi (Jharkhand), Agartala (Tripura) and Lucknow (Uttar Pradesh)**.
- The project is being constructed under the **Global Housing Technology Challenge (GHTC)-India**. It has been conceptualised by the Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.
- Under the programme, over **1,000 houses** would be built in each of the six cities in 12 months along with allied infrastructure facilities.

**Gol extends Deadline to file Income Tax Returns to January 10, 2021**



- The **Central government** has further extended the deadline to file an income tax return (ITR) for **FY 2019-20 by 10 days**, up to **January 10, 2021**. Earlier this deadline was December 31, 2020.
- This extension of the deadline is for those individuals whose accounts are not required to be audited and who usually file their income tax return using **ITR-1 or ITR-4 forms**, as



applicable. This is the third extension of the deadline to file a tax return.

- The first extension was given from the normal deadline of **July 31 to November 30, 2020**, and then to **December 31, 2020**.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Union Minister of Finance and Corporate Affairs: **Nirmala Sitharaman**.
- Union Minister of State in the Ministry of Finance and Corporate Affairs: **Anurag Singh Thakur**.

**India becomes co-chair of Asia Protected Areas Partnership (APAP)**



- **India** has been chosen as the co-chair of the IUCN-supported **Asia Protected Areas Partnership (APAP)** for a period of three years till **November 2023**. India will replace **South Korea**, which held the post for 3 years until November 2020.
- As a co-chair, India would be responsible to assist other Asian countries in managing their protected areas.
- The APAP is chaired by **IUCN** (

**International Union for Conservation of Nature) Asia** and co-chaired by an APAP nation member on a rotational basis.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- International Union for Conservation of Nature Headquarters: **Gland, Switzerland**.
- International Union for Conservation of Nature CEO: **Grethel Aguilar**.
- International Union for Conservation of Nature Founder: **Julian Huxley**.
- International Union for Conservation of Nature Founded: **5 October 1948**.

**Gol constitutes high-level group for South Asia energy security**



- The **Central Government** has set up a high-level group to build a **South Asia-focused energy security architecture**.
- The high-level group, named the **South Asia Group for Energy (SAGE)**, will be headed by former Union Power Secretary **Ram Vinay Shahi**. SAGE has been set up under the **Ministry of External Affairs (MEA)**-run think tank **Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS)**.

- To achieve a balanced and optimal development of energy infrastructure through mutual understanding and cooperation, by promoting, initiating and facilitating effective policy dialogue and capacity building on a bilateral, sub-regional and regional basis for energy and related issues, among South Asian countries.



**Ramesh Pokhriyal launched Toycathon-2021 to promote manufacturing of toys**



- The Union Education Minister **Ramesh Pokhriyal ‘Nishank’** and Union Minister WCD and Textiles Smt. **Smriti Zubin Irani** jointly launched **Toycathon-2021** and the **Toycathon Portal**.
- Toycathon is being organized to develop India as the global **Toy manufacturing hub**.
- Toycathon will provide a platform to conceptualize innovative toys based on the Indian value system which will inculcate the positive behaviour and good value among the children.

**Biden selects Judge Merrick Garland for attorney general**

- President-elect **Joe Biden** will nominate federal appeals judge **Merrick Garland** to be the next U.S. attorney general.
- He serves as a judge on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit, one of 13 federal appeals courts. **Vanita Gupta**, the head of the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, will be nominated by Biden as the **Associate Attorney General**, the No. 3 people in the department.

**Alex Ellis appointed new British high commissioner to India**



- **Alexander Ellis** has been appointed **British high commissioner to India** and will take up the key role later this month.
- He has held several posts, including

deputy national security adviser in the cabinet office, director-general in the department for exiting the European Union, and the British ambassador to Portugal. Ellis succeeds **Philip Barton**.

- In August 2020, Barton was promoted as permanent undersecretary in the UK's newly formed foreign, commonwealth and development office.



**PM Modi dedicates new Section of Western Dedicated Freight Corridor**



- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** has dedicated the **306-km New Rewari-New Madar section** of the **Western Dedicated Freight Corridor (WDFC)** to the nation.
- Through video-conferencing, Modi also flagged off the world's first double-stack long-haul 1.5-km-long container train hauled by electric traction from **New Ateli-New Kishangarh**.
- The New Rewari-New Madar section of the WDFC is situated in Haryana, approximately 79 km in Mahendragarh and Rewari districts and Rajasthan approximately 227 km in Jaipur, Ajmer, Sikar, Nagaur, and Alwar districts.

**India to chair 3 key subsidiary bodies of UN Security Council**

- The Permanent Representative of India to the UN, **T S Tirumurti** has announced that India has been asked to chair three important committees of the **UN Security Council (UNSC)**, during its tenure as a non-permanent member of the powerful **15-nation UN body**.
- The three highly significant committees include the **Taliban Sanctions Committee, Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC)** and the **Libyan Sanctions Committee**.
- Among these, India will chair the Counter-Terrorism Committee of **UNSC in 2022**, which coincides with the **75th anniversary** of India's independence.
- India began its two-year term at UNSC from January 01, 2021. It is the eighth time that the country has joined UNSC as the non-permanent member. In 2021, along with India, Norway, Kenya, Ireland and Mexico joined as non-permanent members in the Council.

**Preeti Pant Panel to study adverse findings of NFHS-5**





**Ministry of Health & Family Welfare  
Government of India**

- The **Health and Family Welfare Ministry** has recently formed a technical expert group to study the adverse findings from the **National Family Health Survey-5**.
- The Ministry has set up the technical committee of medicine and nutrition experts under the leadership of Joint Secretary **Preeti Pant**.
- The expert group also includes State programme officers from **Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, and Karnataka**.
- The committee will examine the findings of the National Family Health Survey-5 as well as suggest policies and courses of action to improve on indicators related to **anaemia, malnutrition, C-section, and stunting**.
- The newly formed technical expert group will conduct meetings regularly and will provide its recommendations soon.
- As of now, no meeting has been held and no date has been finalized for the first meeting.

**Japan commits Rs 2,113 cr support for COVID relief efforts**



- The **Government of Japan** has committed Official Development Assistance loan of **30 billion** Japanese Yen which is approximately **Rs 2113 crore** rupees for a programme loan to support India's efforts at providing social assistance to the poor and vulnerable households, severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- India and Japan have had a long and fruitful history of bilateral development cooperation since **1958**.
- In the last few years, the economic cooperation between India and Japan has strengthened and grown into a strategic partnership.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Japan Capital: Tokyo.
- Japan Currency: Japanese yen.
- Japan Prime minister: Yoshihide Suga.

**Nitin Gadkari to launch "Khadi Prakritik Paint" developed by KVIC**



- Union Road Transport and Highways Minister **Nitin Gadkari** will be launching an innovative new paint developed by **Khadi and Village Industries Commission**.
- The eco-friendly, non-toxic paint, called “**Khadi Prakritik Paint**” is a first-of-its-kind product, with anti-fungal, anti-bacterial properties.
- Based on cow dung as its main ingredient, the paint is cost-effective and odourless and has been certified by the **Bureau of Indian Standards**.
- Khadi Prakritik Paint is available in two forms – distemper paint and plastic emulsion paint.
- Production of Khadi Prakritik Paint is aligned with Prime Minister’s vision of increasing farmers’ income.

**First time in history, Union Budget 2021 to be paperless**



- **Union Budget 2021**, slated to be presented on **February 1**, is going to be completely paperless in the wake of the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.
- This will be the first time since independence that the budget papers will not be printed. The Centre has received permission for the same from both houses of parliament.
- The decision has been taken as several people (**approximately 100**) would be required to stay at the printing press for around a fortnight amid the **COVID-19 fear**.
- The budget papers are usually printed at the ministry’s in-house printing press in the **North Block**.
- This year’s budget may reportedly witness several conventions being broken as the traditional ‘**Halwa ceremony**’, which is a given every year is also not likely to take place, or a low-key function may be held with limited gathering in attendance.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Minister of Finance and Corporate Affairs: **Nirmala Sitharaman**.
- Minister of State in the Ministry of Finance and Corporate Affairs: **Anurag Singh Thakur**.

**No foreign leader as chief guest on Republic Day this year**



- According to **External Affairs Ministry Spokesperson Anurag Srivastava**, due to the global **COVID-19 situation**, it has been decided that this year there will not be a **foreign Head of State or Head of Government as the Chief Guest for the Republic Day event**. President **Ram Nath Kovind** will take the salute at the parade this time.
- This will be the first time in over five decades that India will not have a chief guest at the Republic Day parade.
- This comes days after United Kingdom (UK) Prime Minister **Boris Johnson** cancelled his visit to India. Boris Johnson was scheduled to be the chief guest at India's Republic Day parade on January 26.

**Centre launches Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana 3.0**



- The **Government of India** launched the third phase of **Pradhan Mantri Kaushal**

**Vikas Yojana** on 15 January 2021.

- The scheme has been rolled out for the current financial year, ending March 2021, and will be implemented by the **Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship**.
- Under the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana-3.0, skills training would be provided in **600 districts** across all states, (except four states including **Himachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and West Bengal**) to **8 lakh** candidates over next three months with an outlay of **Rs 948.90 crore** with a focus on Covid-related skills.
- The training will be imparted through **729 Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Kendras (PMKKs)**, empanelled non-PMKK training centres and more than 200 industrial training institutes (ITIs).
- Further, a five-year PMKVY will be launched in 2021-22 with an enhanced target of skilling **1.5 crore youth**.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Minister of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship: **Mahendra Nath Pandey**.

**PM Modi launches Rs 1,000-crore 'Startup India Seed Fund'**





- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** has launched **Rs 1,000-crore ‘Startup India Seed Fund’** on 16 January 2021, while addressing the **‘Prarambh: Startup India International Summit’ 2021**. This initiative will help in setting up new startups and promote their growth.
- The Startup India Seed Fund would support startups in need of initial capital to start and grow their business and help budding entrepreneurs pursue innovative ideas.
- The government has been implementing the Fund of Fund Scheme to help startups raise equity capital. Going forward, the government will also help startups in raising debt capital.

**PM Modi flags off 8 trains connecting Statue of Unity**



- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** has flagged off eight trains connecting the **Statue of Unity in Kevadiya, Gujarat** with different regions of the country through video conferencing.
- PM Modi informed that it was the first time in history that so many trains from different locations were flagged off for a common destination.
- The eight trains flagged off will connect Kevadiya with **Varanasi, Dadar,**

**Ahmedabad, Hazrat Nizamuddin, Rewa, Chennai, and Pratapnagar.**

- PM also inaugurated other railway projects in Kevadiya, including Dabhoi-Chandid gauge converted broad gauge rail line, Chandod-Kevadiya new broad gauge rail line, Pratapnagar-Kevadiya newly electrified section, and new station buildings of Dabhoi Junction, Chandod and Kevadiya.

**Petroleum Ministry launches ‘SAKSHAM’ campaign**



**Sanrakshan Kshamata Mahotsav 2021**

- The **Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas** has launched a month-long mass awareness campaign titled **‘SAKSHAM’** to spread awareness about green and clean energy.
- The campaign has been organised by the **Petroleum Conservation Research Association (PCRA)**, to motivate consumers to switch to cleaner fuels and bring in behavioural change to use fossil fuel intelligently.
- The campaign will spread awareness about seven key drivers that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had recently mentioned.
- **SAKSHAM** stands for **SanrakshanKshamata Mahotsav**.
- The pan-India campaign would include

various activities such as cyclotron, farmer workshops, seminars, painting competition, CNG vehicle driving contest, etc to spread awareness among masses about the advantages of using clean fuels.

- They include moving towards a gas-based economy, cleaner use of fossil fuels, greater reliance on domestic sources to drive biofuels and increased use of electric vehicles.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas: Dharmendra Pradhan.

**Gol decides to celebrate January 23 as ParakramDiwas**



- The birth anniversary of **Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose**, on **January 23**, as '**ParakramDiwas**' every year, the **Ministry of Culture** announced.
- The day is celebrated to honour and remember Netaji's indomitable spirit and selfless service to the nation.
- Earlier this month, the Ministry of Culture held a high-level committee, headed by Prime Minister **Narendra Modi**, to commemorate the **125th birth anniversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose** in a befitting manner.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi is

expected to visit **West Bengal on January 23** to attend Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose's birth anniversary celebrations at the **Victorial Memorial in Kolkata**. The PM is also likely to visit **National Library** located in **Belvedere Estate, Alipore**.

**Nitin Gadkari inaugurates National Road Safety Month 2021**



- The first-ever **National Road Safety Month** was inaugurated by Union Minister for Defence Shri Rajnath Singh and Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways & MSME **Nitin Gadkari**.
- It is the inaugural edition of the National Road Safety Month and is being held in place of **National Road Safety Week**, which was being observed since the past few years.
- The objective of the month-long programme is to build awareness about road safety and reduce road accidents in India. It will be held till **17 February 2021**.
- During this period, nation-wide activities would be conducted throughout the country in association with **State Govt./Union Territory administrations, NHAI, NHIDCL, OEMs and NGOs**.
- The centre is also taking several measures to reduce road accidents by

Restructuring and Strengthening 4E's of Road safety, which are: **Engineering, Education, Enforcement and Emergency care Services.**

**Cabinet approves Rs 5,282-cr investment for 850 MW Ratle project on Chenab river**



- The Union Cabinet has approved **850 megawatts (MW) Ratle hydropower** project worth an Rs. 5281.94 crore on **Chenab river** in **Kishtwar district of Jammu and Kashmir**. The project is being implemented under the Centre's plan to expedite strategically important hydropower projects in the union territory post its reorganization.
- The project will be developed by a new joint venture company between state-run **National Hydroelectric Power Corporation (NHPC) Ltd** and **Jammu & Kashmir State Power Development Corporation Ltd (JKSPDC)**, where NHPC will have a **51% stake** in the JV firm, while the balance will be held by JKSPDC.

**Amit Shah inaugurates new 4-lane Thaltej-Shilaj-Rancharda railway overbridge**



- Union Home Minister **Shri Amit Shah** has inaugurated the new 4-lane **Thaltej-Shilaj-Rancharda railway overbridge** in **Ahmedabad city** of Gujarat through video conferencing. The new overbridge has been built at a cost of **Rs 55 crore**.
- There was a big problem of traffic on more than one lakh railway crossings in the country. Railway gates would open and close more than 100 times a day, due to which the costly fuel and precious time was wasted.
- In view of this, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi decided and under the leadership of Railway Minister Shri Piyush Goyal, a huge campaign was started in which the work of constructing overbridges or underbridges at these one lakh railway crossings was started. Today, this overbridge has been inaugurated under the same scheme.

**Republic Day 2021: India celebrates its 72nd Republic Day**





- The nation celebrated the **72nd Republic Day** with a grand military parade and exhibition of its history, cultural diversity and strategic weaponry at the **Rajpath, Delhi**. This day is celebrated by all Indians and **26th of January** has been declared as a national holiday by the government of India.
- The Republic Day Parade ceremony will commence with Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** visiting the **National War Memorial**. The National Flag was unfurled followed by the National Anthem with a booming 21-gun salute.
- The Indian Republic Day is celebrated all across India with lots of patriotism and fervour. At Rajpath, in Delhi, magnificent parades by regiments of the **Indian Army, Navy, Air Force, police, and paramilitary forces** are witnessed. India's defensive prowess is on display too, with the latest missiles, aircraft, and weapon systems.

**India pledges \$150,000 for UN Peacebuilding Fund for 2021**

- **India** has announced a pledge of **USD 150,000** to the **United Nations Peacebuilding Fund (PBF)** for the year 2021 to support the activities and programs this year. The Peacebuilding Fund has put forth its five-year strategy, which requires 1.5 billion dollars for 2020-2024.
- This was announced by **TS Tirumurti**, India's permanent representative to the United Nations on January 25, 2021.
- UN Secretary-General **António Guterres** expressed that he was grateful to the countries that committed to providing over \$439 million in support of the UN's work toward peacebuilding & conflict prevention through the UN Peacebuilding Fund.
- UN Peacekeeping aims to mainly help countries navigate through the difficult path from conflict to peace. The UN peacekeeping has unique strengths including legitimacy, burden sharing and an ability to deploy troops and police from around the world and integrate them with civilian peacekeepers to address a range of mandates set by the UN Security Council and General Assembly.

**India's "Vaccine Maitri" Initiative begins**



- **Vaccine Maitri Initiative** is an initiative launched by **India** to gift COVID-19 vaccines to neighbouring countries. Recently, **Sri Lanka and Bahrain** have received the COVID-19 vaccines from India under the initiative.
- The Vaccine Maitri initiative was launched by India on January 20 to gift COVID-19 vaccines to neighbouring countries.
- Sri Lanka has received **5 lakh** Covid-19 vaccines from India as a part of the “Vaccine Maitri” initiative.
- Consignment of vaccines has also been sent to Bahrain. The country will receive **10,800 vaccines under the initiative.**
- India has already delivered over **5 million** doses to seven countries in the neighbourhood under the initiative before Sri Lanka and Bahrain.
- The 7 countries are- the Maldives (100,000 vaccines), Bhutan (150,000 vaccines), Nepal (1 million vaccines), Bangladesh (2 million vaccines), Myanmar (1.5 million vaccines), Mauritius (100,000 vaccines), and Seychelles (50,000 vaccines).
- Commercial supplies of Covishield have also been sent to **Morocco, Brazil, (2 million doses each), and Bangladesh (5 million doses).**

### India's First 'Gender Park' in Kerala's Kozhikode



- The **Kerala government** is all set to launch **Rs 300 crore** three-tower '**Gender Park**' in Kozhikode. The park will become functional on the occasion of the second edition of the **International Conference on Gender Equality (ICGE-II).**
- The park will be inaugurated by the Chief Minister of Kerala, Pinarayi Vijayan, in between February 11-13 that will also mark the inauguration of the second edition of ICGE-II.
- The gender park was established with the aim of creating relevant interventions so as to address a range of gender-based issues. It includes both off-campus and on-campus activities and other projects that work to empower the individuals and communities.
- The gender park was established by the government of **Kerala in 2013.** It is an initiative that works towards gender equality and empowerment in Kerala. The headquartered for the initiative is in the capital of **Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram.**

### Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- Kerala CM: Pinarayi Vijayan.
- Kerala Governor: Arif Mohammad Khan.

**OBITUARIES**

**Legendary Music Director Shantanu Mohapatra passes away**



- Legendary Odia musician, **Shantanu Mohapatra** passed away. He was the first Odia music composer to work with legends like Lata Mangeshkar, Manna Dey and Md Rafi and also the first to work in Hindi, Bengali, Assamese and Telugu film industries.
- Mohapatra has composed music for hundreds of Odia film songs and Jatra (opera) shows in a career that spanned over three decades.
- Mohapatra, who retired as the Director of Odisha Mining Corporation, received several awards including the Odisha Film Critic Award for his contribution to Odia music.

**Former Union Minister Buta Singh passes away**



- Former Union Minister and senior Rajasthan Congress leader **Buta Singh** passed away.
- The veteran politician Buta Singh served as **Home Minister of India** in the Rajiv Gandhi government from 1986 to 1989.
- Buta Singh had also served as the **Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development**. He was a four-time MP from **Jalore-Sirohi Lok Sabha constituency**.
- He served as the Chairperson of the **National Commission For Scheduled Cast** from 2007 to 2010.

**Ace mountaineer Colonel Narendra 'Bull' Kumar passes away**



- Ace mountaineer Colonel **Narendra 'Bull' Kumar**, who helped India secure the **Siachen Glacier**, passed away.
- He was responsible for the success of



Operation Meghdoot in 1984. He was the first Indian to climb **Mount Nanda Devi**.

- He climbed **Mount Everest** in **1965**, Mount Blanc( highest peak in the Alps), and later Mount Kangchenchanga. He earned the nickname 'Bull' for relentlessly charging into everything he did.
- Col Kumar, who was awarded the **Kirti Chakra, Padma Shri, Arjun Award and the McGregor medal**, carried out multiple expeditions in the Siachen glacier area in the late 1970s and early 1980s.



- Olympic bronze and World Cup-winning hockey player **Michael Kindo** passed away. He played 3 Men's Hockey World Cup in **1971, 1973 & 1975** where India bagged bronze, silver & gold medals.
- He also represented in **1972 Olympic Games** where India secured a bronze medal. Kindo received the **Arjuna Award** in **1972**.

**Former Maharashtra Minister Vilas Patil Undalkar passes away**



- Former Maharashtra cabinet minister and seven-time Congress MLA **Vilas Patil Undalkar** has passed away.
- The veteran Congressman, Undalkar, who was popularly known as '**kaka**', was elected seven times from Karad-South Assembly constituency for a record 35 consecutive years, from 1980 to 2014.
- Undalkar held the Cooperation and Law and Justice portfolios in the State Cabinets during the previous Congress-led state governments.

**Oldest living first-class cricketer Alan Burgess passes away**



- The world's oldest living first-class cricketer **Alan Burgess** has passed away at the age of **100**. A right-hand batsman and slow left-arm bowler, Alan appeared in 11 first-class matches for **Canterbury** from 1940/41 to 1951/52 and also for **New Zealand Services** in England in 1945.
- He took 6-52 on debut against Otago at Lancaster Park in a match that began

**World Cup winning hockey player Michael Kindo passes away**

on Christmas Day 1940. Alan Burgess was a tank driver for New Zealand's forces in England during the **Second World War**. Following his death, **India's Raghunath Chandorkar** is now the oldest first-class cricketer alive.

**Veteran Indian Fashion Designer Satya Paul passes away**



- Veteran Fashion designer **Satya Paul**, best known for reinventing the Indian saree for contemporary women, has passed away.
- Satya Paul launched the first saree boutique in India, L’Affaire, in 1980. In 1986, he launched India’s first designer label, under the brand ‘Satya Paul’, which has now become one of the premier brands in the country.

**Veteran Professor Chitra Ghosh passes away**



- **Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose’s** niece and eminent academician **Chitra Ghosh** has passed away. She made pioneering contributions to academics and community services and dedicated her life in serving the people, teaching & inspiring the youth.
- Professor Bose was the former head of the political science department at Lady Brabourne College in Kolkata.

**Former Gujarat Chief Minister Madhavsinh Solanki passes away**



- Veteran Congress leader **Madhavsinh Solanki**, who served as former External Affairs Minister of India and the Chief Minister of Gujarat, has passed away.
- He had served as External Affairs Minister of India from **June 1991 to March 1992**.
- He had been the Chief Minister of Gujarat for three times between **1976 to 1990**. He was the longest-serving chief minister of the state before Narendra Modi.

**Padma Shri Awardee Telugu Journalist TurlapatiKutumba Rao passes away**



- Veteran journalist and orator (public speaker) **Sri Turlapati Kutumba Rao** has passed away. He is known for his service to journalism in the **Telugu language**.
- He has written over 4000 biographies and delivered over 16000 public speeches which have been recorded by the Telugu Book of Records as a world record.
- Rao has received a number of honour for his field of work, including the fourth highest Indian civilian award of **Padma Shri, in 2002**, making him the first journalist from the state of Andhra Pradesh to receive the award.

**Pulitzer Prize-winning author & journalist Neil Sheehan passes away**



- Pulitzer Prize-winning author & journalist **Neil Sheehan** passed away. He covered the **Vietnam War** for **United Press International** and

the **Times** from **1962 to 1966**.

- He won a Pulitzer Prize and a National Book Award in 1989 for "**A Bright Shining Lie: John Paul Vann and America in Vietnam.**"

**Indian American writer Ved Mehta passes away**



- Indian American writer **Ved Mehta** passed away. The **Indian-American novelist** overcame blindness & was widely known as the **20th-century writer** most responsible for introducing American readers to India.
- Ved Mehta, a longtime writer for The New Yorker whose best-known work, spanning a dozen volumes, explored the vast, turbulent history of modern India through the intimate lens of his own autobiography.

**Social Activist and Padma Shri Awardee D Prakash Rao passes away**





- Noted social activist and Padma Shri winner, **D Prakash Rao** has passed away. He was basically a tea seller based in Cuttack, who spent his entire earning to educate slum children, through the school '**Asha O Ashwasana**', which he started in 2000.
- He was conferred with the prestigious **Padma Shri award in 2019** for his contribution towards boosting the value of education among slum kids in Cuttack. Apart from this, Rao was also a well-known blood donor.

**Legendary classical musician Ustad Ghulam Mustafa Khan passes away**



- Legendary Indian classical musician and Padma Vibhushan awardee **Ustad Ghulam Mustafa Khan** passed away.

- He was awarded the Padma Shri in **1991**, the Padma Bhusan in **2006**, and the Padma Vibhushan in **2018**. In 2003, he was also awarded the **Sangeet NatakAkademi Award**, which is the highest recognition given to practising Indian artists by the Sangeet NatakAkademi.

**Former Union Minister and Industrialist Kamal Morarka passes away**



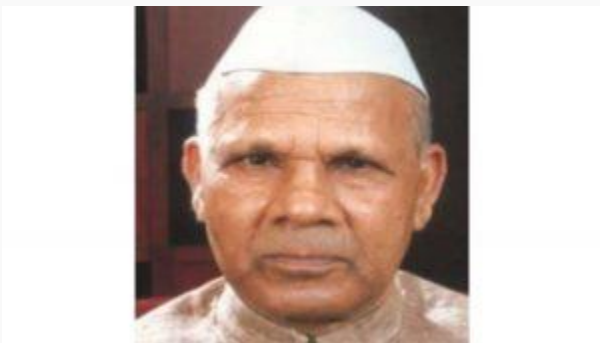
- Former Union minister and noted industrialist **Kamal Morarka** has passed away. He served as the Minister of State in Prime Minister's Office under Prime Minister **Chandra Shekhar** from 1990 to 1991.
- The 74-year-old leader, a businessman who was also a former BCCI vice president. He was incumbent president of Samajwadi Janata Party (Chandra Shekhar). He was elected to **Rajya Sabha in 1988**.

**Padma Award winning Renowned Oncologist Dr V Shanta passes away**



- Padma Award winning renowned oncologist **Dr V Shanta** has passed away. She was the chairperson of **Adyar Cancer Institute in Chennai**, which she joined in 1954. The institute is known for providing state-of-the-art healthcare to all patients.
- Dr V Shanta was a recipient of the prestigious **Padma Shri (1986)** and **Padma Bhushan (2006)** for her efforts for making quality and affordable cancer treatment accessible to everyone. She was also awarded the **Padma Vibhushan** and the **Ramon Magsaysay awards**.

**Former Arunachal Governor Mata Prasad passes away**



- Former Arunachal Governor **Mata Prasad** has passed away at the age of 95.
- He served as minister in the Congress government in **Uttar Pradesh in 1988-89** and appointed as **Governor of**

**Arunachal Pradesh in 1993.**

**Malayalam actor Unnikrishnan Namboothiri passes away**



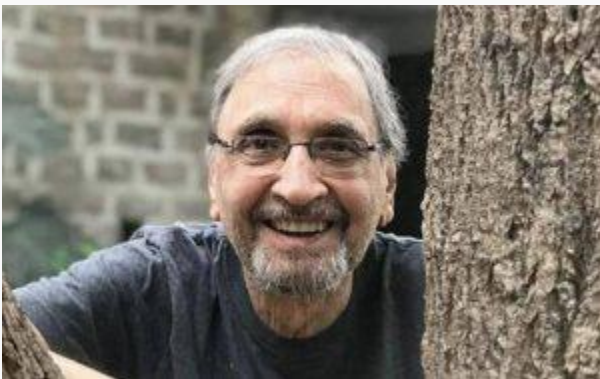
- Veteran Malayalam actor, **Unnikrishnan Namboothiri** has passed away while contracting COVID-19. He made his acting debut in **1996 with Desadanam**. However, he became a household name among the Malayalam film audience for his performance as a witty grandfather in **Kalyanaraman (2002)**.
- Unnikrishnan is well known for movies like **Kaikudunna Nilavu (1998)**, **Kaliyattam (1997)**, **Pammal K Sambandam (2002)**, **Sadanandante Samayam (2003)**, **Madhuranombarakattu (2000)**, **Rappakal (2005)**, and **Pokkiri Raja (2010)**.

**Popular Bhajan Singer Narendra Chanchal passes away**



- The iconic Indian Bhajan singer **Narendra Chanchal**, who specialized in religious songs and hymns, has passed away. He sang a Bollywood song **Beshak Mandir Masjid** for the 1973 film Bobby and won **Filmfare Best Male Playback Award**.
- Some of his ever-popular bhajans include ChaloBulawaAaya Hai, Tune MujheBulayaSherawaliye, Ambe Tu Hai Jagadambe Kali, Hanuman Chalisa, SankatMochan Naam Tiharo, Ram Se Bada Ram Ka Naam among others. Besides several bhajans, Chanchal had also given voice in several Hindi films as well.

**Veteran Bureaucrat, poet and Hyderabad historian Narendra Luther passes away**



- Noted historian, author, poet and retired bureaucrat **Narendra Luther** has passed. A 1955 batch IAS officer, Luther

was closely associated with the history and culture of erstwhile Hyderabad state and its rulers.

- He had served in various positions before retiring as the chief secretary of the **undivided Andhra Pradesh in 1991**. He has penned a number of books on the history, heritage and architecture of Hyderabad.

**Legendary American talk-show host Larry King passes away**



- The iconic American radio and television host, and paid spokesman, **Larry King**, has passed away. He rose to fame in **1978** as a radio host of **The Larry King Show** and then hosted **Larry King Live** on CNN for about 25 years from **1985 to 2010**.
- King has quizzed thousands of world leaders, politicians, entertainers, athletes, and everyday people for CNN and other news outlets in a career spanning more than six decades.

**Former India and Mohun Bagan goalkeeper Prasanta Dora passes away**





- Former Indian National Football team goalkeeper, **Prasanta Dora** has passed away. He was represented Tollygunge Agragami, Calcutta Port Trust, Mohammedan Sporting, Mohun Bagan and East Bengal in domestic football.
- He has also adjudged the Best Goalkeeper when Bengal lifted back-to-back **Santosh Trophy** titles in 1997-98 and 99. At the national level, Dora made five appearances in competitions such as SAFF Cup and SAF Games.

**Oscar winning-actor Cloris Leachman passes away**



- Oscar winning-actor **Cloris Leachman** has passed away. The late star was known as one of Hollywood's most prolific performers having won an **Academy Award, a Golden Globe, and eight Primetime Emmy Awards.**
- Leachman's character Phyllis in *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, which she

claimed was close to her own persona, brought the actress two Emmys as a featured actress in a series during the mid-'70s and made Leachman a household name.

- Leachman also won a supporting actress Oscar for a far different character, an embittered small-town housewife in Peter Bogdanovich's **The Last Picture Show.**

**RANKING & REPORTS**

**Mukesh Ambani ranked 12th in the Bloomberg Billionaires Index 2021**



- India's richest man **Mukesh Ambani**, the chairman and Managing Director of Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) dropped down to **12th spot** in the **Bloomberg Billionaires Index 2021** (as on 2nd January 2021).
- The net worth of Ambani dropped from **90 billion USD** (around Rs. 6.62 lakh crore) (in early 2020) to 76.7 billion USD (around Rs. 5.6 lakh crore).
- The drop in the net worth of Mukesh Ambani was due to the correction in the shares of RIL which has fallen to Rs.1995.50 on 30th December 2020, which is 16% from its all-time high of Rs 2369.35.

- Zhong Shanshan, referred to as “Lone Wolf”, has replaced Ambani as Asia’s richest person, he is one of the fastest in the history to achieve the feat.

**Top 3 in the Bloomberg Billionaires Index:**

Rank	Personality
1	Jeff Bezos
2	Elon R Musk
3	Bill Gates

**Elon Musk overtakes Amazon’s Jeff Bezos to become the world’s richest person**



- According to the Bloomberg Billionaires Index, **Tesla CEO Elon Musk** overtakes Amazon’s **Jeff Bezos** to become the world’s richest person. Elon Musk had a net worth of more than **\$188.5 billion**.
- A **6%** rise in Tesla (TSLA) shares early Thursday lifted the value of its CEO’s stock holdings and options by \$10 billion, taking his net worth to about **\$188.5 billion**.
- A more modest rise of less than **2%** lifted Bezos’ Amazon (AMZN) shares by about \$3 billion, putting his

net worth at **\$187 billion**. Bill Gates is now a distant third at **\$132 billion**, according to Bloomberg.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Tesla Founded: 1 July 2003.
- Tesla Headquarters: California, United States.

**India Ranks 85 in Henley Passport Index 2021**



- The **Henley Passport Index 2021** has been released by **Henley & Partners**, based on the exclusive data from the **International Air Transport Association (IATA)**.
- As per the latest report, **India** has been ranked **85th among 110 countries**, in the Henley Passport Index for 2021, with a visa-free score of **58**.
- The index presents the original ranking of the world’s most powerful passports, according to the number of destinations their holders can access without a prior visa.
- **Japan** has once again topped the list of being the most powerful passport in the world, for the third consecutive year. Japanese citizens can travel to as many

as 191 countries visa-free. **Singapore** is in second place (190) and **South Korea** ties with Germany in third place (189). **Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan** are the countries with the worst passport, with a passport score of 29, 28 and 26 respectively.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- International Air Transport Association Headquarters: Montreal, Canada.
- International Air Transport Association Founded: 19 April 1945.
- International Air Transport Association Leader: William M. Walsh.
- Henley & Partners Headquarters location: London, United Kingdom.
- Henley & Partners Founded: 1997.
- Henley & Partners Chairman: Christian Kalin.
- Henley & Partners CEO: Juerg Steffen.

**India ranks 4th in ‘Break Out Economies’**



- Rapidly digitalising **India** was ranked **4th** in “**Break Out Economies**” in the **third** edition of the **Digital Evolution Scorecard** developed by **Tufts University’s Fletcher School** in partnership with **Mastercard**.

- **China** which leads the countries in the “Break Out Economies” group is more evolved digitally due mainly to its combination of rapidly growing demand and innovation.
- Third rank **Indonesia**, and India, which ranks number four in momentum, have displayed increasing digital momentum suggesting the potential to rapidly digitalise for both **post-COVID economic recovery and longer-term transformation**.

**NITI Aayog Releases India Innovation Index 2.0**

**Innovation report card**

Rank	Major States	Score	Rank	NE and Hill States	Score
1	Karnataka	42.50	1	Himachal Pradesh	25.06
2	Maharashtra	38.03	2	Uttarakhand	23.50
3	Tamil Nadu	37.91	3	Manipur	22.78
4	Telangana	33.23	4	Sikkim	20.28
5	Kerala	30.58	5	Mizoram	16.93
6	Haryana	25.81	<b>Rank UTs And City States</b>		<b>Score</b>
7	Andhra Pradesh	24.19	1	Delhi	46.60
8	Gujarat	23.63	2	Chandigarh	38.57
9	Uttar Pradesh	22.85	3	Daman & Diu	26.76
10	Punjab	22.54	4	Puducherry	25.23
			5	Goa	24.92

Source: NITI Aayog, India Innovation Index 2020

- **NITI Aayog** released the **second edition** of the **India Innovation Index** on 20 January 2021, along with the **Institute for Competitiveness**.
- India Innovation Index 2.0 or 2nd edition has released by NITI Aayog Vice-Chairman **Rajiv Kumar**. The index demonstrates the government’s continued commitment towards transforming the country into an innovation-driven economy. The report examines the innovation capabilities and performance of the states and union territories.
- The innovation index ranking is based on five enabler parameters (‘Human Capital’, ‘Investment’, ‘Knowledge



Workers’, ‘Business Environment’, ‘Safety and Legal Environment’), and two performance parameters (‘Knowledge Output’ and ‘Knowledge Diffusion’).

- In the ‘Major States’ category, **Karnataka** occupied the top position, followed by Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu respectively.
- In UT and city-states category, Delhi topped followed by Chandigarh.
- Under the ‘North-Eastern/Hill States’ category, **Himachal Pradesh** emerged as the top state.

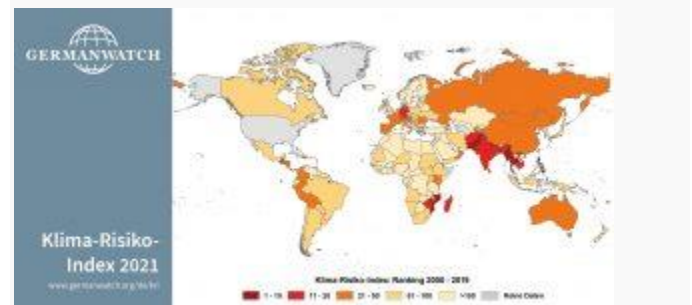
the times of crisis.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- World Economic Forum Founder and Executive Chairman: Klaus Schwab.
- World Economic Forum Headquarters: Cologny, Switzerland.

**India Ranks 7th in Global Climate Risk Index 2021 of Germanwatch**

**The Global Risks Report 2021 released**



- The **World Economic Forum (WEF)** has released the **Global Risks Report 2021, 16th Edition**. The findings of the report are based on the **Global Risks Perception Survey (GRPS)** undertaken by over 650 members of WEF’s diverse leadership communities. The Report is prepared with Strategic Partners, **Marsh McLennan** in Partnership with SK Group and Zurich Insurance Group.
- The report is being released before WEF’s upcoming virtual Davos Agenda scheduled to be held between January 25-29, 2021. The main objective behind the publishing of the report is to enable better preparation by Government & other International Communities during

- **India** has been placed among the top 10 most affected countries by climate change, in the **Global Climate Risk Index 2021** published by the Bonn-based environmental think tank **Germanwatch**. India ranked as the **seventh worst-hit country** in terms of climate change in 2019.
- The **Global Climate Risk Index 2021** is the **16th edition** of the annual report and has taken into account the data available for 2019 and from 2000 to 2019.
- The index analyses and ranks to what extent countries and regions have been affected by impacts of climate-related extreme weather events (storms, floods, heatwaves etc.)
- **Top 3 countries:** Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Bahamas were the top three most affected countries in 2019 respectively.
- **Top 3 Countries most affected in the past 20 years:** Between 2000-2019,

Puerto Rico, Myanmar and Haiti were the countries most affected by the impacts of such weather events.

## China surpasses United States as largest recipient of FDI



- **China** was the largest recipient of **foreign direct investment (FDI)** in 2020, according to a report released by the **United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)**.
- China overtook the United States to gain the top position in 2020. The country attracted **\$163 billion** inflows in 2020, compared to **\$134 billion** attracted by the United States.
- However, in 2019, the United States had received **\$251 billion** in inflows and China received **\$140 billion**.
- Overall, the global FDI had fallen by **42%** in 2020, attracting an inflow of an estimated **\$859 billion**, compared to **\$1.5 trillion** in 2019.

### Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- UNCTAD Headquarters location: Geneva, Switzerland.
- UNCTAD Head: Mukhisa Kituyi.
- UNCTAD Founder: United Nations General Assembly.

- UNCTAD Founded: 30 December 1964.

## TCS ranks third most valued IT services brand globally



- **Tata Consultancy Services (TCS)** has been ranked third most-valued IT services brand globally, after **Accenture** and **IBM**, according to a report by **Brand Finance**. Third-ranked TCS is rapidly closing the gap with IBM following a healthy 11% brand value increase to **USD 15 billion**.
- Accenture retained the title of world's most valuable and strongest IT services brand with record brand value of **USD 26 billion**, while IBM continued at the second place with a brand value of **USD 16.1 billion**.
- Four Indian IT services companies have secured spots in the top-10 globally, namely, **TCS (3)**, **Infosys (4)**, **HCL (7)** and **Wipro (9)**. Accenture has retained the title of world's most valuable and strongest IT services brand with a brand value of **\$26 billion**.

### Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- Tata Consultancy Services CEO: Rajesh Gopinathan.
- Tata Consultancy Services Founded: 1 April 1968.

- Tata Consultancy Services  
Headquarters: Mumbai, Maharashtra.

**India Ranks 86 among 98 Countries in Lowy Institute’s Covid-19 Response Index**



- India has been ranked at **86th position** among 98 countries in the new **Coronavirus Performance Index** released by **Australia-based Lowy Institute**.
- Countries were ranked based on the publicly available and comparable data on **Covid-19 response**. The Lowy Institute is an independent international policy think tank, located in Sydney.
- **New Zealand, Vietnam and Taiwan** are the top three countries respectively in the index. Brazil was ranked at the bottom of the list for worst handling of the pandemic than any other country. China was excluded from the list due to lack of publicly available data.

**India Secures 86th Rank in Corruption Perception Index 2020**



- **India** has been ranked **86th** among 180 countries in the **Corruption Perception Index (CPI) 2020**, released by **Transparency International**. This year, India’s rank has slipped six places compared to 2019, when it was ranked at **80th spot**. The CPI score for India in 2020 is **40**. India is sharing its position jointly with **Burkina Faso, Morocco, East Timor, Trinidad and Tobago and Turkey**.
- **New Zealand and Denmark** have jointly secured the first position with scores of 88.
- **Somalia and South Sudan** rank lowest at 179th position with scores of 12.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Transparency International  
Headquarters location: Berlin, Germany.
- Transparency International  
Chairperson: Delia Ferreira Rubio.
- Transparency International Founded: 4 May 1993.

**Reliance Jio ranked 5th strongest brand globally**





- Billionaire **Mukesh Ambani’s** four-year-old telecom venture **Reliance Jio** has been ranked the fifth strongest brand globally behind the likes of **Ferrari and Coca-Cola**. As per the ranking, Reliance Jio has emerged as the 5th strongest brand in the world.
- Reliance Jio has made its entry to the world’s strongest brands. Reliance has been ranked as the 5th strongest brand in the world. It has a **Brand Strength Index (BSI)** score of 91.7 out of 100.
- The Brand Finance’s Global 500 ranking of the strongest brands globally, which determined the relative strength of brands, is topped by WeChat, according to its annual report on most valuable and strongest global brands.

**India ranks 10th in ‘Asia-Pacific Personalised Health Index’**



- **India** ranked **10th** out of **11** **Asia**

**Pacific countries** in a newly-launched health index to measure the progress towards personalised healthcare. **Singapore(1st), Taiwan (2nd), Japan (3rd) and Australia (4th)** also performed well in overall readiness.

- These include Policy Context, Health Information, Personalised Technologies and Health Services.
- The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) report **”Asia-Pacific Personalised Health Index”** measures the readiness of 11 health systems across the region—Australia, China, Japan, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand and New Zealand—in adopting personalised healthcare, enabling the right care to be tailored to the right person at the right time.
- The ‘Personalised Health Index’ measures performance against 27 different indicators of personalised health across four categories called **”Vital Signs”**.

**SCHEMES & COMMITTEES**

**MoS Reddy to head committee for ‘protecting language, culture and land of Ladakh’**



- A 10-member delegation from Ladakh met Union home minister **Amit Shah** has urged the government to protect Ladakh's language, culture and land.
- The Central Government has decided to form a committee to protect the **unique language, cultural identity and land of Ladakh**. The Committee will be headed by the Minister of State for Home **G Kishan Reddy**.
- This committee will also ensure citizen's participation in the development of the Union Territory. The other members of the committee will include elected representatives from **Ladakh, Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council**, central government, and the Ladakh administration.

**RBI forms six-member working group to regulate digital lending frauds**



- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has set up a **working group** to study **digital lending** activities of the regulated and unregulated players, due to the growing instances of frauds in digital lending space.
- The group will suggest steps to regulate digital lending including online lending platform and mobile lending.
- The group will evaluate digital lending activities and assess the penetration and standards of outsourced digital lending activities in RBI regulated entities.

**The six-member panel comprises of following four RBI internal and two external members:**

1. **Jayant Kumar Dash**, Executive Director, RBI (Chairman)
2. **Ajay Kumar Choudhary**, Chief General Manager-in-Charge, Department of Supervision (Member)
3. **P Vasudevan**, Chief General Manager, Department of Payment and Settlement Systems, RBI (Member)
4. **Manoranjan Mishra**, Chief General Manager, Department of Regulation (Member Secretary)
5. **Vikram Mehta**, Co-founder, Monexo Fintech (External Member)
6. **Rahul Sasi**, Cyber Security Expert & Founder of CloudSEK (External Member)

**IRDAI sets up panel to examine availability**

of health insurance products



- Insurance regulator **Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority (IRDAI)** has set up a panel of experts called **‘Health Insurance Advisory Committee’** to examine the availability of health insurance products in the country, considering the need of the Indian society and recommend suitable products and processes.
- The expert committee will be headed by IRDAI Chairperson, **Subhash Chandra Khuntia** and will have a Member (Non-Life) as the vice-chairperson. The committee, which has a term of **one year**.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- IRDAI Founded: 1999.
- IRDAI Headquarters: Hyderabad, Telangana.

**Arjun Munda Virtually Launches “Shramshakti” Portal**

- The Union Minister of Tribal Affairs **Shri Arjun Munda** has launched a National Migration Support Portal **“ShramShakti”**, during a virtual programme organised at **Panjim, Goa**.
- The portal will help the government in smooth formulation of state and national level programs for migrant workers.
- Shram Shakti portal will address the **data gap and empower migrant workers** who generally migrate in search of employment and income generation. The government would also be able to link the migrant population with existing Welfare Scheme under **AtamNirbhar Bharat**.

**Centre Approves ‘Startup India Seed Fund Scheme’**





- The Central Government has approved the **Rs 945-crore 'Start-up India Seed Fund Scheme'** (SISFS), which aims to provide financial assistance to start-ups for the product trials, market-entry, proof of concept, prototype development and commercialization.
- The Rs 945 crore **Startup India Seed Fund Scheme (SISFS)** will become operational from April 1 of this year till **2025** and this will be disbursed through selected incubators across India, according to a gazette notification by the government.
- The scheme will be implemented by the **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DIIT)**. The funds under the scheme will be disbursed through the selected incubators across the country. The startup will receive seed support only once.

- The **Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI)** has formally announced the final approval for Oxford-AstraZeneca "**Covishield**" and Bharat Biotech "**Covaxin**" vaccines against the coronavirus disease (**Covid-19**) for emergency use.
- **CDSCO (Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation)** accepts the subject expert committee reform rations on Serum and Bharat Biotech Covid vaccines.
- The subject expert committee (SEC) under CDSCO had recommended **Oxford-AstraZeneca's** vaccine, which is being manufactured by the **Serum Institute of India (SII)** as Covishield, for emergency use and Covaxin for restricted use.
- Covaxin is the indigenous vaccine being developed by **Bharat Biotech** in collaboration with the **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)**.

## SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

**DCGI gives final approval for Covid-19 vaccines of SII, Bharat Biotech**

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Serum Institute of India CEO: Adar Poonawalla.
- Serum Institute of India Founder: Cyrus S. Poonawalla.
- Serum Institute of India Founded: 1966.
- Serum Institute of India Headquarters location: Pune.

**Japan to launch the first wood-based satellite by 2023**



- Japan's **Sumitomo Forestry company** and **Kyoto University** aims to launch the world's first **wood-based space satellite** by **2023** to combat the problem of space junk.
- Currently, the initiative is in the nascent stage as several wooden materials are being tested by the research team to find a suitable one for space missions. It is also reported that the team is also working towards developing wooden materials extremely resistant to temperature changes and sunlight.
- According to the **European Space Agency (ESA)** statistical model, there are more than 130 million pieces of anthropogenic space debris—waste residue due to human activities—smaller than a millimetre around our planet. The debris can travel at a speed of more than **22,300 mph** and can impact other satellites.

**NASA targets final test of 'world's most powerful rocket'**



- The **National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)** is looking to carry out the eighth and final test in its **"Green Run"** test series.
- This eighth stage termed **"hot fire,"** will bring to an end a series of tests which, NASA says, will gradually bring together the core stage of the **Space Launch System (SLS)** to life for the very first time.
- The core stage of the SLS will form the backbone of what NASA says will be the **"most powerful rocket in the world"** and will power its next-generation **human Moon Missions**.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- The administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration: **Jim Bridenstine**.
- Headquarters of NASA: **Washington D.C., United States**.

**Infosys receives Google Cloud Partner Status**



- **Infosys** has recently announced that it has been accredited with the **Google Cloud Partner Specialization** in the data and analytics space. Infosys is among the top global system integrators which have been accredited with this specialization.
- **Infosys** has received this recognition as the company has successfully demonstrating end-to-end capabilities on Google Cloud including warehousing on the cloud and data ingestion.
- Infosys has showcased robust methodology, strong industry expertise, technical proficiency, success in specialized data and analytics solutions, and service areas.
- These data and analytics offerings are a part of **Infosys Cobalt**.
- Along with AI capabilities, these data and analytics offerings help in optimizing costs paving the way for AI and cloud-native digital transformation for enterprises, migrating workloads to **Google Cloud**, and **modernize data landscapes**.

### Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- Infosys Founded: 7 July 1981.
- Infosys CEO: Salil Parekh.
- Infosys Headquarters: Bengaluru.

### MeITY and AWS announced Quantum

### Computing Applications Lab in India



- The **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)** has announced the establishment of a Quantum Computing Applications Lab in partnership with **Amazon Web Services (AWS)**.
- The move will give select researchers, scientists access to **Amazon's Bracket cloud-based quantum computing service**.
- It is to be implemented by the Department of Science and Technology operating under the **Ministry of Science and Technology**.
- The mission focuses on fundamental science, technology development and addresses the issues concerning the national priorities.
- It will prepare next-generation skilled manpower and encourages entrepreneurship and startup ecosystem development.
- The Union Budget 2020-21 had proposed to spend **Rs 8,000 crores** on the **National Mission on Quantum Technologies and Applications**.

### Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- Minister of Electronics and Information Technology: Ravi Shankar Prasad.
- Amazon Web Services CEO: Andy



Jassy.

- Amazon Web Services Founded: 2006.
- Amazon Web Services Headquarters: Seattle, Washington, United States.

**SpaceX breaks ISRO's Record by launching 143 Satellites**



- **SpaceX** successfully launched its ambitious rideshare mission called **Transporter-1**, carrying **143** small satellites, and created a new record of launching many satellites from a single rocket.
- With this launch, SpaceX broke the record set by **ISRO** in **February 2017** for deploying **104** satellites onboard PSLV in a single mission.
- The SpaceX used two-stage **Falcon 9 rocket** for the mission, from the Space Launch Complex 40 at **Cape Canaveral Space Force Station in Florida**. The 143 satellites included 133 commercial and government satellites and **10 Starlink satellites of SpaceX**.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- SpaceX founder & CEO: Elon Musk.
- SpaceX president & COO: Gwynne Shotwell.
- SpaceX Founded: 2002.

- SpaceX Headquarters: California, United States of America.

**Microsoft launches its new Taj Mahal inspired Engineering Hub**



- Tech major **Microsoft** has launched its new **India Development Center (IDC)** facility in **Noida, Uttar Pradesh**.
- The new centre will serve as a leading hub for driving advanced engineering and innovation. The centre will build on Microsoft's commitment to tap India's world-class engineering talent and create solutions for a global impact.
- IDC NCR is the **third** development centre of Microsoft in India after **Bengaluru and Hyderabad**. The IDC NCR workspace architecture is inspired by the Taj Mahal, one of the seven wonders of the world.
- The IDC NCR facility will collaborate with Microsoft teams globally to build products and services for driving digital innovation. The centre will provide opportunities for engineering talent in the areas of **Business & Productivity tools, AI, Cloud & Enterprise, Core Services, and the new Gaming division**.

**Important takeaways for all competitive**

**exams:**

- Microsoft CEO: Satya Nadella.
- Microsoft Headquarters: Redmond, Washington, United States.

**ISRO to launch city college's academic satellite**



- ISRO chairman **K Sivan** is likely to inaugurate the '**SriShakthiSat**' ground station at **Sri Shakthi Institute of Engineering and Technology** in **Coimbatore**.
- The station will help monitor the satellite developed by the institute, which is set to be launched by the ISRO. A satellite communication lab was established in the college in **2010**.
- The satellite can detect fire and leaks on underground pipelines and collect info on bank thefts. ISRO is expected to launch this satellite, along with two other satellites built by **JPR Institute, Chennai** & **GH Raisoni College of Engineering, Maharashtra**.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- ISRO Chairman: **K.Sivan**.
- ISRO Headquarters: **Bengaluru, Karnataka**.

- ISRO established: **15 August 1969**.

**SPORTS**

**Leon Mendonca becomes India's 67th Grandmaster**



- Goa's 14-year-old **Leon Mendonca** has become **India's 67th chess Grandmaster** by winning the third and final norm at a tournament in Italy.
- Mendonca, who achieved the feat at 14 years, 9 months and 17 days, is the second GM from the coastal State. Chennai player **G. Akash**, had in July, become the country's **66th Grandmaster**. He became the **29th Youngest GM** in the world. The 1st GM from Goa is **Ivana Maria Furtado**, she achieved it in 2011.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- International Chess Federation President: **Arkady Dvorkovich**.
- International Chess Federation Headquarters: **Lausanne, Switzerland**.
- International Chess Federation Founded: **20 July 1924**.

**Claire Polosak set to become first female**

**match official in men’s Test match**



- Australia’s **Claire Polosak** is set to become the **first female match official** in a **men’s Test match** when she takes up the fourth umpire’s role in the third Test between **India and Australia**.
- The 32-year-old from New South Wales has already earned the distinction of being the first woman on-field umpire in a men’s ODI match in ICC’s Division 2 league between Namibia and Oman played at the Windhoek in 2019.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Chairman of ICC: Greg Barclay.
- CEO of ICC: Manu Sawhney.
- Headquarters of ICC: Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

**Khelo India Ice Hockey Tournament begins in Chiktan, Kargil**



- **Khelo India Ice Hockey Tournament** organised at Chiktan in Kargil, Ladakh. For the first time, the women team of Chiktan also participated in the **Khelo India Games** in Kargil district.
- There are **13 teams** from different villages of Chiktan participating in the tournament, which include **11 men’s teams** and **2 women’s teams**.
- The tournament was inaugurated by SDM ShakarChiktan and the Chief Guest of the event KachoAsgar Ali khan in the presence of ZPEO Chiktan Ghulam Rasool along with in-charge police post-Chiktan.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Union Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports: Kiren Rijju.
- Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh: Radha Krishna Mathur.

**Dhaka Marathon 2021: Jigmet Dolma from Ladakh wins 4th position**





- **Jigmet Dolma** from India secured the fourth position in the **Dhaka Marathon 2021**. Jigmet Dolma is an SPO of Ladakh police. In the marathon, **Hicham Lakohi** of Morocco came first in the elite competition of the marathon in men's category while **Angela Jim Asunde** from Kenya won the women's category in the same event.
- In the full marathon, among the SAARC and local runners, **Bahadur Singh of India** became the champion in the men's category and **Pushpa Bhandari** of Nepal became the champion in the women's category.
- The marathon was organized to commemorate the return of **Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman** from Pakistan jail to **Bangladesh in 1972**.

**Jay Shah named BCCI's Official Representative on ICC Board**



- **Jay Shah** has been named as the official representative of **Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI)** for

the **International Cricket Council (ICC) Board** meetings.

- Shah is the Secretary of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI).
- He will replace BCCI president **Sourav Ganguly**, who was currently representing India at the ICC Board, but he suffered a heart condition recently and had to be admitted to hospital where he underwent primary angioplasty.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- President of BCCI: Sourav Ganguly.
- Headquarters of BCCI: Mumbai, Maharashtra; Founded: December 1928.

**Khelo India Zaskar Winter Sport & Youth festival 2021 begins**



- In **Ladakh**, the inaugural edition of the **Khelo India Zaskar Winter Sport & Youth Festival 2021** kicked off on 18th January 2021.
- The 13- Day Zaskar Winter Sports Festival aims to open a new arena in Ladakh for adventure and Nature loving tourists and a boost for local Youth to hone up their skills in winter sports to represent India.
- A series of snow-based activities will be

held for the next 13 days to promote tourism and economic activities in the **Snowbound**, **picturesque Zaskar**.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh: Radha Krishna Mathur.

**Carolina Marin wins Yonex Thailand Open badminton tournament 2021**



- Reigning Olympic champion **Carolina Marin** bolstered her chances of defending her title in Tokyo later this year after claiming the **Thailand Open in Bangkok** over top seed **Tai Tzu-Ying**.
- The **Yonex Thailand Open Super 1000 badminton tournament** was held from 12 January 2021 to 17 January 2021. It was the first badminton tournament of 2021 by Badminton World Federation (BWF).

**Winners of Singles Title:**

- **Men’s Category: Viktor Axelsen (Denmark)** defeated Angus Long (Hong Kong) to clinch the Men’s Singles Title.
- **Women’s Category: Carolina Marin (Spain)** defeated Tai Tzu-Ying (Taiwan)

to bag the Women’s Singles Title.

**Winners of Doubles Title:**

- In the Men’s Doubles, **Taiwan’s Lee Yang & Wang Chi-Lin** beat Malaysia’s Goh V Shem & Tan Wee Kiong to bag the Doubles Title.
- In the Women’s Doubles, Indonesia’s **Greysia Polii & Apriyani Rahayu** defeated Thailand’s Jongkolphan Kititharakul & Rawinda Prajongjai to clinch the Doubles Title.

**Winners of Mixed Doubles:**

- Thailand’s Dechapol Puavaranukroh and Sapsiree Taerattanachai defeated Indonesia’s Praveen Jordan & Melati Daeva Oktavianti to clinch the mixed doubles title.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Badminton World Federation President: Poul-Erik Hoyer Larsen.
- Badminton World Federation Headquarters: Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

**ITBP wins IHA National Ice Hockey Championship**



- The **Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP)** has won the Ice Hockey Association of India (IHAI) **10th National Ice Hockey Championship** trophy after a win over **Ladakh** in the finals in **Gulmarg**.
- The match was held at Gulmarg Ice Rink. Ladakh has been considered as the capital of ice hockey in India where local men and women play this game with great enthusiasm.
- The championship was held at an altitude of **8,694-feet** and temperatures below freezing point. Top **eight teams** of ice hockey in India participated in the event. Top teams of Ice Hockey in India participated in the Championship organized from January 16 to 22, 2021.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- ITBP Founded: 24 October 1962.
- ITBP Headquarters: New Delhi, India.
- ITBP DG: S SDeswal.
- Ice Hockey Association of India president: K. L. Kumar.
- Ice Hockey Association of India membership: 27 April 1989.

**STATES**

**ADB to provide \$231 mn loan to enhance power generation capacity in Assam**



- The **Asian Development Bank (ADB)** has signed a **\$231 million loan** with the Government of India to augment **electricity generation capacity** in the state of **Assam**.
- This is the third tranche loan for the '**Assam Power Sector Investment Programme**' that was approved by the **ADB Board in July 2014**.
- Under the project, **120 megawatts (MW) hydroelectric power plant** would be constructed. The programme focuses on enhancing the capacity and efficiency of the energy generation and distribution systems in Assam to improve the availability of electricity service to end-users.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Chief Minister of Assam: SarbanandaSonowal; Governor: Prof. Jagdish Mukhi.

**ADB and India sign \$10 million loan to**



**support horticulture in HP**



- The **Asian Development Bank (ADB)** and the Government of India have signed a **\$10 million project readiness financing (PRF)**.
- This agreement aims to help finance piloting activities, and design and capacity building for an ensuing project that aims to expand horticulture production and farm household income in the hill state of **Himachal Pradesh**.
- The PRF project will support advance actions to achieve a high level of project readiness through detailed design activities, capacity building of state-level agencies, and creating an enabling environment for subtropical horticulture development in the state.
- The PRF project aims to ensure implementation readiness with prior testing of new production technologies and marketing systems so that the ensuing project is cost-effective and gets completed in a timely manner to enhance farm profitability.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Chief Minister of HP: **Jairam Thakur**;  
Governor of HP: **BandaruDattatraya**.

**ADB approves \$100 million loan to upgrade power distribution system in Bengaluru**



- The **Asian Development Bank (ADB)** will provide a **USD 100 million** (around Rs 730 crore) loan to modernise and upgrade the power distribution system in **Bengaluru city**.
- Besides the USD 100 million sovereign loans, ADB will provide a USD 90 million loan without sovereign guarantee for the project to Bangalore Electricity Supply Company Ltd (BESCOM), one of the five state-owned distribution utilities in Karnataka.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Chief Minister of Karnataka: **B.S. Yediyurappa**; Governor: **VajubhaiVala**.
- President of ADB: **Masatsugu Asakawa**;  
Headquarters: **Manila, Philippines**.
- ADB Established: **9 December 1966**.

**MP Govt launches 'Launch Pad Scheme' to make youth self-reliant**



- The government of **Madhya Pradesh** has launched a '**Launch Pad Scheme**' for the boys and girls coming out of child care institutions and having completed **18 years of age**.
- This scheme has been launched by the **Women and Child Development Department of the state** with the objective to provide a platform to these youth, through which they will be able to become self-reliant by continuing their education and training.
- The District Administration will provide space to these youths for the opening of **coffee shops, stationery, photocopying, computer typing and DTP work**.
- All the 52 districts of the state have been divided into 5 clusters with headquarters at **Indore, Sagar, Gwalior, Jabalpur and Bhopal**.
- An amount of **Rs 6 lakh** will be provided by the **Women and Child Development Department** for the installation of each launch pad.
- These launch pads will be operated through **non-governmental organizations**.

### Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh: Shivraj Singh Chouhan; Governor: Anandiben Patel.

### World Bank approves \$105 million loan to

### improve Waterways in West Bengal



## THE WORLD BANK

- The **World Bank** has signed a **\$105 million** project with the **Government of India** and the **Government of West Bengal** to improve the inland water transport infrastructure in Kolkata, West Bengal.
- The **\$105 million** loans from the **International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)**, has a maturity of **17 years**, including a grace period of **7 years**.
- The **West Bengal Inland Water Transport, Logistics and Spatial Development Project** will improve passenger and freight movement across the Hooghly river as well as improve accessibility in the **Kolkata Metropolitan Area**, enhance the quality of life of its residents and contribute to the growth of the state's logistics sector.
- The project will cover the five most populous districts of southern West Bengal, including its urban agglomeration — the **Kolkata Metropolitan Area (KMA)** where around **30 million people** or one-third of West Bengal's population live.

### Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- Chief Minister of West Bengal: Mamata Banerjee; Governor: Jagdeep Dhankhar.

**Journalist Day Observed in Maharashtra on 6 January**



- The **Journalist Day** is observed by **Maharashtra state government** on **6th January** every year in the memory of late journalist **BalshastriJambhekar**.
- The first newspaper in the Marathi language named '**Darpan**', was published on **January 6, 1832**, the date which also marks the birth anniversary of **BalshastriJambhekar**.
- BalshastriJambhekar is also known as '**The Father of Marathi Journalism**', for his efforts in starting journalism in the **Marathi language**, in the form of first Marathi newspaper and first Marathi monthly.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Chief Minister of Maharashtra: Uddhav Thackeray; Governor: Bhagat Singh Koshyari.

**India and NDB signs USD 646 million loan agreement for Andhra Pradesh**



- The **New Development Bank (NDB)** has signed loan agreements worth **USD 646 million** with the **Government of India** for two road projects in **Andhra Pradesh**. Each project costs **USD 323 million**.
- These projects will improve mobility and connectivity to the socioeconomic centres, enhance transport efficiency, improve road safety and riding quality, and provide all-weather accessibility for the State's road users.
- The first project is the **Andhra Pradesh Roads and Bridges Reconstruction Project**. It comprises widening **1,600 km** of State Highways to double lane and reconstructing dilapidated bridges on the State Highway network.
- The second project is Andhra Pradesh Mandal Connectivity and Rural Connectivity Improvement Project. It comprises widening **1,400 km of district roads** to double lane and reconstructing dilapidated bridges on the district road network.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- New Development Bank Headquarters Location: Shanghai, China.
- New Development Bank President: Marcos Prado Troyjo.
- New Development Bank Founder: BRICS.
- New Development Bank Founded: 15



July 2014.

**Karnataka Government launches Krishi Sanjeevani Vans to test soil, water**



- The Chief Minister of Karnataka, **B.S. Yediyurappa** flagged off **40 Krishi Sanjeevani vans** in Bengaluru.
- These vans have been launched by the state Agriculture Department with Central assistance under **National Krishi Vikas Yojana** to take up this novel programme.
- To take labs to the agriculture fields, study the conditions and address the needs of the farmers about pest control, the fertility of the soil, weeds and suitable crops in the existing conditions so that farmers get support for their farming techniques.
- Depending on the soil, water and pests inflicting the crops, the Agriculture Department personnel can suggest remedies.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Chief Minister of Karnataka: **B.S. Yediyurappa**; Governor: **VajubhaiVala**.

**West Bengal CM Inaugurates 26th Kolkata International Film Festival**



- West Bengal CM, **Mamata Banerjee** has inaugurated the **26th Kolkata International Film Festival (KIFF)**.
- The inaugural ceremony was also virtually attended by Bollywood superstar and West Bengal’s brand ambassador **Shah Rukh Khan** from Mumbai.
- Legendary filmmaker **Satyajit Ray’s** classic **‘Apar Sansar’** will be the inaugural film of the festival in which 131 movies from 45 countries will be screened till January 13.
- Films will be screened at **Rabindra Sadan, Nandan, Sisir Mancha** and **Rabindra Okakura Bhavan** in Salt Lake.
- Six films by Italian filmmaker **Federico Fellini** and movies on sitarist **Ravi Shankar**, singer **Hemanta Mukherjee** and flicks of comedian **Bhanu Bandyopadhyay** will be screened.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Chief Minister of West Bengal: **Mamata Banerjee**; Governor: **Jagdeep Dhankhar**.

**Manipur: CM Biren Singh virtually inaugurated Cherry Blossom Festival**



- The **4th edition** of the **Cherry Blossom Festival**, Mao in **Manipur** was virtually inaugurated by Chief Minister **N Biren Singh**.
- However this year, the authority decided to scale down the festival due to the **COVID-19 pandemic**.
- The Festival featured the picturesque landscape of Mao adorned with beautiful cherry trees laden with blooming flowers which have traditionally attracted visitors from across the world.
- Manipur has been celebrating the festival every year since **2017**.
- The festival which featured the picturesque landscape of Mao town adorned with beautiful **Cherry Blossom flowers** was streamed live from 2 pm on various social media platforms.
- The Mao area of Senapati district in Manipur is known for Cherry Blossom, a plant which is popularly known as **Sakura in Japan**.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Chief Minister of Manipur: **N. Biren Singh**; Governor: **Najma Heptulla**.

**Naveen Patnaik inaugurates India's first 'Fire Park' in Bhubaneswar**

- The Chief Minister of **Odisha**, **Naveen Patnaik** virtually inaugurated a first of its kind **'Fire Park'**, to educate and bring awareness on basic fire safety measures among the people, particularly the students.
- The 'Fire Park' is located inside the premises of the **Odisha Fire and Disaster Academy** in **Bhubaneswar**.
- The minister also launched an online portal, **'AgnishamaSeva'** of Odisha Fire Service.
- The fire park will facilitate demonstrations on use of first aid fire-fighting equipment, rescue and disaster operations, visit the exhibition hall, screening of films and distribution of leaflets on fire safety.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Chief Minister of Odisha: **Naveen Patnaik**.
- Odisha Capital: **Bhubaneswar**.
- Odisha Governor: **Ganeshi Lal**.

**Kerala becomes 8th State to complete ease of doing business reforms**



- Kerala has become the **8th State** in the country to successfully undertake “**Ease of Doing Business**” reform stipulated by the Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance.
- Kerala has become eligible to mobilise additional financial resources of **Rs.2,373 crore** through **Open Market Borrowings**. Permission for the same was issued by the Department of Expenditure on **12th January 2021**.
- Kerala has now joined the seven other States namely, **Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and Telangana**, who have completed this reform.
- On completion of reforms facilitating ease of doing business, these eight States have been granted additional borrowing permission of **Rs.23,149 crore**.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Kerala CM: Pinarayi Vijayan.
- Kerala Governor: Arif Mohammad Khan.

**Kerala Governor launches ‘One School One IAS’ scheme**

- Kerala Governor **Arif Mohammad Khan** has inaugurated the ‘**OneSchool One IAS**’ scheme which has been rolled out under the **Vedhik Erudite Foundations Scholarship Programme**.
- According to a notification released an institution considered by top academics and retired IAS and IPS officers in the state is conducting the programme which seeks to refute the general notion that the civil service is for the elite class only.
- The programme will be providing free training to the students who are economically backward but are academically brilliant aspirants of civil service and other competitive exams.
- The scheme is supported by sponsors, which expects an enrollment of **10,000 boys and girls across the state**.
- The beneficiaries of the programme will be selected by a panel which will be headed by the heads of the respective educational institutions.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Kerala CM: Pinarayi Vijayan.
- Kerala Governor: Arif Mohammad Khan.

**Maharashtra renames Gorewada international zoo after Bal Thackeray**



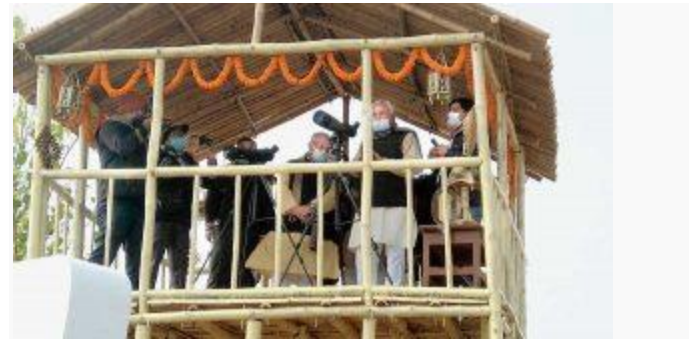


- The **Maharashtra** government has renamed **Gorewada International Zoo** in **Nagpur** as '**Balasaheb Thackeray Gorewada International Zoological Park**'. The zoological park will come up on nearly 2,000 hectares forest land.
- Chief Minister **Uddhav Thackeray** will inaugurate the Indian safari at the zoo on **January 26**. Three special 40-seat capacity vehicles and an online ticket booking facility will be made available to the people as soon after the Indian safari is inaugurated.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Chief Minister of Maharashtra: **Uddhav Thackeray**; Governor: **Bhagat Singh Koshyari**.

**Nitish Kumar inaugurates state's first Bird Festival 'Kalrav'**



- The Chief Minister of Bihar **Nitish Kumar** has inaugurated the first-ever bird festival of the state, '**Kalrav**', at **Nagi-Nakti bird sanctuary**, located in **Jamui district**.
- The festival was organized by the state environment, forest and climate change department to create awareness among people about birds, especially the migratory birds. He will also launch the logo of the bird festival and also release a coffee table book on the birds available at the sanctuaries.
- The Nagi- Nakti Bird Sanctuaries have been the home of a wide variety of indigenous species of birds and of migratory birds that turn up during the winters from places like **Eurasia, Central Asia, the Arctic Circle, Russia and Northern China**.
- Over **136 species** of birds have been spotted at these sanctuaries.
- Not just that, around **1,600 bar-headed geese**, which is about 3% of the global population of this variety, have been seen here, as per a report of the Wetlands International and because of this rare phenomenon, the Birdlife International, a global body, has held the Nagi Dam Bird Sanctuary to be globally important for the conservation of birds' population and has declared it as an important bird area.

**Important takeaways for all competitive**

**exams:**

- Chief Minister of Bihar: Nitish Kumar;  
Governor: Phagu Chauhan.

**CM Thakur launches HP's first online youth radio station**



- Chief Minister **Jai Ram Thakur** has launched **Himachal Pradesh's** first online youth radio station "**Radio Hills-Youngistan Ka Dil**".
- The Chief Minister appreciated the efforts of young entrepreneurs. The developer of the online radio Karan, and Radio Jockeys Palak, Rahul and Nidhi were also present on the occasion.
- The online radio would go a long way in promoting the culture and traditions of the state, besides providing an opportunity to the youth to exhibit their talents. The founders of the online radio, **Deepika and Saurabh**.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Chief Minister of HP: Jairam Thakur;  
Governor of HP: BandaruDattatraya.

**Gujarat to Rename Dragon Fruit as**

**'Kalamam'**



- The **Gujarat state government** has renamed dragon fruit as '**Kalamam**'. The move has kept the internet in splits and many criticized it using the hashtag **#SanskariFruitSabzi**.
- As per Gujarat Chief Minister, the dragon fruit has been renamed **Kalamam** because of the shape of the fruit.
- The state government has applied for the patent of the fruit named **Kalamam**. This was announced at the launch of the **Chief Minister Horticulture Development Mission**.
- The Horticulture Development Mission is a scheme to promote horticulture in the unproductive regions of the state as well.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Gujarat Chief Minister: Vijay Rupani.
- Gujarat Governor: Acharya Devvrat.

**CM to inaugurate first child-friendly police station of U'khand**



- **Uttarakhand Chief Minister, Trivendra Singh Rawat** will inaugurate the first child-friendly police station of Uttarakhand, which is meant to provide a friendly environment to children associated with crimes.
- The child-friendly police unit has been set up in the **Dalanwala police station** with a budget of about **Rs 5 lakhs** on the recommendation of the **Child Protection Committee of Uttarakhand**.
- According to the chairperson of **State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (SCPCR) Usha Negi**, the children who are either victims or need proper counselling or visit police station due to other reasons should be provided with a comfortable and unthreatening environment rather than keeping them in a dull and scary atmosphere.
- To keep children at ease, the walls are painted in bright colours and cartoons and the police personnel will also be dressed in casual clothes rather than their uniforms.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Uttarakhand Chief Minister: Trivendra Singh Rawat.
- Governor of Uttarakhand: Baby Rani Maurya.

**Karnataka CM Yediyurappa launches Avalokanasoftware**



- The **Karnataka Chief Minister, BS Yediyurappa** recently launched **Avalokana software**. The software will enable the state government to access data on expenditures and sanctions incurred on **1,800 programmes**.
- The software provides a focused eye view on Sustainable Development goals, Scheduled Caste Sub-Plan, Tribal Sub-plan and Centrally Sponsored Schemes.
- It is a transparent e-governance tool that will provide Assembly constituency-wise release of government grants and allocations to different government programmes.
- This will help the government to decide on releasing funds based on the expenditure incurred by the department.
- It will eventually increase the government hold over resources. The software provides a focused view on scheduled caste sub-plan, sustainable development goals and tribal sub-plan and centrally sponsored scheme.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**



- Chief Minister of Karnataka: B.S. Yediyurappa; Governor: VajubhaiVala.

**Odisha’s famous ‘Toshali National Crafts Mela’ begins**



- **Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik** has inaugurated the annual **Toshali National Crafts Mela** in Bhubaneswar.
- The Crafts Mela was inaugurated virtually. The Toshali Crafts Mela has become one of the most popular **handlooms and handicrafts fairs** in Eastern India.
- Three artisans were also presented with the State Handicrafts Award-2019 in the event. Three winners are- **Dilip Kumar Swain (palm leaf engraving), Divyajyoti Behera (stone sculpting), and Priyanka Patra (terracotta).**
- A total number of 250 stalls have been set up at the Janata Maidan venue displaying the best handloom and handicrafts from across the country. Out of the total, 170 stalls represent Odisha textiles and crafts and 80 stalls are of other states.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Chief Minister of Odisha: Naveen Patnaik.

- Odisha Capital: Bhubaneswar.
- Odisha Governor: Ganeshi Lal.

**UP Government launches ‘UdyamSarathi App’ for Youths**



- **Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister, Yogi Adityanath** has launched the **‘UdyamSarathi App’** on the occasion of the **71st Foundation Day** of the state, on **24 January 2021**. The app will enable the youths to get every information related to self-employment and the job industry, across the state.
- The Uttar Pradesh Day celebration will run from 24 January to 26 January 2021. The theme of Uttar Pradesh Day 2021 is **‘Respect for self-reliant Uttar Pradesh, women young farmers, development of all’**.
- **UdyamSarathi App** will comprise of a varied range of data regarding business opportunities in different departments and sectors, including the state and Central governments, and anywhere and at any time. It has been launched under the **One District One Product (ODOP)** scheme.

**Important takeaways for all competitive**

**exams:**

- Uttar Pradesh Capital: Lucknow.
- Uttar Pradesh Governor: Anandiben Patel.
- Uttar Pradesh Chief minister: Yogi Adityanath.

**Haridwar teen Shrishti Goswami to be one-day CM of Uttarakhand**



- **Shristi Goswami**, a nineteen-year-old Haridwar-based student, become the Chief Minister of **Uttarakhand** for one day on **National Girl Child Day**.
- She is a student of BSc Agriculture, lives in Daulatpur village in Roorkee, Haridwar. The move has received the nod of Chief Minister **Trivendra Singh Rawat**.
- The one-day chief minister has administered from Gairsain, the summer capital of the state, and will review various schemes run by the state government that include Atal Ayushman Scheme, Smart City project, Homestay Scheme by the tourism department, and other development projects.

**Important takeaways for all competitive**

**exams:**

- Uttarakhand Chief Minister: Trivendra Singh Rawat.

- Governor of Uttarakhand: Baby Rani Maurya.

**CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan launches 'PANKH Abhiyan' for Girl Child**



- In **Madhya Pradesh**, Chief Minister **Shivraj Singh Chouhan** has launched a new scheme '**PANKH Abhiyan**' on **24 January**, to mark the occasion of **National Girl Child Day**.
- The scheme has been launched under the '**BetiBachaoBetiPadhao**' scheme for the empowerment and growth of the girl child.
- The CM also announced scholarships worth **Rs 6.47 crore** for **26,099** girls under **Ladli Laxmi Yojana**.
- '**PANKH Abhiyan**' is a year-long programme. The letter in the PANKH scheme stands for:

- 'P' – protection
- 'A' – awareness of their rights
- 'N' – nutrition
- 'K' – knowledge
- 'H' – health.

**Important takeaways for all competitive**

**exams:**

- Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh: Shivraj Singh Chouhan; Governor: Anandiben Patel.

**UP becomes first Indian State to have 2 Expressway airstrips**



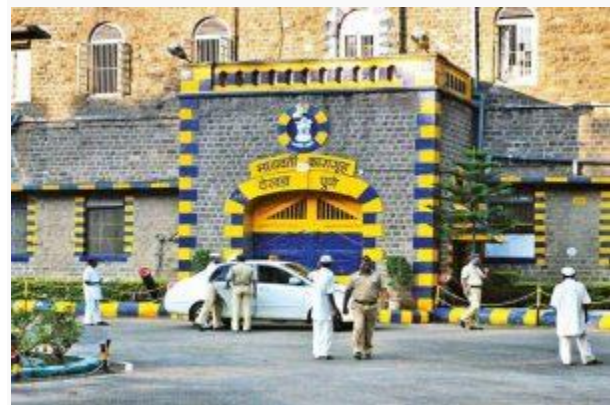
- In **Uttar Pradesh**, a new **3,300-metre-long airstrip** has been constructed near **Kurebhar** on **Purvanchal Expressway**.
- With this new airstrip, Uttar Pradesh has become the first state in India having two airstrips on expressways.
- Uttar Pradesh also has an airstrip on Lucknow-Agra Expressway. Airstrips on expressways are designed to facilitate emergency landing and take-off of fighter planes.
- Uttar Pradesh government is trying to connect the entire northern part of the country with expressways.
- The **Hindon and Agra airbases** of the **Indian Air Force** will be able to use the runway of all three expressways if needed.
- Also, these airstrips of Uttar Pradesh can serve the Air Force to respond against **China and Pakistan** in case of any war.

**Important takeaways for all competitive**

**exams:**

- Uttar Pradesh Capital: Lucknow.
- Uttar Pradesh Governor: Anandiben Patel.
- Uttar Pradesh Chief minister: Yogi Adityanath.

**Maharashtra launches 'jail tourism' initiative from Pune's Yerawada jail**



- The Prison Department of **Maharashtra** has launched its **jail tourism** initiative starting with more than **150-year-old Yerawada Central Prison in Pune**.
- The initiative was launched in a move to help students learn about historical experiences.
- Yerawada jail is **150 years old** where several freedom fighters, including **Mahatma Gandhi, Lokmanya Tilak** were imprisoned, Pune-pact was signed within the premises etc.
- The visitors will also get to see the **faasi yard**, the area where the death sentence is executed.
- This is the place where Chapekar brothers were executed in 1899 for the assassination of **British Plague Commissioner of Pune WC Rand**.
- The last execution that the faasi yard witnessed was in **November 2012 of**



**Ajmal Kasab**, a convict of 26/11 attacks, who was buried inside the prison premises.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Chief Minister of Maharashtra: Uddhav Thackeray; Governor: Bhagat Singh Koshyari.

## SUMMITS & CONFERENCES

**PM Modi inaugurates National Metrology Conclave 2021**



- Prime Minister Shri **Narendra Modi** has addressed the **National Metrology Conclave**, via video conferencing on January 04, 2021.
- National Metrology Conclave 2021 was organised by the **Council of Scientific and Industrial Research-National Physical Laboratory (CSIR-NPL)**, New Delhi, to mark its 75th year of inception. This year theme: **'Metrology for the Inclusive Growth of the Nation'**.
- As a part of this conclave, PM Modi also dedicated **'National Atomic Timescale'**, and **'Bhartiya Nirdeshak Dravya'** to the nation, and

laid the foundation stone of the 'National Environmental Standards Laboratory'.

**Ramesh Pokhriyal inaugurates International Akhand Conference 'EDUCON-2020'**



- Union Education Minister **Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank'** has inaugurated the two-day Virtual International Akhand Conference **'EDUCON 2020'** through video conferencing.
- This two-day International Conference is being organized by the **Central University of Punjab, Bathinda (CUPB)** in collaboration with the **Global Educational Research Association (GERA)**.
- The focal theme of EDUCON-2020 is **Envisioning Education for Transforming Youth to Restore Global Peace**.
- This conference is the first of its kind in India where scholars across the world would be continuously having a non-stop marathon dialogue sessions for 31 hours exploring the possibilities of the use of ICT in the higher education to promote the equitable quality education in India.
- Further, the conference will also provide a platform for discussions on emerging trends in education viz., likely scenario of higher education and school education by 2050, developing disruptive technologies for **STEAM**

(Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics) Education, training youth for strategic future jobs in Universities, the skill training programme for future graduates and relevance of ancient education system in 21st century.

**France hosts 4th One Planet Summit**



- The **Government of France** organised the fourth **‘One Planet Summit’**, through videoconferencing, which aimed at protecting the world’s biodiversity.
- The Summit was organised in cooperation with the **United Nations** and the **World Bank**.
- The theme of the Summit was **“Let’s act together for nature!”**.
- It was inaugurated by the Secretary-General of the United Nations António Guterres, French President Emmanuel Macron, and President of the World Bank Group David Malpass.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- France Capital: Paris.
- France President: Emmanuel Macron.
- France Prime minister: Jean Castex
- France Currency: Euro.

**Piyush Goyal inaugurates the ‘Prarambh:**

**Startup India International Summit’**



- The Union Minister of Commerce and Industry, Consumer Affairs and Food and Public Distribution, **Piyush Goyal** has inaugurated the two-day **‘Prarambh’, Startup India International Summit** in New Delhi on 15 January 2021.
- The Summit has been organized by the **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)**, under M/o Commerce & Industry.
- The inaugural event was participated by the members of **BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation)** countries.
- The ‘Prarambh’ Summit will provide a platform to the startups and young minds from around the world to come together and collaborate to work collectively to come with new ideas, innovation and invention.
- The focus of the Summit will be on enhancing multilateral cooperation and engagement with countries from around the globe to collectively develop and strengthen the startup ecosystems.
- The Summit marks the **fifth anniversary of the Startup India initiative**, launched by the Prime Minister on **16 January 2016**.

**Harsh Vardhan chairs 148th session of WHO Executive Board**



- Dr **Harsh Vardhan**, Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare digitally chaired the **148th session of WHO Executive Board**, through Video Conference.
- The 148th session of the Executive Board has been organised from 18-26 January 2021.
- The meeting provides a platform to bring together all member states to set the directions and agenda and continue striving for the objective of Health as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.
- Also, the WHO has declared the **Year 2021 as the Year of Global Solidarity and Survival**.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Headquarters of WHO: Geneva, Switzerland.
- Director-general of WHO: Tedros Adhanom.

**15th India Digital Summit 2021 begins**



- The **India Digital Summit**, the flagship event of the **Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI)** is one of the biggest conferences for the digital industry.
- Honourable Union Minister for Communications, Electronics & IT and Law & Justice, **Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad**, who is the chief guest, will deliver the inaugural address at the Summit.
- The summit, in its **15th year**, will bring thought leadership on various digital initiatives that will cover Policies, Business, Investment, Advertising, Digital Commerce, Start-ups Ecosystem, Emerging Tech, and other Digital Trends.
- The theme for this year's summit, which is being held virtually is **'Aatmanirbhar Bharat – Start of New Decade'** in line with the government's **'Make for the World' Initiatives**.
- The staggering increase in the total number of internet users in rural India recently presents us with the unique opportunity to establish India as a global powerhouse of Digital Growth.

**India, Singapore sign pact on submarine rescue support**





- The 5th edition of the Defence Ministers' Dialogue (DMD) between India and Singapore was successfully held on 20 January 2021 through a video conference, in an effort to deepen military cooperation.
- During the meeting, the 'Implementing Agreement on Submarine Rescue Support and Cooperation' was signed between the two Navies. The agreement was signed between Defence Minister **Rajnath Singh** and his Singaporean counterpart **Dr Ng Eng Hen**.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Singapore Currency: Singapore dollar.
- Capital of Singapore: Singapore.
- PM of Singapore: Lee Hsien Loong.

**Harsh Vardhan inaugurates 7th Edition of MASCRAD 2021**



- The 7th edition of 'MASCRAD 2021 – Movement against Smuggled & Counterfeit Trade' was inaugurated by **Dr Harsh Vardhan**, the Union Minister of Health and Family welfare.
- The two-day programme was organized by **FICCI CASCAD** (Committee Against Smuggling and Counterfeiting Activities Destroying the Economy), to combat illicit trade, especially in a post **COVID era**.
- The event provided a platform to deliberate and discuss actionable, innovative policy solutions that can reverse the rising incidences of counterfeit, smuggled and spurious products, causing significant damage to the economy of the nation, health and safety of people worldwide.

**PM Modi Chairs 35th PRAGATI Meet**



- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** has

chaired the **35th PRAGATI** meeting to review multiple projects, grievances and programmes. In the meeting, ten agenda items were taken for review worth **Rs. 54,675 crore**, related to 15 states.

- These included nine projects and one programme. Prime Minister also reviewed the **Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Jan Aushadhi Pariyojana**.
- PRAGATI stands for **Pro-Active Governance and Timely Implementation**.
- Of the total 9 projects, 3 projects were from the Ministry of Railways, 3 from Ministry of Road Transport and Highways and 1 project each from Department of Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, Power Ministry and Ministry of External Affairs.
- The States are **Odisha, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Punjab, Jharkhand, Bihar, Telangana, Rajasthan, Gujarat, West Bengal, Haryana, Uttarakhand, and Uttar Pradesh**.

### 5th Joint Meeting of the India-Japan Act East Forum



- The **5th joint meeting of the India-Japan Act East Forum (AEF)** was held in New Delhi. The meeting was co-chaired by Foreign Secretary **Shri Harsh Vardhan Shringla**, and **Suzuki Satoshi**, Ambassador of Japan to India.
- During the 5th meeting, the AEF reviewed the progress of ongoing projects in the North Eastern Region of India in various areas including **connectivity, hydropower, sustainable development, harnessing of water resources, and skill development**.
- They also exchanged views on cooperation in new areas such as healthcare, agro-industries and SMEs, bamboo value chain development, smart city, tourism and people-to-people exchanges.
- The AEF was established in **2017** to provide a platform for India-Japan collaboration in the North Eastern Region under India's "**Act East Policy**" and Japan's vision for a "**Free and Open Indo-Pacific**".

# SECTION 2

## Detailed Analysis of Important Events



# Economics

## What is Interconnection Usage Charge (IUC) in Telecom?

Mains Paper 3: Infrastructure: Energy, Ports, Roads, Airports, Railways Etc.

### Note4Students

From UPSC perspective, the following things are important :

**Prelims level** : IUC

**Mains level** : TRAI and its regulations of telecom services

The termination charge for wireless to wireless domestic calls has been zeroed from January 1 onwards. Until now operators paid Interconnection Usage Charges (IUC) of 6 paise per minute on mobile calls.

*We are heading for 5G and yet we were indulged in 2G era spat. Sounds strange, but finally IUC got away....*

### Interconnection Usage Charge (IUC)

- IUC is the cost that a mobile operator pays to another operator for carrying through/ terminating a call.
- If a customer of Mobile Operator A calls a customer of Mobile Operator B and the call is completed, then A pays an IUC charge to B for carrying/facilitating the call.
- Essentially, it is the originating network compensating the receiving network for the cost of carrying the call. In India, IUC is set by the TRAI.

### When was it introduced?

- IUC was introduced at a time when some operators had a larger network footprint compared to new players.
- In such a scenario, the larger operators had to be compensated for the investments it had to enable call completion. However, over the years this gap between operators has reduced.
- All the remaining operators have identical network footprint when it comes to voice calls.
- TRAI's original deadline to phase out IUC was January 1, 2020.

### What does it mean to Consumers?

- For mobile users, this means that all voice calls will be free from now on.
- While almost all operators had already started offering unlimited calls as part of their bundled pack, some were charging the 6 paise from consumers for paying IUC charges.
- From January 1, operators will stop collecting the charges.
- But other than that there will not be any significant gain for users. Tariff packs available in the market already offer data with unlimited voice calls.

### What does the end of the IUC regime imply?

- For the operators, the end of the IUC regime will lead to easier operations.
- Many legal battles have been fought in the past over disputes related to IUC charges.
- Now, the operators can keep whatever money they collect from consumers without having to keep a tab on where the call is terminating.
- The change in the billing system will not have any significant impact on operators' revenue.

## RBI comes up with Digital Payments Index

Mains Paper 3: Indian Economy

### Note4Students

From UPSC perspective, the following things are important :

**Prelims level :** Various parameters of the index

**Mains level :** Digital banking in India

The RBI has constructed a composite Digital Payments Index (DPI) with March 2018 as the base period to capture the extent of digitization of payments across the country.

*Note various indicators of the DPI.*

### Digital Payments Index

- RBI-DPI will be published on the central bank's website on a semi-annual basis from March 2021 onwards with a lag of four months.
- It comprises five broad parameters that enable the measurement of deepening and penetration of digital payments in the country over different time periods.
- The parameters are:
  1. Payment enablers (weight 25 percent)
  2. Payment infrastructure—demand-side factors (10 percent)
  3. Payment infrastructure – supply-side factors (15 percent)
  4. Payment performance (45 percent) and
  5. Consumer centricity (5 percent)
- Each of these parameters has sub-parameters which, in turn, consist of various measurable indicators, RBI said.

### Why need such an Index?

- Digital payments in India have been growing rapidly.
- The DPI reflects accurately the penetration and deepening of various digital payment modes.

**Mutual Funds Risk-o-Meter**

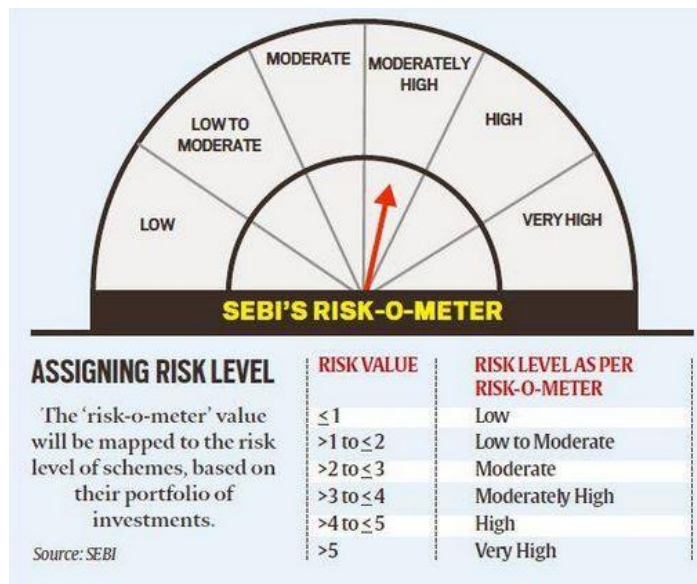
Mains Paper 3: Indian Economy

**Note4Students**

From UPSC perspective, the following things are important :

**Prelims level :** Mutual Funds

**Mains level :** Mutual Funds and associated market risks



The capital markets regulator Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has made it mandatory for mutual funds to assign a risk level to schemes, based on certain parameters.

**Try this PYQ:**

**Q. Which of the following is issued by registered foreign portfolio investors to overseas investors who want to be part of the Indian stock market without registering themselves directly?**

- (a) Certificate of Deposit
- (b) Commercial Paper
- (c) Promissory Note
- (d) Participatory Note

**What are Mutual Funds?**

- A Mutual Fund is a trust that collects money from a number of investors who share a common investment objective.
- Then, it invests the money in equities, bonds, money market instruments and/or other securities.
- Each investor owns units, which represent a portion of the holdings of the fund.
- The income/gains generated from this collective investment are distributed proportionately amongst the



investors after deducting certain expenses, by calculating a scheme's "Net Asset Value or NAV.

- It is one of the most viable investment options for the common man as it offers an opportunity to invest in a diversified, professionally managed basket of securities at a relatively low cost.
- All funds carry some level of risk. With mutual funds, one may lose some or all of the money invested because the securities held by a fund can go down in value.

### What is the risk-o-meter?

- All mutual funds shall beginning January 1, assign a risk level to their schemes at the time of launch, based on the scheme's characteristics.
- SEBI's decision on the "risk-o-meter", characterizes the risk level of the schemes on a six-stage scale from "Low" to "Very High".
- The risk-o-meter must be evaluated on a monthly basis.

### A compulsory mandate

- Fund houses are required to disclose the risk-o-meter risk level along with the portfolio disclosure for all their schemes on their own websites as well as the website of the Association of Mutual Funds in India (AMFI) within 10 days of the close of each month.
- Any change in the risk-o-meter reading with regard to a scheme shall be communicated to the unit-holders of that scheme.

### How will the level of risk be assigned?

- Which one of the six risk levels — low, low to moderate, moderate, moderately high, high, and very high — would apply, would depend upon the risk value (less than 1 for low risk to more than 5 for very high risk) calculated for the scheme.
- So if the risk value of a scheme is less than 1, its risk level would be low, and if it is more than 5, the risk will be very high on the risk-o-meter.

## Secured Overnight Financing Rate (SOFR)

Mains Paper 3: Indian Economy

### Note4Students

From UPSC perspective, the following things are important :

**Prelims level :** SOFR and various inter-bank rates

**Mains level :** Not Much

State Bank of India (SBI) has executed two inter-bank short term money market deals with pricing linked to SOFR (Secured Overnight Financing Rate).

**Try this PYQ:**

**Q. The money multiplier in an economy increases with which one of the following?**

(a) Increase in the cash reserve ratio

- (b) Increase in the banking habit of the population  
(c) Increase in the statutory liquidity ratio  
(d) Increase in the population of the country

### What is SOFR?

- Secured Overnight Financing Rate (SOFR) is a secured interbank overnight interest rate.
- It is a replacement for USD LIBOR (London Inter-bank Offered Rate) that may be phased out end-2021.
- The overnight rate is generally the interest rate that large banks use to borrow and lend from one another in the overnight market.

### Why SOFR?

- Global regulators decided to move away from the Libor, a vital part of the financial system after it was revealed in 2012 that banks around the world manipulated it.
- It also didn't help that volume underlying the benchmark dried up.
- U.K regulators set the deadline at 2021 for financial firms and investors to transition away from the Libor.

## Environment & Biodiversity

### Asian Waterbird Census (AWC) 2021

Mains Paper 3: Conservation, Environmental Pollution & Degradation, Eia

### Note4Students

From UPSC perspective, the following things are important :

**Prelims level** : Asian Waterbird Census (AWC) 2021

**Mains level** : Wetland conservation in India

The two-day Asian Waterbird Census-2020 was recently held in Andhra Pradesh.

### **Anyone can participate!**

*By using eBird and filling an additional site form, one can take part in this multi-country effort to document the state of our wetlands and waterbirds. To take part one simply visits a wetland and count the birds he/she see there.*

### Asian Waterbird Census

- The Asian Waterbird Census (AWC) takes place every January.
- The AWC was started in 1987, and many birders were initiated into bird counting and monitoring through this project.
- This citizen-science event is a part of the global International Waterbird Census (IWC) that supports the conservation and management of wetlands and waterbirds worldwide.
- The data collected each year is shared by Wetlands International with global conservation organisations such as IUCN and Ramsar Convention.

### Why need such census?

- Waterbirds are one of the key indicators of wetlands health.
- Wetlands provide feeding, resting, roosting and foraging habitats for these charismatic species.

### AWC in India

- In India, the AWC is annually coordinated by the Bombay Natural history Society (BNHS) and Wetlands International.
- BNHS is a non-government Organisation (NGO) founded in the year 1883.
- It engages itself in the conservation of nature and natural resources and also in the research and conservation of endangered species.
- Its mission is to conserve nature, primarily biological diversity through action based on research, education and public awareness.

## What is Nitrogen-Use Efficiency (NUE)?

Mains Paper 3: Conservation, Environmental Pollution & Degradation, Eia

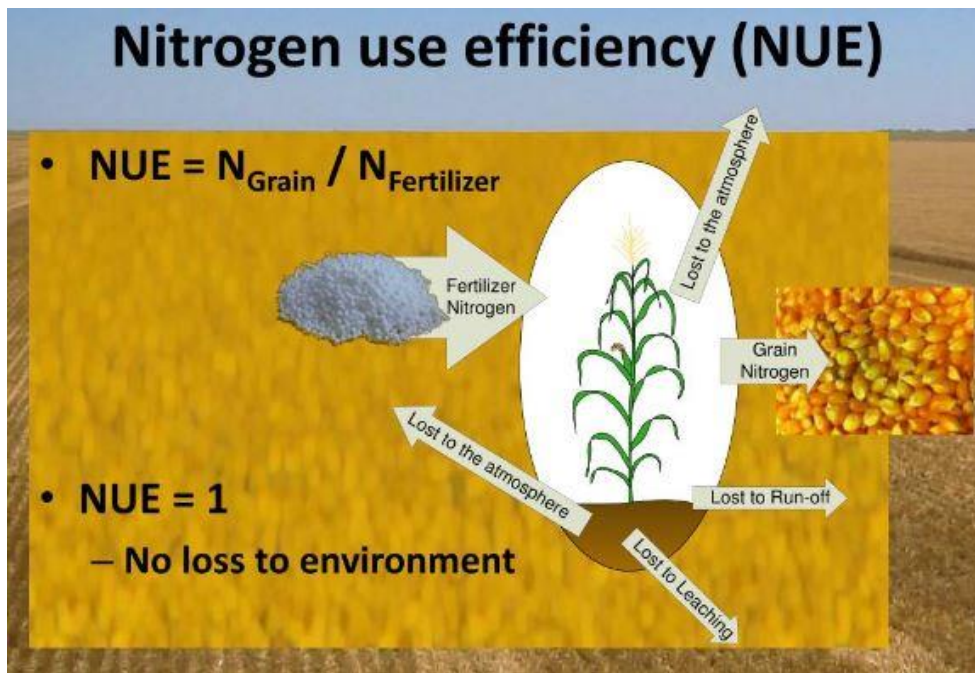
### Note4Students

From UPSC perspective, the following things are important :

**Prelims level** : NUE, Nitrogen's GHG potential

**Mains level** : Nitrogen pollution





A group of Indian scientists have found a way to improve crops by reducing wastage of nitrogen fertilizers applied to them.

**Try this PYQ:**

**Q. Which of the following adds/add nitrogen to the soil?**

1. Excretion of Urea by animals
2. Burning of coal by man
3. Death of vegetation

**Select the correct answer using the code given below:**

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2, and 3

### Nitrogen-Use Efficiency

- NUE is calculated as a ratio between nitrogen used and harvest: A higher number denotes low wastage.
- With the efficiency on the decline, farmers use more fertiliser in the hope of raising yield. This in turn worsens NUE.
- Crops generally use up 30 per cent of nitrogen fertilizer applied; the rest seeps into the environment, harming health and adding to climate change.
- Researchers were able to identify phenotypes or visibly identifiable features that determine the efficiency with which cultivated rice varieties (cultivars) use nitrogen.

- This efficiency is known as nitrogen-use efficiency (NUE).
- Cereals consume over 69 per cent of nitrogen fertilizers in India; rice tops the list with 37 per cent, followed by wheat (24 per cent).

### Nitrogen Pollution: the reason behind

- Agriculture leads to 70 per cent of nitrous oxide emissions in India.
- Of this, 77 per cent is contributed by fertilizers, mostly urea, according to the Indian Nitrogen Assessment published in 2017.
- This greenhouse gas (GHG) is 300 times more potent than carbon dioxide.
- It has replaced methane as the second-largest component of GHG emissions from Indian agriculture in the past 15 years.

## Governance

### FSSAI slashes limit for Trans Fats level in food

Mains Paper 2: Health & Education

#### Note4Students

From UPSC perspective, the following things are important :

**Prelims level :** Trans fats

**Mains level :** Health threats posed by Trans Fats

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has capped the amount of trans fatty acids (TFA) in oils and fats to 3% for 2021 and 2% by 2022 from the current permissible limit of 5%.

#### New FSSAI norms

- FSSAI has acted in response to the amendment to the Food Safety and Standards (Prohibition and Restriction on Sales) Regulations.
- The country's food regulatory body notified the amendment on December 29, more than a year after it issued a draft on the subject for consultation with stakeholders.
- The revised regulation applies to edible refined oils, vanaspati (partially hydrogenated oils), margarine, bakery shortenings, and other mediums of cooking such as vegetable fat spreads and mixed fat spreads.
- It was in 2011 that India first passed a regulation that set a TFA limit of 10% in oils and fats, which was further reduced to 5% in 2015.

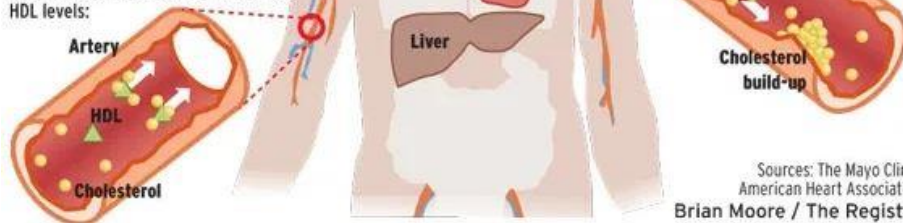
#### What are Trans Fats?

## Trans fats and the body

Trans fats (also known as partially hydrogenated oils) are created by adding hydrogen to liquid vegetable oil. This process makes the fat more solid, lengthens its shelf life and makes it more suitable for frying and other uses. However, trans fats are also more unhealthy than regular, unsaturated fats. Here's why:

### Good cholesterol

High-density lipoproteins (HDL) pick up excess cholesterol and transport it back to the body's liver for processing. Consuming trans fats lowers the body's HDL levels:



### Bad cholesterol

Low-density lipoproteins (LDL) transport cholesterol throughout the body. As cholesterol builds up in the walls of the body's arteries, the arteries become narrow and hardened, reducing blood flow and leading to an increased chance of heart attack and stroke:

Sources: The Mayo Clinic;  
American Heart Association  
Brian Moore / The Register

- Artificial Trans fats are created in an industrial process that adds hydrogen to liquid vegetable oils to make them more solid.
- Since they are easy to use, inexpensive to produce and last a long time, and give foods a desirable taste and texture, they are still widely used despite their harmful effects being well-known.

### Why such a regulation?

- Trans fats are associated with increased risk of heart attacks and death from coronary heart disease.
- As per the WHO, approximately 5.4 lakh deaths take place each year globally because of intake of industrially-produced trans-fatty acids.
- The WHO has also called for global elimination of trans fats by 2023.

## History

### Patharughat Uprising of Assam (1894)

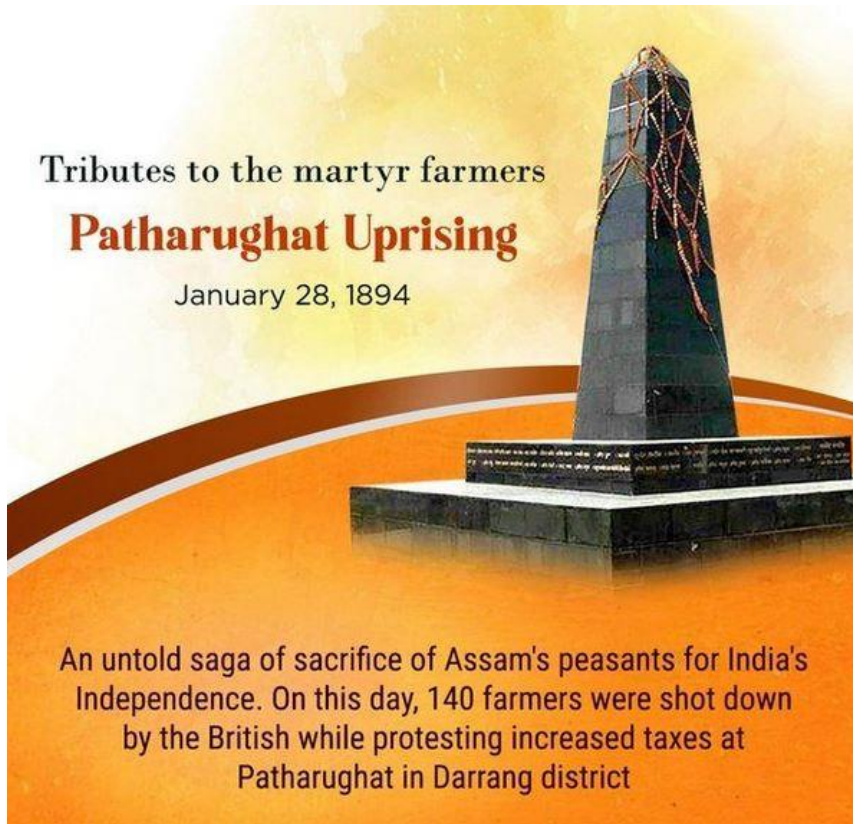
Mains Paper 1: Modern Indian History

### Note4Students

From UPSC perspective, the following things are important :

**Prelims level** : Patharughat uprising

**Mains level** : Peasants movements in colonial India



Twenty-five years before the Jallianwala Bagh massacre, more than a hundred peasants fell to the bullets of the British on January 28, 1894, in Patharughat, a small village in Assam's Darrang district.

***Make a note of all breakthrough peasants' revolt in the nineteenth century. Also, try this PYQ:***

***Q. The demand for the Tebhaga Peasant Movement in Bengal was for-***

- (a) The reduction of the share of the landlords from one-half of the crop to one-third*
- (b) The grant of ownership of land to peasants as they were the actual cultivators of the land*
- (c) The uprooting of Zamindari system and the end of serfdom*
- (d) Writing off all peasant debts*

### **Patharughat uprising**

- After the British annexation of Assam in 1826, surveys of the vast lands of the state began.
- On the basis of such surveys, the British began to impose land taxes, much to the resentment of the farmers.
- In 1893, the British government decided to increase agricultural land tax reportedly by 70- 80 per cent.
- Up until then the peasants would pay taxes in kind or provide service in lieu of cash.
- Across Assam, peasants began protesting the move by organising RajiMels, or peaceful peoples' conventions.



### The day of the massacre

- The unarmed peasants were protesting against the increase in land revenue levied by the colonial administration when the military opened fire.
- Despite these gatherings being democratic, the British perceived them as “breeding grounds for sedition”.
- On January 28, 1894, when the British officers were refusing to listen to the farmers’ grievances, things heated up.
- There was a lathi charge, followed by an open firing which killed many of the peasants present.
- Official records, as mentioned in the Darrang District Gazette, 1905, edited by BC Allen, placed the casualties in the Patharughat incident as 15 killed and 37 wounded.

### Why was the incident significant?

- The incident was one of the most tragic and inspiring episodes in the saga of the Indian freedom movement.
- However, it rarely features in the mainstream historical discourse of the freedom struggle.
- For the larger Assamese community, Patharughat comes second only to the Battle of Saraighat, when the Ahoms defeated the Mughals in 1671.

## International Relations

### What is Operation Meghdoot?

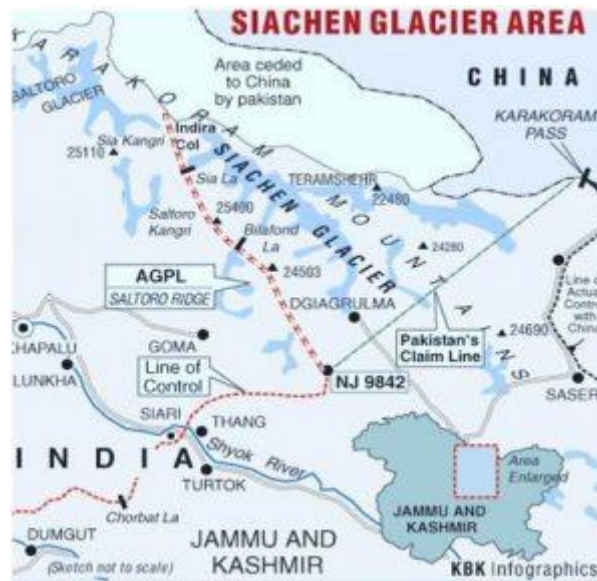
Mains Paper 3: Bilateral, Regional and Global Groupings and agreements involving India

#### Note4Students

From UPSC perspective, the following things are important :

**Prelims level** : Operation Meghdoot

**Mains level** : Not Much



Colonel Narinder 'Bull' Kumar (Retd.), instrumental in the Army launching Operation Meghdoot and securing the dominating heights of Siachen Glacier in 1984 has passed away at 87.

### Operation Meghdoot

- Operation Meghdoot was the codename for the Indian Armed Forces' operation to seize control of the Siachen Glacier in Kashmir, precipitating the Siachen conflict.
- The Siachen then had become a bone of contention following a vague demarcation of territories in the Karachi Agreement of July 1949.
- Executed in the morning of 13 April 1984, this military operation, launched on the highest battlefield in the world, was the first offensive of its kind.
- The operation preempted Pakistan's impending Operation Ababeel and was a success, resulting in Indian forces gaining control of the Siachen Glacier in its entirety.
- Currently, the Indian Army remains the first and only army in the world to have taken tanks and other heavy ordnance up to such an altitude (well over 5,000 m or 16,000 ft).

### Bull Kumar's contributions

- Kumar, a legendary mountaineer who had spotted Pakistani activities around the Siachen glacier in 1984 that helped India secure it subsequently.
- He was awarded Padma Shri, the fourth highest civilian award, in 1965.
- He was decorated with Param VishishtSeva Medal (PVSM), Kirti Chakra, and AtiVishishtSeva Medal (AVSM).
- The battalion headquarters on the glacier located close to an altitude of 16,000 feet is named "Kumar post" in his honor.

## Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam

Mains Paper 2: Effect Of Policies & Politics Of World On India'S Interests

**Note4Students**

From UPSC perspective, the following things are important :

**Prelims level :** Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam

**Mains level :** Horn of Africa Region



Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt have agreed on to resume negotiations to resolve their decade-long complex dispute over the Grand Renaissance Dam hydropower project in the Horn of Africa.

**Note:** You never know when UPSC might switch map based questions away from the Middle East and SE Asia.

Considering this news, the UPSC may ask a prelim question based on the countries swept by River Nile/ various dams constructed/ landlocked countries in the African continent etc.

### Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam

- Spearheaded by Ethiopia, the 145-meter-tall (475-foot-tall) Grand Renaissance Dam hydropower project, when completed, will be Africa's largest.
- Its construction was initiated in 2011 on the Blue Nile tributary of the river that runs across one part of Ethiopia.
- The Nile is a necessary water source in the region and Egypt has consistently objected to the dam's construction, saying it will impact water flow.
- The long-standing dispute has been a cause of concern for international observers who fear that it may increase conflict between the two nations and spill out into other countries in the Horn of Africa.

### What is the dispute about?

- The Nile, Africa's longest river, has been at the centre of a decade-long complex dispute involving several countries that are dependent on the river's waters.
- At the forefront of this dispute are Ethiopia and Egypt, with Sudan having found itself dragged into the issue.
- The main waterways of the Nile run through Uganda, South Sudan, Sudan and Egypt, and its drainage basin runs through several countries in East Africa, including Ethiopia.

### Concerns over the dam

- Given the dam's location on the Blue Nile tributary, it would potentially allow Ethiopia to gain control of the flow of the river's waters.
- Egypt lies further downstream and is concerned that Ethiopia's control over the water could result in lower water levels within its own borders.
- In addition, Egypt proposed a longer timeline for the project over concerns that the water level of the Nile could dramatically drop as the reservoir fills with water in the initial stages.
- Sudan's location between Egypt up north and Ethiopia down south has caused it to become an inadvertent party to this dispute.
- But that isn't all; Sudan too is concerned that if Ethiopia were to gain control over the river, it would affect the water levels Sudan receives.

### Why does Ethiopia want this dam?

- Ethiopia's goal is to secure electricity for its population and to sustain and develop its growing manufacturing industry.
- Addis Ababa anticipates that this dam will generate approximately 6,000 megawatts of electricity when it is completed, that can be distributed for the needs of its population and industries.
- In addition to its domestic requirements, Ethiopia may sell surplus electricity to neighbouring nations like Kenya, Sudan, Eritrea and South Sudan, that also suffer from electricity shortages, to generate some revenue.

### What lies ahead?

- Despite previous talks, the point of contention hasn't changed: Egypt and Sudan are concerned about the filling and the operation of the dam.
- Ethiopia continues to insist that the dam is required to meet the needs of its population and has said that downstream water supplies will not be adversely affected.
- Cairo insists that the dam would cut its water supplies — concerning for a country that depends on the Nile for approximately 97% of its drinking water and irrigation supplies.
- Sudan believes that the dam will reduce flooding, but is concerned about the path forward if the negotiations end at a stalemate.



# Polity

## What is Non-price Competition?

Mains Paper 2: Indian Constitution - historical underpinnings, evolution, features, amendments, significant provisions and basic structure

### Note4Students

From UPSC perspective, the following things are important :

**Prelims level** : Non-price competition

**Mains level** : Data privacy issues

Data privacy can take the form of non-price competition and abuse of dominance can lower privacy protection, a study by the Competition Commission of India (CCI) has said.

Try this PYQ:

**Q.Right to Privacy is protected as an intrinsic part of Right to Life and Personal Liberty. Which of the following in the Constitution of India correctly and appropriately imply the above statements?**

- (a) Article 14 and the provisions under the 42<sup>nd</sup> Amendment to the Constitution
- (b) Article 17 and the Directive Principles of State Policy in Part IV
- (c) Article 21 and the freedoms guaranteed in Part III
- (d) Article 24 and the provisions under the 44<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Constitution

### What is Non-price Competition?

- Non-price competition is a marketing strategy “in which one firm tries to distinguish its product or service from competing products on the basis of attributes like design and workmanship”.
- It often occurs in imperfectly competitive markets as it exists between two or more producers that sell goods and services at the same prices but compete through non-price measures.
- Such measures include marketing schemes and greater quality or any sustainable competitive advantage other than price.

### What is CCI’s observation?

- The CCI study made observations about non-price factors such as quality of service (QoS), data speeds etc. which are likely to be the new drivers of competitive rivalry between service providers in the telecom sector.
- CCI noted that an aspect of data in the context of competition in digital communications market is the conflict between allowing access and protecting consumer privacy.

### Privacy at stake

- Abuse of dominance can take the form of lowering the privacy protection and therefore fall within the ambit of antitrust as low privacy standard implies lack of consumer welfare.
- Privacy can take the form of non-price competition, said the CCI.
- On other non-price factors of competition, CCI found that consumers ranked network coverage at the top followed by customer service despite their Privacy.

## Science, Tech & Culture

### Know the scientist: Dmitri Mendeleev

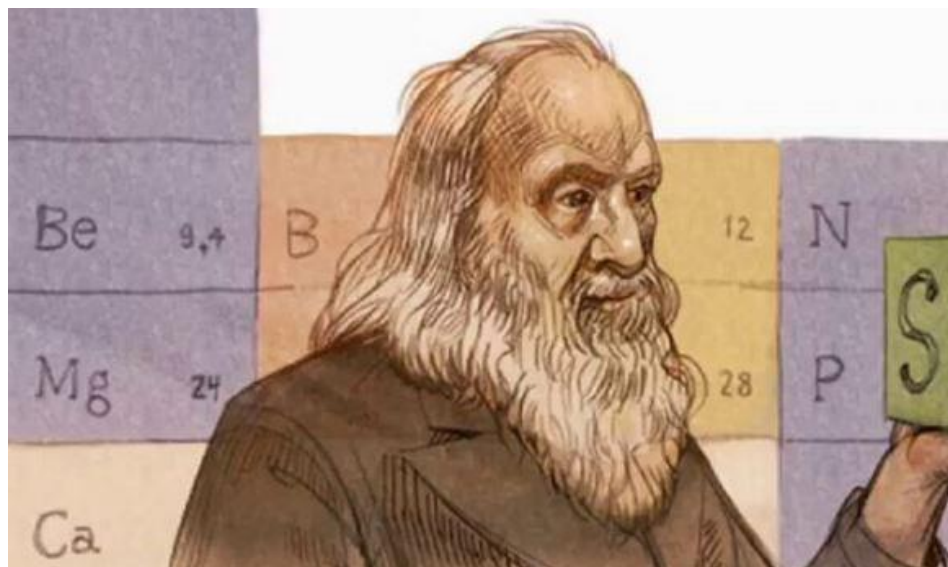
Mains Paper 3: S&T - Applications In Everyday Life

#### Note4Students

From UPSC perspective, the following things are important :

**Prelims level** : Dmitri Mendeleev, Periodic table

**Mains level** : NA



Mendeleev was a Russian chemist and inventor who formulated the Periodic Law and the Periodic Table of Elements.

*Chemistry can, no wonder, find their place in exam if core Biology could do in 2020 CSP.*

**Q. Which of the following statements is/are correct regarding the general difference between plant cells and animal cells?**

1. *Plant cells have cellulose cell walls whilst animal cells do not.*
2. *Plant cells do not have plasma membrane unlike animals cells which do*
3. *Mature plant cell has one large vacuole whilst animal cell has many small vacuoles*

**Select the correct answer using the given code below-**

- (a) 1 and 2 only  
(b) 2 and 3 only  
(c) 1 and 3 only  
(d) 1, 2 and 3

### **Dmitri Mendeleev**

- Mendeleev was born in the Siberian town of Tobolsk.
- In 1861, Mendeleev published a textbook named Organic Chemistry, which won him the Demidov Prize of the Petersburg Academy of Sciences.
- While explaining the chemical and physical properties of elements, he discovered similarities in the progression of atomic weights.
- He found that the order of atomic weights could be used to arrange the elements within each group and the groups themselves.
- Thus, Mendeleev formulated the periodic law. His Osnovykhimii (The Principles of Chemistry) became a classic, running through many editions and many translations.

### **The Periodic Law**

- Using the Periodic Law, Mendeleev developed a systematic table of all the 63 elements then known.
- He even predicted the locations of unknown elements together with their properties within the periodic table.
- When these predicted elements, notably gallium ( 1875), scandium (1879), and germanium (1886) were discovered, Mendeleev Periodic Table began to gain wide acceptance.
- Incidentally, in 1870, German chemist Julius Lothar Meyer also published a paper describing the same organisation of elements as Mendeleev's. But the latter is given credit for the table.
- In all, Mendeleev predicted 10 new elements, of which all but two turned out to exist. Element 101 is named Mendelevium in his honour.

## **Magneto-Telluric Survey in the Delhi-NCR Region**

Mains Paper 3: S&T - Applications In Everyday Life

### **Note4Students**

From UPSC perspective, the following things are important :

**Prelims level :** Magnetotelluric Study

**Mains level :** Earthquakes

In the backdrop of multiple quakes of low intensity in the Delhi-NCR region, the National Centre for Seismology (NCS) is conducting a unique geophysical Magnetotelluric-MT survey to accurately assess potential seismic hazards.

**Try this PYQ:**

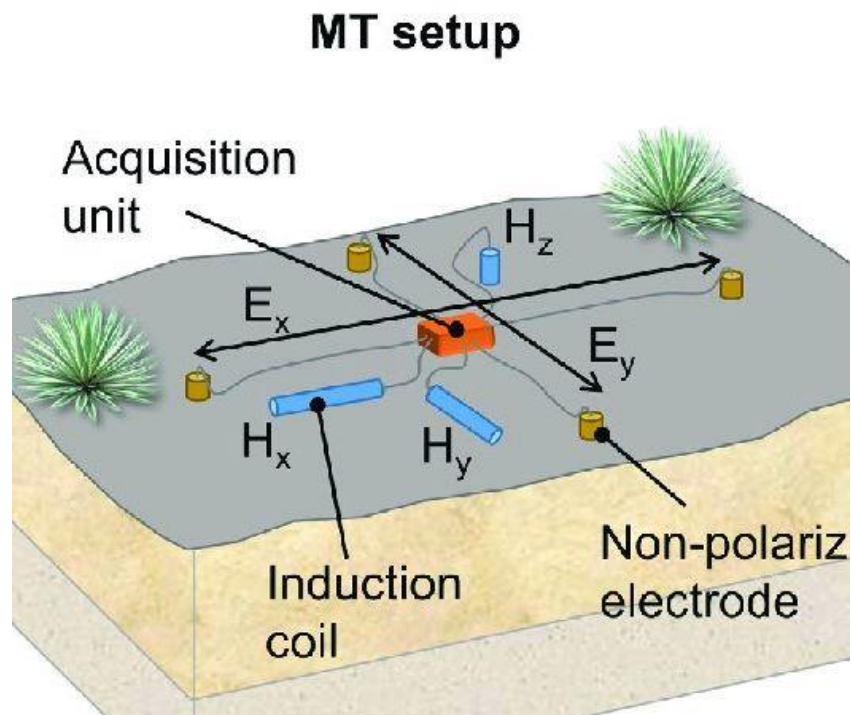
**Q.Consider the following statements:**

1. *The Earth's magnetic field has reversed every few hundred thousand years.*
2. *When the Earth was created more than 4000 million years ago, there was 54% oxygen and no carbon dioxide.*
3. *When living organisms originated, they modified the early atmosphere of the Earth.*

**Which of the statements given above is/ are correct?**

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

**What is Magneto-Telluric Survey?**



- MT is a geophysical method which uses natural time variation of the earth's magnetic and electric fields



to understand the geological (underground) structure and processes.

- It is an increasingly popular technique widely used to image the electrical resistivity distribution inside the Earth in various application fields ranging in scale from the shallow crust to the lithosphere.
- In the MT method, the earth's natural electromagnetic field is used as a source field.
- The receivers record the electric and magnetic fields on the surface of the Earth.
- The variations in amplitude and phase of the received signals can be interpreted in terms of the resistivity structure of the subsurface using the magnetotelluric impedance.

### Where would the MT survey be undertaken?

- The survey is conducted across three major seismic sources, namely Mahendragarh-Dehradun Fault (MDF), Sohna Fault (SF) and Mathura Fault (MF).
- It will ascertain the presence of fluids, which generally enhance the possibility of triggering earthquakes.

### Benefits of the survey

- Its findings will help different user agencies for designing quake-resistant buildings, industrial units and structures such as hospitals and schools.
- In addition to MT, analysis and interpretation of satellite imageries and geological field investigations for locating the faults are also being carried out.
- Both these geophysical and geological surveys will help in taking multiple preventive measures in the quake-prone region.

## Lithium deposits in Karnataka

Mains Paper 1: Distribution Of Key Natural Resources Across The World

### Note4Students

From UPSC perspective, the following things are important :

**Prelims level** : Lithium ion batteries and their significance

**Mains level** : Lithium reserves in India

Alongside a move to tap into the global lithium value chain, India has initiated a concerted domestic exploration in Karnataka's Mandya district.

### Lithium reserves in Karnataka

- Preliminary surveys by the Atomic Minerals Directorate for Exploration and Research (AMD), an arm of the Department of Atomic Energy has carried out the exploration.
- AMD is carrying out surface and sub-surface exploration for lithium in potential geological domains of the country.
- Their research has shown the presence of 1,600 tonnes of lithium resources in the igneous rocks of the Marlagalla-Allapatna region of Karnataka's Mandya district.

**Must read:**

### **Global producers of lithium**

- *Australia and Chile have swapped positions as the world's leading lithium-producing country over the past decade. In 2019, the world's Top 5 lithium producers were:*
  1. *Australia – 52.9% of global production*
  2. *Chile – 21.5%*
  3. *China – 9.7%*
  4. *Argentina – 8.3%*
  5. *Zimbabwe – 2.1%*
- *The U.S. ranked 7th with 1.2% of the world's lithium production.*

*In 2019, the world's Top 5 lithium reserves by country were:*

1. *Chile – 55.5% of the world's total*
2. *Australia – 18.1%*
3. *Argentina – 11.0%*
4. *China – 6.5%*
5. *U.S. – 4.1%*

### **Why is the exploration significant?**

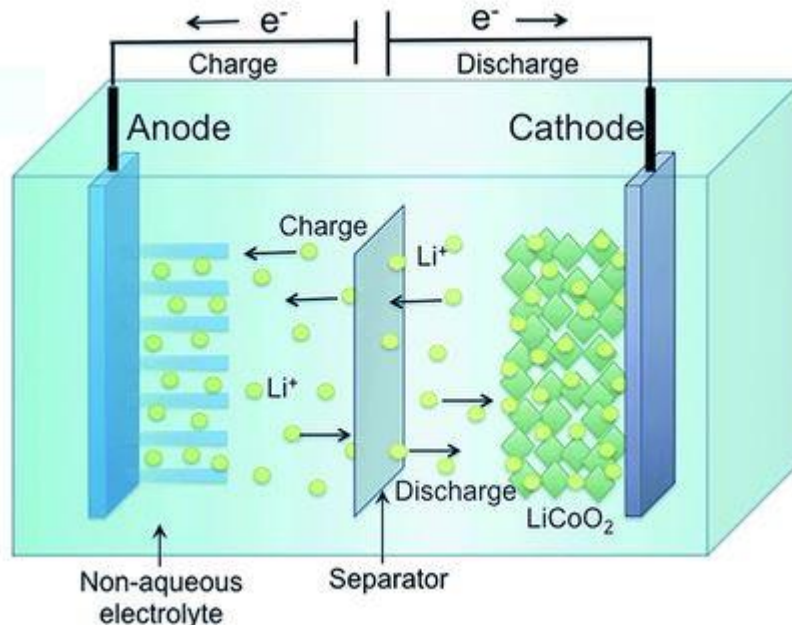
- India currently imports all its lithium needs.
- The find in Mandya is extremely small in quantitative terms, but it marks some initial success in the attempt to domestically mine the silver-white metal by way of hard-rock extraction of the ore.
- The domestic exploration push comes at a time when India has stepped up its economic offensive against China, a major source of lithium-ion energy storage products being imported into the country.
- The Marlagalla-Allapatna area is seen as among the most promising geological domains for potential exploration for lithium and other rare metals.

### **What lies ahead?**

- India is seen as a late mover in attempts to enter the lithium value chain, coming at a time when EVs are predicted to be a sector ripe for disruption.
- 2021 is likely to be an inflexion point for battery technology – with several potential improvements to the li-ion technology, and alternatives to this tried-and-tested formulation in advanced stages of commercialization.

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### **Back2Basic: Li-Ion battery**



- Whittingham developed the first functional lithium-ion battery in 1976, Goodenough brought in a major improvement in 1980, while Yoshino made the first practical-use lithium-ion battery in 1985.
- Commercially manufactured lithium-ion batteries, based on what Yoshino had developed, made their first appearance in 1991.

### Its' working

- Batteries convert chemical energy into electricity.
- A battery comprises two electrodes, a positive cathode and a negative anode, which is separated by a liquid chemical, called an electrolyte, which is capable of carrying charged particles.
- The two electrodes are connected through an electrical circuit.
- When the circuit is on, electrons travel from the negative anode towards the positive cathode, thus generating an electric current, while positively charged ions move through the electrolyte.

### 'Recoiling' Black Holes

Mains Paper 3: Awareness In The Fields Of It, Space, Computers, Robotics, Nano-Technology, Bio-Technology, Pharma Sector & Health Science

### Note4Students

From UPSC perspective, the following things are important :

**Prelims level** : Black Holes, Recoils

**Mains level** : Black holes and gravitation waves



A supermassive black hole, which is estimated to weigh up to 100 billion times the mass of the Sun, is seemingly missing, leaving astronomers perplexed.

**Try this PYQ:**

**Q. Recently, scientists observed the merger of giant ‘blackholes’ billions of light-years away from the Earth. What is the significance of this observation?**

- (a) ‘Higgs boson particles’ were detected.
- (b) ‘Gravitational waves’ were detected.
- (c) Possibility of inter-galactic space travel through ‘wormhole’ was confirmed.
- (d) It enabled scientists to understand ‘singularity’.

### The ‘missing’ black hole

- The black hole is supposed to be located in Abell 2261, an enormous galaxy cluster that is about 2.7 billion light-years away from our planet.
- So, when we look at a celestial object, we are looking at how it appeared that long ago in the past.
- At 2.7 billion light-years away, the Abell galaxy is at an overwhelmingly large distance away from us.

### What could have happened?

- Every large galaxy in the universe has a supermassive black hole at its centre, whose mass is millions or billions of times that of the Sun, says NASA.
- The black hole at the centre of our galaxy– the Milky Way– is called Sagittarius A\*, and is 26,000 light-years away from Earth.
- Scientists have been using data gathered in 1999 and 2004 to look for the centre of the Abell galaxy, but have so far been unable to find its black hole.
- A reason for this could be that Abell’s black hole has been ejected from the centre of the galaxy.

### Recoil of Black Holes

- When two black holes merge, they release what is known as gravitational waves– invisible ripples



travelling at the speed of light, which squeeze and stretch anything in their path.

- As per the theory of gravitational waves, during such a merger, when the amount of waves generated in one direction is stronger than another, the new big black hole can be sent away from the centre of the galaxy into the opposite direction.
- This is known as a “recoiling” black hole.
- So far, though, scientists are yet to find definitive evidence for recoiling black holes and are still to discover whether supermassive black holes can merge and release gravitational waves.
- As of now, only mergers of significantly smaller black holes have been verified.

### **Why it is significant?**

- The researchers assert that this may have happened because of the merging of two smaller galaxies to form Abell– a process in which both of their black holes merged to form an even bigger black hole.
- If this hypothesis turns out to be true, it would mean a major breakthrough in astronomy.

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### **Back2Basics:**

# What Is a Black Hole?

A black hole is an area of such immense gravity that nothing - *not even light* - can escape from it.

- Black holes can form at the end of some stars' lives
- Once all of a star's material is used up, it no longer has the energy to support itself and it collapses
- All of that collapsing matter creates a magnificent explosion
- The material left over after the explosion falls into an infinitely small point
- This small point is called a singularity
- Black holes can form in many ways and have a range of masses. Stellar Black holes have as much matter as a bunch of our suns.
- Supermassive black holes, on the other hand, have the mass of 1,000 million suns, all trapped within a tiny singularity.
- The area around a singularity where nothing - including light - is able to escape is called an event horizon. That's probably what you are thinking of when you think of a black hole.
- What would happen if you took a spaceship near a black hole's event horizon? The end closer to the black hole would experience so much more gravity than the other end it would stretch out like a piece of spaghetti. What's the scientific term for this? *Spaghettification*.

## Kashmir's ancient art of papier-mache

Mains Paper 1: Arts & Culture

**Note4Students**

From UPSC perspective, the following things are important :

**Prelims level :** Kashmiri papier-mache

**Mains level :** NA



This newscard is an excerpt of the original article published in The Hindu.

### Kashmiri papier-mache

- It is a handicraft of Kashmir that was brought by Muslims saint Mir Sayyid Ali Hamadani from Persia in the 14th century to medieval India.
- It is based primarily on paper pulp, and is a richly decorated, colourful artefact; generally in the form of vases, bowls, or cups (with and without metal rims), boxes, trays, bases of lamps, and many other small objects.
- These are made in homes, and workshops, in Srinagar, and other parts of the Kashmir Valley, and are marketed primarily within India, although there is a significant international market.
- The product is protected under the Geographical Indication Act 1999 and was registered by the Controller General of Patents Designs and Trademarks.

### Back2Basics: Geographical Indication (GI)

- The World Intellectual Property Organisation defines a GI as “a sign used on products that have a specific geographical origin and possess qualities or a reputation that are due to that origin”.
- GIs are typically used for agricultural products, foodstuffs, handicrafts, industrial products, wines and spirit drinks.
- Internationally, GIs are covered as an element of intellectual property rights under the Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property.
- They have also covered under the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Agreement.

## Sulawesi Cave Paintings

Mains Paper 1: Arts & Culture



**Note4Students**

From UPSC perspective, the following things are important :

**Prelims level :** Sulawesi Cave Paintings

**Mains level :** Not Much



A team of archaeologists in Indonesia has discovered what may be the world's oldest known cave painting dating back to more than 45,000 years.

**Try this PYQ:**

**Q. There are only two known examples of cave paintings of the Gupta period in ancient India. One of these is paintings of Ajanta caves. Where is the other surviving example of Gupta paintings?**

- (a) Bagh caves
- (b) Ellora caves
- (c) Lomas Rishi cave
- (d) Nasik caves

**Sulawesi Cave Paintings**

- The cave painting depicts a wild boar endemic to the Sulawesi island of Indonesia, where the painting was found.
- The central Indonesian island, which occupies an area of over 174,000 sq. km, is situated between Asia and Australia.



- It has a long history of human occupation.

**Significance of the painting**

- The archaeologists’ note that the dated painting of the Sulawesi warty pig seems to be the world’s oldest surviving representational image of an animal.
- The painting was made using red ochre pigment and depicts a pig with a short crest of upright hairs and a pair of horn-like facial warts in front of the eyes.
- These pigs have been hunted by humans for tens of thousands of years and are the most commonly depicted animal in the ice age rock art of the island.
- It suggests that they have long been used as food and form a “focus of creative thinking and artistic expression” for people of that time.

**Must read:**

**How did the archaeologists date it?**

- The painting was first discovered in 2017 as part of surveys the team was carrying out with the Indonesian authorities.
- For these painting archaeologists used a method called **U-series isotope analysis**, which uses calcium carbonate deposits that form naturally on the cave wall surface to determine its age.
- They used a calcium carbonate deposit, also referred to as “cave popcorn” that had formed on the rear foot of one of the pig figures.
- They were able to figure out a minimum age for the painting at around 45,500 years, which means the painting was made before this.

**Sulawesi: Oldest human habitat**



*Try memorizing these Islands of the Indo-Pacific in their East-West alternations.*

- Sulawesi island contains some of the oldest directly dated rock art in the world and also some of the oldest evidence for the presence of hominins beyond the southeastern limits of the Ice Age Asian continent.

- Hominins include modern humans, extinct human species and our immediate ancestors.
- Homo sapiens are the first modern humans who evolved from their hominid predecessors between 200,000-300,000 years ago.
- It is estimated that these modern humans started migrating outside of Africa some 70,000-100,000 years ago.
- Even so, it is not yet clear as to when modern humans first colonised Sulawesi.

## NASA's Curiosity Rover celebrates 3000 days on Mars

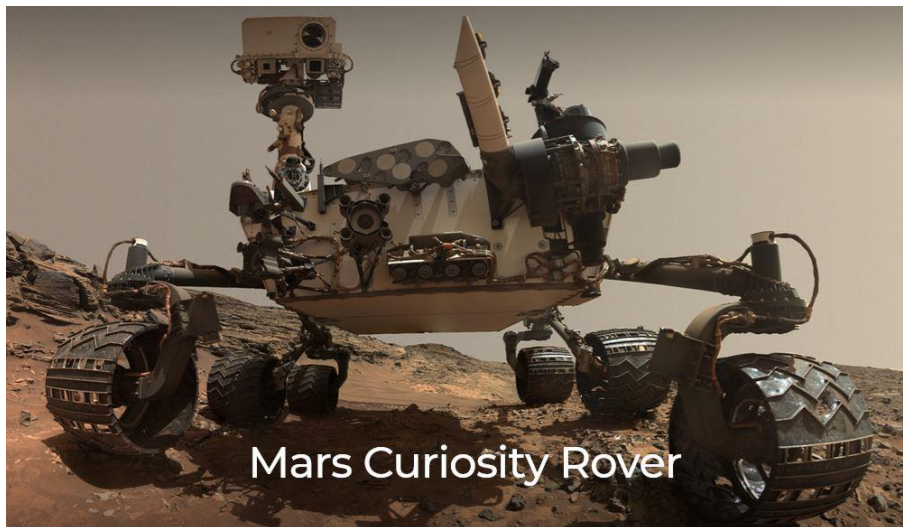
Mains Paper 3: Awareness In The Fields Of It, Space, Computers, Robotics, Nano-Technology, Bio-Technology, Pharma Sector & Health Science

### Note4Students

From UPSC perspective, the following things are important :

**Prelims level** : Curiosity rover, Martian Day

**Mains level** : Quest for extraterrestrial life



The Mars rover 'Curiosity' has completed 3,000 Martian days.

**Try this PYQ:**

**Q. Which region of Mars has a densely packed river deposit indicating this planet had water 3.5 billion years ago?**

- (a) Aeolis Dorsa
- (b) Tharsis
- (c) Olympus Mons
- (d) Hellas

### Curiosity Rover

- Curiosity is an SUV-sized Mars rover designed to explore the **Gale crater on Mars** as part of NASA's Mars Science Laboratory (MSL) mission
- The main mission of Curiosity was "to search areas of Mars for past or present conditions favourable for life, and conditions capable of preserving a record of life."
- It has a suite of instruments:
  1. A gas chromatograph, a mass spectrometer, a tunable laser spectrometer, X-ray diffraction, fluorescence instrument help study the rocks
  2. The Mars Hand Lens Imager (for close-up pictures) and a Mast Camera (to take photos of the surroundings)
  3. An instrument named ChemCam to vaporize thin layers of Martian rocks.
  4. Radiation Assessment Detector to study the radiation environment at the surface of Mars
  5. Rover Environmental Monitoring Station to measure atmospheric pressure, temperature, humidity, winds, plus ultraviolet radiation levels
  6. Dynamic Albedo of Neutrons instrument to measure subsurface hydrogen

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### Back2Basics: Martian Day/ Sol

- Coincidentally, the duration of a Martian day aka 'Sol' is within a few per cent of that of an Earth day, which has led to the use of analogous time units.
- A sol is slightly longer than an Earth day. It is approximately 24 hours, 39 minutes, 35 seconds long.
- A Martian year is approximately 668 sols, equivalent to approximately 687 Earth days.
- Mars has an axial tilt and a rotation period similar to those of Earth.
- Thus, it experiences seasons of spring, summer, autumn and winter much like Earth.

### [pib] Who was Thiruvalluvar?

Mains Paper 1: Arts & Culture

### Note4Students

From UPSC perspective, the following things are important :

**Prelims level :** Thiruvalluvar

**Mains level :** Sangam Literature



The Prime Minister has extended his venerations to Thiruvalluvar on the Thiruvalluvar Day.

*Read everything about Sangam Literature from your basic sources.*

### Who was Thiruvalluvar?

- Thiruvalluvar is fondly referred to as Valluvar by Tamils was born during 4<sup>th</sup> -5<sup>th</sup> century CE.
- His 'Thirukkural', a collection of 1,330 couplets ('kurals' in Tamil), are an essential part of every Tamil household.
- It holds importance in the same way the Bhagavad Gita or the Ramayana are in traditional North Indian Hindu households.
- Thiruvalluvar is revered as an ancient saint, poet, and a philosopher by Tamils, irrespective of their religion.
- He is an essential anchor for Tamils in tracing their cultural roots; Tamils are taught to learn his couplets word-for-word and to follow his teachings in their day-to-day living.

## 5G Technology and India's preparedness

Mains Paper 3: S&T - Applications In Everyday Life

### Note4Students

From UPSC perspective, the following things are important :

**Prelims level :** 5G technology

**Mains level :** 5G technology and its rollout



The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) has sought inputs from telcos and other industry experts on the sale and use of radiofrequency spectrum over the next 10 years, including the 5G bands.

**Try this PYQ:**

**Q. In India, which of the following review the independent regulators in sectors like telecommunications, insurance, electricity, etc.?**

1. Ad Hoc Committees set up by the Parliament
2. Parliamentary Department Related Standing Committees
3. Finance Commission
4. Financial Sector Legislative Reforms Commission
5. NITI Aayog

**Select the correct answer using the code given below:**

- (a) 1 and 2
- (b) 1, 3 and 4
- (c) 3, 4 and 5
- (d) 2 and 5

**What is 5G technology?**

- 5G or fifth generation is the latest upgrade in the long-term evolution (LTE) mobile broadband networks.
- It mainly works in 3 bands, namely low, mid and high-frequency spectrum — all of which have their own uses as well as limitations.

**Three bands of 5G**

- The **low band spectrum** has shown great promise in terms of coverage and speed of internet and data exchange, the maximum speed is limited to 100 Mbps (Megabits per second).
- This means that while telcos can use and install it for commercial cellphones users who may not have specific demands for very high-speed internet, the low band spectrum may not be optimal for specialised needs of the industry.
- The **mid-band spectrum**, on the other hand, offers higher speeds compared to the low band but has limitations in terms of coverage area and penetration of signals.
- Telcos and companies, which have taken the lead on 5G, have indicated that this band may be used by industries and specialised factory units for building captive networks that can be moulded into the needs of that particular industry.
- The **high-band spectrum** offers the highest speed of all the three bands, but has extremely limited coverage and signal penetration strength.
- Internet speeds in the high-band spectrum of 5G have been tested to be as high as 20 Gbps (gigabits per second), while, in most cases, the maximum internet data speed in 4G has been recorded at 1 Gbps.

### Where does India stand in the 5G technology race?

- On par with the global players, India had, in 2018, planned to start 5G services as soon as possible, with an aim to capitalize on the better network speeds and strength that the technology promised.
- Indian private telecom players have been urging the DoT to lay out a clear road map of spectrum allocation and 5G frequency bands so that they would be able to plan the rollout of their services accordingly.
- One big hurdle, however, is the lack of flow of cash and adequate capital with some companies due to their **AGR dues**.

### Global progress on 5G

- More than governments, global telecom companies have started building 5G networks and rolling it out to their customers on a trial basis.
- In countries like the US, some companies have taken the lead when it comes to rolling out commercial 5G for their users.
- A South Korean company, which had started researching on 5G technology way back in 2011, has, on the other hand, take the lead when it comes to building the hardware for 5G networks for several companies.

## What is a Tripuri Risa?

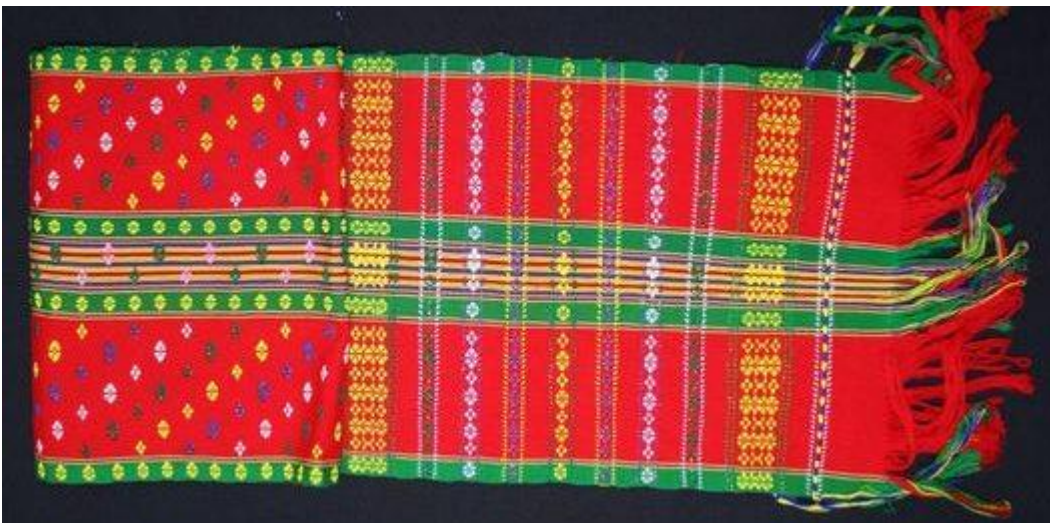
Mains Paper 1: Arts & Culture

### Note4Students

From UPSC perspective, the following things are important :

**Prelims level** : Tripuri Handloom

**Mains level** : Not Much



Tripura CM has of late made a statement to sport the Risa, a customary hand-woven cloth used by Tripura's

indigenous tribal communities.

**Which of the pairs given above is/are correct? (CSP 2018)**

- a) 1 only
- b) 1 and 2
- c) 3 only
- d) 2 and 3

**What is Risa?**

- Risa is one of the three parts of customary Tripuri female attire, the other two being the Rignai and Rikutu.
- The Risa, which is essentially a customary hand-woven cloth, is used as headgear, stole, female upper cloth or presented to honour a distinguished recipient.
- The Rignai is primarily used to cover the lower part of the body and literally translates into 'to wear'. The Rituku covers the upper half of the body, wrapping it all around.
- However, it is also used as a 'chunri' or a 'pallu' of the Indian saree. It is also used to cover the head of newly married Tripuri women.

**Its cultural significance**

- Apart from its beautiful designs, the Risa plays a host of crucial social utilities.
- Adolescent Tripuri girls are first given Risa to wear when she reaches 12-14 years in an event called Risa Sormani.
- The event involves prayers to a Lampra god, where her elder women pray for her wellbeing throughout her life.
- However, it is also used in religious festivals like the Garia Puja, a customary festival of the tribal communities, or as a head turban by male folks during weddings and festivals, as a cummerbund over dhoti or headscarf.
- The cloth is even used as a makeshift baby carrier on the mother's back.

## Why do Viruses mutate?

Mains Paper 3: Awareness In The Fields Of It, Space, Computers, Robotics, Nano-Technology, Bio-Technology, Pharma Sector & Health Science

**Note4Students**

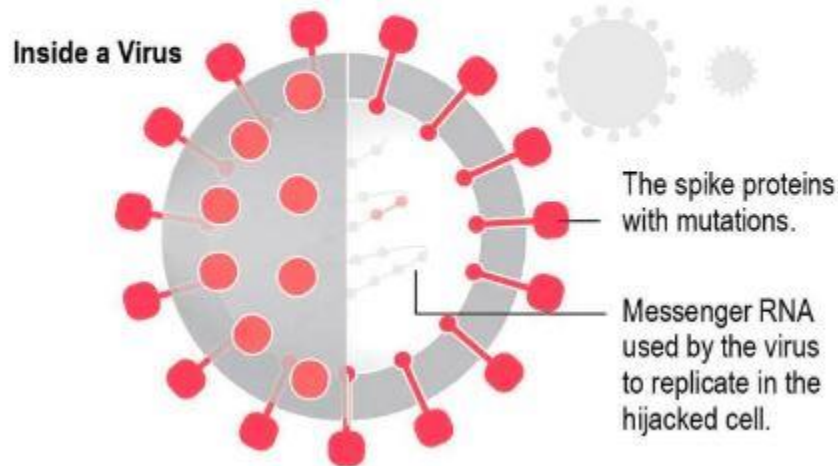
From UPSC perspective, the following things are important :

**Prelims level** : Virus mutation

**Mains level** : Vaccination challenges for coronavirus

## The new coronavirus variant

The new variant of the virus that causes COVID-19 has several mutations on its spike proteins. These spikes are used by the virus to attach to and infect cells. They also are what vaccines and antibody drugs target.



SARS-CoV-2 variants have emerged independently in several countries, and research published over the past week indicates that the virus is changing more quickly than was once believed.

**Q.H1N1 virus is sometimes mentioned in the news with reference to which one of the following diseases?**

- (a) AIDS
- (b) Bird flu
- (c) Dengue
- (d) Swine flu

### Mutation of Virus

- Mutation, an alteration in the genetic material (the genome) of a cell of a living organism or of a virus that is more or less permanent and that can be transmitted to the cell's or the virus's descendants.
- Like all life, viruses carry a genetic code in the form of nucleic acids — either DNA or RNA.
- When cells multiply, the DNA within them replicates as well, to make copies for the new cells.
- During replication, random errors are introduced into the new DNA, much like spelling errors when we write.
- While the errors in DNA virus genomes can be corrected by the error-correcting function of cells in which they replicate, there are no enzymes in cells to correct RNA errors.
- Therefore, RNA viruses accumulate more genetic changes (mutations) than DNA viruses.

### Effect of mutation on the virus

- Evolution requires not just mutations, but also selection.
- While most mutations are deleterious to the virus, if some allow a selective advantage — say better infectivity, transmission, or escape from immunity — then the new viruses out-compete the older ones in a population.



- The mutations can be synonymous (silent) or non-synonymous (non-silent); the latter also changes an amino acid (protein building block) at that position in the coded protein.

### **Mutations in COVID**

- As of January 26, about 29,000 infections are attributed to UK variants from 63 countries, many due to local transmission.

### **Why is it harmful?**

- Viruses with mutations within the receptor-binding domain (RBD) of the Spike protein have the most potential to evade antibodies that develop as a result of natural infection or vaccination.
- The RBD binds the cellular receptor allowing the virus to infect cells, and anti-RBD antibodies neutralize the virus.
- Such mutations were recently found in variant viruses that emerged in the UK, South Africa and Brazil.

### **Testing of mutation**

- Indirect tests are done in laboratories to assess if an emerging variant might escape antibodies developed after natural infection or vaccination.
- Serum (the blood components that contain antibodies) from recovered patients or vaccinated people, and antibodies are known to neutralize the original virus, are tested.
- Serial dilutions of the serum or antibodies are separately mixed with a fixed amount of the original and variant viruses, and the mixture is added to cells in culture.
- After a period of incubation, cells are washed and stained. Cells infected and killed by viruses multiplying within them appear as clear zones (plaques) on a dark background.
- The effectiveness of serum or antibody is expressed as an inhibitory concentration (IC) or plaque reduction neutralisation titer (PRNT) value.
- The IC<sub>50</sub> or PRNT<sub>50</sub> value is the reciprocal dilution of serum or antibody that neutralises 50 per cent viruses in the sample.

### **India's response**

- Only the UK variant viruses have so far been reported from India — and that too, in travellers.
- There is no reported local transmission, but considering its increased infectivity, this is likely to happen.
- The evidence so far suggests that current vaccines would still protect against the UK variant, even if with reduced efficacy.
- The evidence at this time, though of concern, does not indicate that current vaccines are failing.
- But this has to be watched carefully, and all efforts made to limit transmission between people, which drives mutations and the emergence of variants.

## **What is Dark Matter?**

Mains Paper 3: Awareness In The Fields Of It, Space, Computers, Robotics, Nano-Technology, Bio-Technology, Pharma Sector & Health Science

### **Note4Students**

From UPSC perspective, the following things are important :

**Prelims level :** Dark Matter

**Mains level :** Dark Matter, Black Holes



Space scientists from the University of Sussex have found a new way to know more about dark matter. They have narrowed down the range of masses within which particles that could make up dark matter may lie in.

**What is the news about?**

- Around 95 % of the Universe is unknown to human beings.
- It is often referred to as dark which has nothing to do with the colour of any substance but to do with the unknown nature of cosmic entities known as dark matter and dark energy.

*Trending in news these days is the Quantum Technology. (as it used to be until last year were- the Internet of Things (IoT) CSP 2019, Artificial Intelligence (AI) etc.)*

**What is Dark Matter?**

- Dark matter is composed of particles that do not absorb, reflect, or emit light, so they cannot be detected by observing electromagnetic radiation.
- Dark matter is a form of matter thought to account for approximately 85% of the matter in the universe and about a quarter of its total mass-energy density or about  $2.241 \times 10^{-27}$  kg/m<sup>3</sup>.

**What does the research say?**

- Scientists carried out the research using quantum gravity, a field of study that tries to combine two of

Einstein's concepts — **quantum physics** and **general relativity theory of gravity**.

- This is the first time anyone has thought of using what we know about quantum gravity to calculate the mass range for dark matter.
- Their research shows that the dark matter particles can neither be super light nor super heavy unless there is a force acting on it that is yet unknown.

### Quantum gravity: The concept

- Quantum gravity is a field of theoretical physics that seeks to describe gravity according to the principles of quantum mechanics.
- Quantum mechanics is a fundamental theory in physics which describes nature at the smallest scales of energy levels of atoms and subatomic particles.
- Here quantum effects cannot be ignored, such as in the vicinity of black holes or similar compact astrophysical objects where the effects of gravity are strong, such as neutron stars.

### Significance of the findings

- This might help in finding out more about this mysterious force. There are currently four known forces in the Universe — gravitational, electromagnetic, weak and strong.
- Scientists estimate that roughly 68 per cent of the Universe is made up of dark energy which is responsible for the accelerated expansion of the Universe.
- Another 27 per cent is a dark matter whose existence was inferred from the observation that ordinary matter in galaxies, including the Milky Way, is far less than that required by gravity to hold the galaxies together.

### Why does the 'Dark Matter' matter?

- Dark matter's gravitational effects are also necessary to explain the motions of clusters of galaxies and the structure of the entire Universe at the largest scale.
- On smaller scales, dark matter is too diffused to impact the motion of the Solar System, Earth or the origin and evolution of humans in any significant way.
- But the nature of that dark matter is still unclear. It is most likely made of particles that do not couple to light because of which humans cannot see them.

## Security Issues

### [pib] Exercise Kavach

Mains Paper 3: Various Security Forces, Agencies & Their Mandates

### Note4Students

From UPSC perspective, the following things are important :

**Prelims level** : Exercise Kavach

**Mains level : NA**

A large scale all-services exercise 'Exercise Kavach' will be conducted next week under the aegis of the Andaman and Nicobar Command (ANC), the only Joint Forces Command of the country.

- The tri-services exercise aims to fine-tune joint war-fighting capabilities and SOPs towards enhancing operational synergy in the Andaman Sea and Bay of Bengal.
- This exercise would involve assets of Indian Army, Indian Navy, Indian Air Force and Indian Coast Guard.
- The exercise involves synergized application of maritime surveillance assets, coordinated air and maritime strikes, air defence, submarine and landing operations.
- Concurrently Joint Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) exercise involving various technical, electronic and human intelligence from three services will be conducted.
- The ISR exercise will validate the capabilities of intelligence gathering from space, air, land and sea-based assets/ sensors, its analysis and sharing to achieve battlefield transparency.
- It would carry out amphibious landing operations, air landed operation, helicopters-borne insertion of Special Forces from sea culminating in tactical follow-on operations on land.



# SECTION 3

## Practice Questions with Answers

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1) Which of the following banks has signed an agreement With

E) Bangladesh

1) Government has extended Income Tax Returns Filing Date To which date?

A) January 11

B) January 12

C) January 10

D) January 15

E) January 18

2) Veteran broadcaster Indira Joseph Venniyor who passed away was a renowned \_\_\_\_\_.

A) Director

B) Producer

C) Actor

D) Broadcaster

E) Singer

3) Government has extended deadline for FASTag till which date?

A) February 11

B) February 13

C) February 17

D) February 18

E) February 15

4) Which state assembly has passed a Bill to abolish all government-run Madrassas?

A) Bihar

B) Assam

C) Haryana

D) Kerala

E) Madhya Pradesh

5) Which state is organizing Exhibition Raag-Bhopali being organized to promote Zari-Zardozi?

A) Nagaland

B) Assam

C) Madhya Pradesh

D) Bihar

E) Chhattisgarh

6) Navy and which organization has conducted a maiden trial of 1st indigenous air-droppable container?

A) BEL

B) BHEL

C) BDL

D) DRDO

E) ISRO

7) Which bank has introduced a one-stop integrated travel marketplace Travel Now?

A) Axis

B) Yes

C) ICICI

D) SBI

E) DBS

**8) Union Cabinet has approved a Multi-Modal Logistics Hub & Multi-Modal Transport Hub (MMTH) at \_\_\_\_\_.**

A) Indore

B) Noida

C) Chandigarh

D) Bhopal

E) Surat

**9) India's First Testbed for Autonomous Navigation Systems has been launched at which institution?**

A) IIT Roorkee

B) IIT Bombay

C) IIT Delhi

D) IIT Hyderabad

E) IIT Madras

**10) Which institution has developed a plaque therapy successfully used on eye cancer patients in AIIMS?**

A) BHEL

B) BDL

C) BARC

D) ISRO

E) DRDO

**11) World Braille Day Observed is observed on which date?**

A) January 1

B) January 14

C) January 4

D) January 15

E) January 12

**12) Shantanu Mohapatra who died at 84 in Bhubaneswar was an eminent \_\_\_\_\_.**

A) Actor

B) Writer

C) Director

D) Musician

E) Dancer

**13) Indian SARS-CoV-2 Genomics Consortium (INSACOG) has been launched under the leadership of \_\_\_\_\_.**

A) MoH & FW

B) AIIMS

C) CSIR

D) ICMR

E) NCDC

**14) Drug regulator has given final approval for**

**Covid-19 vaccines of which of the following?**

- A) Sputnik V
- B) SII
- C) Cipla
- D) Pfizer
- E) Ranbaxy

- C) 2017
- D) 2016
- E) 2015

**15) Which organization has released data on Police Organizations?**

- A) RPF
- B) CRPF
- C) CISF
- D) BPRD
- E) NitiAayog

**18) Government has extended the benefit of the RoDTEP scheme to all export goods to boost exports based on the recommendation of \_\_\_\_\_ committee.**

- A) Ramesh Chand
- B) VK Paul
- C) V Srinivasan
- D) GK Pillai
- E) Suresh Mathur

**16) Who among the following has released the inaugural issue of 'National Police K-9 Journal'?**

- A) Anurag Thakur
- B) Prahlad Patel
- C) Amit Shah
- D) NarendraModi
- E) Venkiah Naidu

**19) The government of which state has Permitted all shops to remain open for 24x7?**

- A) Telangana
- B) Andhra Pradesh
- C) West Bengal
- D) Kerala
- E) Karnataka

**17) RBI has recently introduced the Digital Payments Index with the base year as \_\_\_\_\_.**

- A) 2019
- B) 2018

**20) ISRO to launch the first satellite developed entirely by which country's space agency?**

- A) US
- B) Japan
- C) Brazil
- D) France



E) Germany

A) 1996

**21) The Journalist Day is observed by the Maharashtra state government on which date every year?**

B) 1993

C) 1994

A) January 11

D) 1995

B) January 12

E) 1997

C) January 6

**25) The government of which state has launched the 'KisanKalyan Mission' to Double Farmers' Income?**

D) January 7

A) Bihar

E) January 3

B) Madhya Pradesh

**22) Who among the following will head the high-level group for South Asia energy security?**

C) Chhattisgarh

A) Prahlad Patel

D) Haryana

B) G Kishan Reddy

E) Uttar Pradesh

C) VK Paul

**26) Who among the following has launched the Freight Business Development Portal?**

D) Ram VinayShahi

A) Nitin Gadkari

E) Ramesh Chand

B) Anurag Thakur

**23) Who among the following will head the 51st IFFI's International Jury?**

C) Piyush Goyal

A) Quentin Tarantino

D) Narendra Modi

B) SmritiIrani

E) Narendra Singh Tomar

C) Anupam Kher

**27) Who among the following has launched the Toycathon 2021 launched to promote manufacturing of indigenous toys?**

D) Shekar Kapur

A) Prahlad Patel

E) Pablo Cesar

B) Narendra Modi

**24) Boris Johnson has cancelled the Republic Day visit as the UK has locked down. The last British leader to be the Chief guest was in which year?**

C) Anurag Thakur

D) Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank

E) S Jaishankar

**28) Anil Panachoran who passed away recently was an eminent \_\_\_\_.**

A) Director

B) Actor

C) Writer

D) Dancer

E) Poet

**29) Which Bank has launched a video KYC facility for opening savings bank accounts?**

A) Axis

B) HDFC

C) IDBI

D) SBI

E) ICICI

**30) World Bank has signed a \_\_\_\_ million project to improve waterways in West Bengal.**

A) 125

B) 120

C) 115

D) 105

E) 110

**31) World Hindi Day is observed on which date?**

A) January 11

B) January 12

C) January 10

D) January 13

E) January 15

**32) PM Modi will head a panel to commemorate \_\_\_\_ birth anniversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose.**

A) 121st

B) 122nd

C) 123rd

D) 125th

E) 124th

**33) Who will address the National Youth Parliament Festival 2021?**

A) Rajnath Singh

B) Venkiah Naidu

C) Anurag Thakur

D) Ram Nath Kovind

E) Narendra Modi

**34) The Government has issued guidelines for renewal of International Driving License while travelling abroad. The applications can be made through \_\_\_\_.**

A) Freecharge

B) Paytm

C) SBI Card

D) VISA

E) Mastercard

**35) India has now become the \_\_\_\_\_ largest manufacturer of PPE kits and suits.**

A) 6th

B) 2nd

C) 3rd

D) 4th

E) 5th

**36) Indian Railways has attained a train speed of \_\_\_\_\_ kmph on Golden Quadrilateral – Golden Diagonal route.**

A) 150

B) 145

C) 130

D) 125

E) 140

**37) The Centre has provided guidelines for Migrant Children, asking states to carry out proper identification for children of age group \_\_\_\_\_.**

A) 8 to 18

B) 7 to 18

C) 4 to 18

D) 6 to 18

E) 5 to 15

**38) According to Union education minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' \_\_\_\_\_ crores have been spent for the safe movement of wildlife on the National highway.**

A) 1350

B) 1300

C) 1100

D) 1250

E) 1200

**39) Who among the following has dedicated the coastal research vessel to the Nation at Chennai port trust?**

A) Prahlad Patel

B) Narendra Modi

C) Harsh Vardhan

D) Amit Shah

E) Anurag Thakur

**40) Prime Minister Narendra Modi has inaugurated the \_\_\_\_\_ edition of the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas convention.**

A) 11th

B) 12th

C) 13th

D) 16th

E) 15th

**41) Indian Armed Forces Veterans Day is being observed On which date?**

- A) January 11
- B) January 12
- C) January 14
- D) January 13
- E) January 15

**42) Tesla will set up India's subsidiary in which city?**

- A) Raipur
- B) Chandigarh
- C) Puducherry
- D) Bengaluru
- E) Chennai

**43) Aviation services have recently been launched between Chandigarh and which city?**

- A) Dehradun
- B) Hyderabad
- C) Chennai
- D) Delhi
- E) Hisar

**44) Who among the following has unveiled India's first indigenously developed driverless metro car?**

- A) Prahlad Patel

- B) Venkiah Naidu
- C) Harsh Vardhan
- D) Rajnath Singh
- E) Narendra Modi

**45) Indian Army Day is being Observed On which date?**

- A) January 11
- B) January 15
- C) January 13
- D) January 16
- E) January 17

**46) Which edition of the Dhaka International Film Festival will pay tribute to Satyajit Ray?**

- A) 15th
- B) 16th
- C) 19th
- D) 18th
- E) 17th

**47) India's first Fire Park will come up in which state?**

- A) Punjab
- B) Karnataka
- C) Maharashtra
- D) Kerala



E) Odisha

**48) Dr Harsh Vardhan inaugurates the new entity CSIR-NIScPR in which city?**

A) Chennai

B) Hyderabad

C) New Delhi

D) Chandigarh

E) Pune

**49) ICT Grand Challenge for development of 'smart water supply measurement and monitoring system' is being held by which ministry?**

A) Ministry of Earth Sciences

B) Ministry of Education

C) Ministry of Human Resource Development

D) Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology

E) Ministry of

**50) RBI forms 6 Member working group to study digital lending activities of the regulated and unregulated players, the panel headed by?**

A) Ajay Kumar Choudhary

B) Jayant Kumar Dash

C) Vikram Mehta

D) P Vasudevan

E) Manoranjan Mishra

**51) NDRF recently celebrated its \_\_\_\_\_ Raising Day On January 18.**

A) 13th

B) 12th

C) 16th

D) 15th

E) 14th

**52) Who among the following has inaugurated the Road Safety Month?**

A) Piyush Goyal

B) Nitin Gadkari

C) Prahlad Patel

D) Narendra Modi

E) Anurag Thakur

**53) The US has designated which countries as its 'major strategic partners'?**

A) Iraq and UAE

B) Qatar and UAE

C) Qatar and Oman

D) Oman and UAE

E) UAE and Bahrain

**54) PM NarendraModi has flagged off \_\_\_\_\_trains to boost connectivity to the Statue of Unity.**

A) 4

B) 5

C) 6

D) 8

E) 7

**55) CARE has lowered the Centre's fiscal deficit projection to \_\_\_\_\_ per cent of GDP.**

A) 6.6

B) 6.5

C) 7.8

D) 7.5

E) 7.3

**56) Which space agency has targeted the final test of 'world's most powerful rocket'?**

A) JAXA

B) NASA

C) CNES

D) ISRO

E) ROSCOMOS

**57) Pakistan PM Imran Khan has given special permit for royals of which country to hunt houbara bustard?**

A) Turkey

B) Iraq

C) Saudi Arabia

D) Oman

E) UAE

**58) Union Health Minister Dr. Harsh Vardhan has digitally chaired \_\_\_\_\_ the session of the**

**Executive Board of WHO.**

A) 144

B) 145

C) 146

D) 148

E) 147

**59) India has signed anMoU with which country for Agreement to Promote movement of Skilled Workers?**

A) Israel

B) Japan

C) France

D) Germany

E) Sweden

**60) Which state will launch the 'One school, One IAS' programme?**

A) Uttar Pradesh

B) Haryana

C) Karnataka

D) Madhya Pradesh

E) Kerala

**61) Who among the following has assumed the additional charge of Ministry of AYUSH?**

A) Anurag Thakur

B) Amit Shah

C) Kiren Rijju

D) NS Tomar

E) Prahlad Patel

**62) The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has notified Inter Country Transport Vehicles Rules, 2021 where the state authority has been given power to grant Inter country transport permit which will be valid for a period of \_\_\_\_\_ year from issue.**

A) 3

B) 2.5

C) 2

D) 1

E) 1.5

**63) The Prime minister of which country and his entire cabinet has quit over the welfare scandal?**

A) Sweden

B) Spain

C) Denmark

D) Iceland

E) Netherlands

**64) India has signed a pact with which country on submarine rescue support?**

A) Brunei

B) Vietnam

C) Thailand

D) Singapore

E) Malaysia

**65) Union Minister DharmendraPradhan has inaugurated a LNG truck-loading unit of Shell India in which state?**

A) Karnataka

B) Kerala

C) Madhya Pradesh

D) Gujarat

E) Haryana

**66) Who among the following is all set to become the 1st woman fighter pilot to take part in the Republic Day parade?**

A) Anila Aggarwal

B) Bhawana Kanth

C) Radha Sharma

D) Neelima Rao

E) Deeksha Gupta

**67) India's first Labour Movement museum is all set to come up in which state?**

A) Andhra Pradesh

B) Uttar Pradesh

C) Kerala

D) Madhya Pradesh

E) Haryana

**68) The Chief Minister of which state has announced the 'Horticulture Development Mission'?**

- A) Madhya Pradesh
- B) Chhattisgarh
- C) Uttar Pradesh
- D) Haryana
- E) Gujarat

**69) Which zoo has been renamed as Balasaheb Thackeray Zoological Park?**

- A) Arignar Anna Zoological Park
- B) Indira Gandhi Zoological Park
- C) Gorewada International Zoo
- D) Mysore Zoo
- E) Nandankanan Zoological Park

**70) Kerala has become the \_\_\_\_\_ State to complete ease of doing business reforms.**

- A) 4th
- B) 5th
- C) 6th
- D) 8th
- E) 7th

**71) Indian Railways renames iconic Howrah-Kalka Mail as \_\_\_\_\_ Express.**

- A) Azad Hind
- B) Swaraj
- C) Netaji

- D) Subash
- E) Bose

**72) The Chief minister of which state has inaugurated the state's first child-friendly police station?**

- A) Chhattisgarh
- B) Uttar Pradesh
- C) Madhya Pradesh
- D) Uttarakhand
- E) Bihar

**73) The Supreme Court has upheld which section of the IBC to make immune successful bidders for a corporate debtor from any investigation by investigating agencies?**

- A) 9
- B) 7A
- C) 18
- D) 11
- E) 32A

**74) DPIIT has recently which portal to act as a bridge between citizens, industries and the government to minimise burdensome compliances?**

- A) Atma Nirbhar Portal
- B) Regulatory Compliance Portal
- C) Shakti Portal
- D) Achievers Portal



E) Business First Portal

A) PNB

**75) RBI has imposed a \_\_\_\_\_ crores penalty on Standard Chartered Bank.**

B) Axis

A) 4

C) SBI

B) 3.5

D) ICICI

C) 2

E) Bandhan

D) 3

**79) India's longest Road Arch Bridge has recently been inaugurated in which state?**

E) 2.5

A) Tripura

**76) Who among the following has inaugurated the new 4-lane Thaltej-Shilaj-Rancharda railway overbridge in Ahmedabad?**

B) Manipur

A) Nitin Patel

C) Nagaland

B) Venkiah Naidu

D) Assam

C) Anurag Thakur

E) Meghalaya

D) Amit Shah

**80) Dr Harsh Vardhan has recently inaugurated the \_\_\_\_\_ Edition of MASGRADE 2021 organized by FICCI.**

E) Narendra Modi

A) 5th

**77) SBI, ICICI Bank and HDFC Bank remain systemically important banks. RBI has issued the framework for dealing with D-SIB in which year?**

B) 9th

A) 2012

C) 7th

B) 2011

D) 6th

C) 2015

E) 8th

D) 2013

**81) International Customs Day is observed on which of the following date?**

E) 2014

A) January 21

**78) Which of the following Bank has unveiled the Aura Credit Card with health, wellness solutions?**

B) January 23

C) January 26

D) January 25

E) January 29

**82) Which of the following has become the first state to have 2 airstrips on expressways for landing, take-off of fighter planes?**

A) Bihar

B) Madhya Pradesh

C) Chhattisgarh

D) Uttar Pradesh

E) Haryana

**83) The Prime Minister of which country has quit Mongolia after protests in the capital Ulaanbaatar over the government's handling of the Covid-19 pandemic?**

A) Singapore

B) Finland

C) Vietnam

D) Brunei

E) Mongolia

**84) SpaceX has broken India's record by launching \_\_\_\_\_ satellites on a single rocket.**

A) 95

B) 126

C) 117

D) 143

E) 135

**85) Which country has beaten the US as the**

**largest recipient of FDI, receiving \$163 billion in 2020?**

A) Singapore

B) China

C) India

D) UAE

E) Qatar

**86) Which armed force has launched Operation 'SardHawa' at Rajasthan border?**

A) RPF

B) RAF

C) BSF

D) CRPF

E) CISF

**87) India is Celebrating its \_\_\_\_\_ Republic Day on 26 January 2021.**

A) 73rd

B) 69th

C) 70th

D) 72nd

E) 71st

**88) In UP Yogi Adityanath has launched which app for youth to explore self-employment?**

A) Udyam Vikar

B) Udyam Abhyas

C) Udyam Sahayak

D) Udyam Sakshi

E) Udyam Sarathi

**89) Narendra Luther who passed away at the age of 89 was an eminent \_\_\_\_\_.**

A) Producer

B) Historian

C) Singer

D) Actor

E) Director

**90) 20-year-old ShrishtiGoswami has become the chief minister of which state for a day?**

A) Kerala

B) Assam

C) Uttarakhand

D) Haryana

E) Punjab

**91) International Data privacy day is observed on which of the following day?**

A) January 21

B) January 14

C) January 28

D) January 17

E) January 19

**92) Uddhav Thackeray has recently inaugurated a**

**Zoological Park in which city?**

A) Aurangabad

B) Nashik

C) Solapur

D) Nagpur

E) Pune

**93) India has recently pledged \_\_\_\_\_ for the UN Peacebuilding Fund for 2021.**

A) \$170,000

B) \$180,000

C) \$200,000

D) \$100,000

E) \$150,000

**94) Who among the following has recently chaired the meeting of PRAGATI, the ICT-based platform?**

A) Prahlad Patel

B) Narendra Modi

C) Amit Shah

D) Anurag Thakur

E) Nirmala Sitharaman

**95) Who among the following has addressed the NCC rally in New Delhi?**

A) Ram NathKovind

B) Venkiah Naidu

- C) Prahlad Patel
- D) Narendra Modi
- E) Amit Shah

**96) Bharat Parv has begun on a virtual platform showcasing the glory of the nation recently. It has been observed since which year?**

- A) 2012
- B) 2013
- C) 2014
- D) 2015
- E) 2016

**97) Liberation War fighter from which of the following country has been awarded Padma Shri recently?**

- A) Singapore
- B) Nepal
- C) Bhutan
- D) Bangladesh
- E) Sri Lanka

**98) Who among the following has recently flagged-off a fleet of electric buses in Andaman and Nicobar Islands?**

- A) Amit Shah
- B) DK Joshi
- C) Narendra Modi
- D) Anurag Thakur

- E) Prahlad Patel

**99) Which state has been selected for Special Award for Information Technology applications in Elections by the Election Commission of India?**

- A) Uttar Pradesh
- B) Karnataka
- C) Meghalaya
- D) Kerala
- E) Assam

**100) Venkaiah Naidu has inaugurated an integrated weapons design centre in which of the following cities recently?**

- A) Chennai
- B) Bengaluru
- C) Surat
- D) Pune
- E) Hyderabad



## ANSWERS

**1) Answer: C**

The government extended the deadline to file income tax return (ITR) for individuals by 10 days to January 10, 2021.

Prior to that the deadline was December 31, 2020

This is the third time that the government has extended the deadline to file ITR first from the normal deadline of July 31 to November 30, 2020, and then to December 31, 2020.

The last date for filing ITR has been extended for those taxpayers whose filings using ITR-1 and ITR-4 forms are not required to be audited.

**2) Answer: D**

Indira Joseph Venniyor, Renowned broadcaster, All India Radio Veteran, and the first English news announcer of Travancore Radio, passed away. She was 94.

She was the wife of well-known literary scholar and art critic the late E.M.J. Venniyoor.

She is a lover of music and performing arts, she encouraged budding professionals in the fields.

**3) Answer: E**

The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has extended the deadline for FASTags for all vehicles in India till February 15, 2021.

Earlier, the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) had announced to completely do away with cash transactions for paying toll charges from January 1.

The new deadline for FASTags to be made mandatory to cross a toll plaza has been set on February 15, 2021.

The compulsory use of FASTags will help vehicles pass through the toll plazas swiftly, preventing long

queues.

**4) Answer: B**

The Assam Legislative Assembly passed the repeal provincialisation of Madrassa Bill, 2020 to abolish all government-run Madrassas in the state and convert them to general schools.

The new act will come into effect from April 1, 2021. The Bill was tabled in the assembly by the state government on December 28, 2020.

Assam, the state government has decided to make 'education secular' and 198 high madrasas and 542 other madrasas in the state will operate as any other general educational institute and will not give admission to students for theological studies.

**5) Answer: C**

Madhya Pradesh Government is Organizing an exhibition called Raag-Bhopali is being organized to promote Zari-Zardozi crafts of Bhopal.

The exhibition is being organised till 30 December in GauharMahal, Bhopal. Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan while inaugurating the exhibition on that fading art of Zari-Zardozi will be revived.

Different kinds of zari work

Zardozi: This is a heavy and more elaborate embroidery work which uses varieties of gold threads, spangles, beads and gota.

It is used to embellish wedding outfits, heavy coats, cushions, curtains etc.

Kamdani : This is a lighter needlework which is done on lighter material like scarves, veils, and caps.

Mina Work: This is thus called owing to its resemblance with enamel work. The embroidery is done in gold.

**6) Answer: D**

Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) along with the Indian Navy conducted the successful maiden test trial of 'SAHAYAK-NG' India's

first indigenously designed and developed Air Dropped Container from IL 38SD aircraft (Indian Navy) off the coast of Goa.

The trial was conducted by the Indian Navy to enhance its operational logistics capabilities and provide critical engineering stores to ships that are deployed more than 2000 kilometers from the coast.

SAHAYAK-NG is an advanced version of SAHAYAK Mk I.

The newly developed GPS aided air dropped container is having the capability to carry a payload that weighs up to 50 kilograms and can be dropped from heavy aircraft.

SAHAYAK-NG container was developed by two DRDO laboratories i.e. NSTL, Visakhapatnam and ADRDE, Agra along with Avantel for GPS integration.

**7) Answer: E**

DBS Bank India introduced a one-stop travel marketplace within the digibank app.

Named as Travel Now, the platform enables customers to browse and book flights, bus tickets and hotels across hundreds of destinations both within and outside of India.

With the help of this new platform customers will now be able opt for travel insurance, offered by Bharti AXA General Insurance, with an automated claims process for flight cancellation, and flight departure and arrival delays of more than 60 minutes.

**8) Answer: B**

The government approved a multi-modal logistics and transport hub (MMTH) at Greater Noida in Uttar Pradesh.

For a view to making India a strong player in the global value chain. The Union Cabinet also approved a proposal to set up industrial corridor nodes at Krishnapatnam and Tumakuru under CBIC.

The proposals have a total estimated cost of Rs 7,725 crore and an estimated employment generation of more than 2.8 lakh persons

The Union Cabinet has approved proposals of Department of Promotion of Industry & Internal Trade (DPIIT) for construction of various trunk infrastructure components, which includes:

Krishnapatnam Industrial Area in Andhra Pradesh (estimated cost of the project of Rs. 2,139.44 crore)

**9) Answer: D**

Union Minister of Education Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank virtually laid the foundation stone of 'TiHAN-IIT Hyderabad, India's first Testbed for Autonomous Navigation Systems (Terrestrial and Aerial) at IIT Hyderabad.

The Department of Science and Technology (DST), Government of India, has sanctioned Rs. 135 crores to IIT Hyderabad under the National Mission on Interdisciplinary Cyber-Physical Systems (NM-ICPS) to set up a Technology Innovation Hub on Autonomous Navigation and Data Acquisition Systems.

The Technology Innovation Hub on Autonomous Navigation Systems for Unmanned Aerial Vehicles and Remotely Operated Vehicles at IIT Hyderabad, known as 'TiHAN Foundation' has been incorporated as a Section-8 company by the institute in June 2020.

**10) Answer: C**

The Bhabha Atomic Research Centre in Mumbai has developed an eye cancer therapy in the form of the first indigenous Ruthenium 106 Plaque for the treatment of ocular tumours.

The handling of plaque is very convenient for surgeons and it has been acknowledged to be at par with international standards.

About Ocular Tumours:

Ocular tumors are tumors inside the eye.

They are collections of cells that grow and multiply abnormally and form masses.

They can be benign or malignant. In adults the most common type is metastatic, from another part of the body (lung, breast, prostate, etc).

About Ruthenium-106:

Ruthenium-106 is a radioactive form of the rare heavy metal ruthenium, which is a "platinum group" metal similar to platinum.

**11) Answer: C**

World Braille Day is observed every year on 4 January to celebrate the importance of braille, a form of communication and written language for people who are blind and visually challenged.

The day commemorates the birth anniversary of Louis Braille, the man who invented braille in the year 1809.

Aim of the day : The day aims to raise awareness about braille language and other forms of communication, As many establishments such as banks, restaurants, hospitals still don't offer braille versions of their printed materials, the day serves as a reminder of the importance of accessibility and independence for people who are visually impaired.

**12) Answer: D**

Legendary Odia music director ShantanuMohapatra died in Bhubaneswar on December 30 .He was 84 years old.

Born at Baripada in Mayurbhanj district in 1936.

ShantanuMohapatra was the first Odia music director to work with acclaimed singers and music composers of the Hindi film industry.

These included LataMangeshkar (Surjyamukhi), Mohd Rafi (Arundhati), Manna Dey (Surjyamukhi), UshaMangeskar (Arundhati) and other artists like Suresh Wadekar, AnuradhaPaudwal, UshaUthup, Kavita Krishnamurthy, etc.

He composed the first modern lullaby in AIR, first qawali, first bhangra tune, and first fusion and jumping note.

**13) Answer: E**

The Central government has formed a genomic surveillance consortium for laboratory and epidemiological surveillance of circulating strains of

the SARS-CoV-2 in India.

The Indian SARS-CoV-2 Genomic Consortia (INSACOG) has been launched. Coordinated by the Department of Biotechnology (DBT) along with MoH&FW, ICMR, and CSIR , the strategy and roadmap of the National SARS CoV2 Genome Sequencing Consortium (INSACOG) has been prepared.

The genomic surveillance consortium, INSACOG, has been formed under the leadership of the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), New Delhi.

Aim : To monitor the genomic variations in the SARS-CoV-2 on a regular basis through a multi-laboratory network. This vital research consortium will also assist in developing potential vaccines in the future.

**14) Answer: B**

The Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) has formally announced the final approval for Oxford-AstraZeneca and Bharat Biotech vaccines against the coronavirus disease (Covid-19) for emergency use.

CDSCO (Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation) accepts the subject expert committee reform rations on Serum and Bharat Biotech Covid vaccines.

About Covishield :

The subject expert committee (SEC) under CDSCO had recommended Oxford-AstraZeneca's vaccine, which is being manufactured by the Serum Institute of India (SII) as Covishield, for emergency use and Covaxin for restricted use.

**15) Answer: D**

The Bureau of Police Research & Development (BPR&D) released Data on Police Organizations.

The BPR&D has been publishing the Data on Police Organizations (DoPO), annually, since the year 1986.

DoPO as on 01.01.2019 was released by the Union Home Minister ShriAmit Shah, on 29th January, 2020.

This is for the first time in the history of BPR&D that DoPO for a particular year has been released during

the year itself.

The number of people getting police protection across India stood at 19,467 in 2019 and 21,300 in 2018 a reduction of 1,833 (or 8.7 percent).

The number of police personnel put on protection duty in 2018 and 2019 for ministers, MPs, MLAs, judges, bureaucrats, etc., outnumbered their sanctioned strength for the job by around 35 percent.

**16) Answer: C**

Home Minister Amit Shah released the inaugural issue of the National Police K-9 Journal in New Delhi.

It is the first such publication in the country on the subject of Police Service K9s, Police Dogs.

This is a unique initiative that will further enrich the subjects related to Police Service Dog, K-9, PSK teams in the country.

The event was attended by Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla, Directors General of Central Armed Police Forces and senior ranking Police Officers of the Forces, while CAPF personnel from all over the country attended through virtual conference.

**17) Answer: B**

The Reserve Bank of India has constructed a composite Digital Payments Index (DPI) to capture the extent of digitisation of payments across the country.

The RBI-DPI comprises 5 broad parameters that enable measurement of deepening and penetration of digital payments in the country over different time periods.

These parameters are

Payment Enablers (weight 25%),

Payment Infrastructure – Demand-side factors (10%),

Payment Infrastructure – Supply-side factors (15%),

Payment Performance (45%) and

Consumer Centricity (5%).

The RBI-DPI has been constructed with March 2018 as the base period, i.e. DPI score for March 2018 is set at 100. The DPI for March 2019 and March 2020 work out to 153.47 and 207.84 respectively, indicating appreciable growth.

RBI-DPI shall be published on RBI's website on a semi-annual basis from March 2021 onwards with a lag of 4 months.

The base period for RBI-DPI is March 2018.

This means that the DPI score for March 2018 is set at 100.

**18) Answer: D**

Government has decided to extend the benefit of the scheme for Remission of Duties and Taxes on Exported Products (RoDTEP) to all export goods to boost exports.

The scheme will refund to exporters the embedded Central, State and local taxes that were so far not being given rebate or refunded.

The refund will be credited in the exporter's ledger account with Customs and used to pay Basic Customs duty on imported goods.

The RoDTEP rates will be notified shortly by the Department of Commerce, based on the recommendation of a Committee chaired by former Commerce and Home Secretary Dr. G.K. Pillai

**19) Answer: E**

All shops and commercial establishments employing ten or more people in Karnataka are now allowed to operate on a 24x7 basis, the state government.

The move is aimed at generating employment and accelerating economic growth.

The permission is subject to the establishments which employ ten or more people.

The state government also mandated that no employee will be made to work more than eight hours



and in case of overtime the working hours should exceed ten hours a day and 48 hours in a week.

**20) Answer: C**

The Indian Space Research Organisation (Isro) is set to launch Amazonia-1, the first satellite to have been developed completely in Brazil by the National Institute for Space Research (INPE), the Latin American nation's apex space research body.

Emirates SkyCargo, the freight division of Emirates airline, has executed a cargo charter to transport Amazonia-1 from Sao Jose dos Campos, Brazil to Chennai. This is the first time that Emirates SkyCargo has transported a space satellite from South America.

The satellite is due to be sent to space in February 2021 from the SatishDhawan Space Centre on the East coast of India.

India and Brazil signed a Framework Agreement for cooperation in the field of outer space in January 2004. Apart from this, an agreement on the programme of cooperation between the two space agencies was also signed. Under this, Brazil received data from ISRO's remote sensing satellite ResourceSAT-1.

**21) Answer: C**

The Journalist Day is observed by the Maharashtra state government on 6th January every year.

This day was celebrated in memory of late journalist BalshastriJambhekar.

**22) Answer: D**

The government has set up a high-level group headed by former Union power secretary Ram VinayShahi and tasked it with helping build a South Asia-focused energy security architecture.

The high-level group, named the South Asia Group for Energy (SAGE), has been set up under the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA)-run think tank Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS).

The objective is to achieve a balanced and optimal development of energy infrastructure through mutual

understanding and cooperation. SAGE will have the role of promoting, initiating and facilitating effective policy dialogue and capacity building on bilateral, sub-regional and regional basis for energy and related issues, among South Asian countries."

**23) Answer: E**

The 51st edition of International Film Festival of India (IFFI) will be held in Goa from January 16 to January 24, 2021.

The Information and Broadcasting Ministry stated that the Jury will comprise Pablo Cesar of Argentina as Chairman, PrasannaVithanage of Sri Lanka, Abu BakrShawkyof Austria, Priyadarshan of India and RubaiyatHossain of Bangladesh.

IFFI takes place in Goa from November 20-28 every year, but has been postponed due to the Covid-19.

**24) Answer: B**

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson cancelled his Republic Day visit to India later this month, citing the need to oversee the Covid-19 pandemic response at home. The development comes as Britain began its third Covid-19 lockdown.

Mr Johnson's government has announced a complete lockdown for England's 56 million people, which could last until mid-February.

Johnson would have been the sixth leader from the UK to be Chief Guest at the Republic Day celebrations. The last British leader to be Chief Guest was Prime Minister John Major in 1993.

**25) Answer: E**

On January 6, 2021, Uttar Pradesh CM Yogi Adityanath's government will launch an initiative named 'KisanKalyan Mission'

This is mainly for double the income of farmers of the state.

The 3-week long campaign for the welfare of farmers will be organised in every development block of all 75 districts.

Under the mission to be launched by the Uttar

Pradesh government, many departments of the state government such as Horticulture, Mandi Parishad, animal husbandry, sugarcane food and supply, fisheries, and Panchayati Raj will be working together.

It will help the farmers in getting benefit from the various schemes of the centre such as PM Kisan Samman Nidhi, Kisan Credit Cards, and PM Fasal Bima Yojana.

**26) Answer: C**

Railway Minister Piyush Goyal launched a Freight Business Development Portal as a one stop solution for all the needs of freight customers.

The new portal will be a game changer in ensuring ease of doing business with Railways.

The portal will ensure that best services are available to the clients.

The portal has been designed to replace physical processes with online ones to minimize the need of human to human interaction.

The portal can be accessed by logging on to Indian Railways web site <https://indianrailways.gov.in/> or <https://www.fois.indianrail.gov.in/RailSAHAY>

**27) Answer: D**

Union Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' and Union Minister for Textiles and Women & Child Development Smriti Zubin Irani jointly launched the Toycathon 2021.

**Aim :** This Toycathon is aimed to conceptualize innovative toys based on the Indian value system which will inculcate the positive behaviour and good value among the children.

The Toycathon will majorly focus on conceptualizing new and innovative toys using local material which are economical, affordable, safe and environment friendly.

The grand finale of the event will be organized from 23rd to 25th of February.

There will be two categories for the Toycathon, one is

for online toys and another for physical toys.

**28) Answer: E**

Malayalam poet and lyricist Anil Panachooran passed away. He was 51.

About Anil Panachooran :

Anil Panachooran was a lawyer by profession.

He made his debut in the Malayalam film industry in 2005 with Makalkku, which was directed by Jayaraj.

Besides writing lyrics for many hit songs, he also has a poetry collection in Malayalam literature.

He has penned songs in films Bhramaram, Mulla, Cocktail, Madambi, Cycle and Velipadinte Pusthakam.

He passed away while working on his first film as a director.

**29) Answer: C**

IDBI Bank announced the launch of video KYC account opening (VAO) facility for savings bank accounts.

Through the facility, a customer can open a savings account with the lender from the convenience of his/her home or office as there are no physical forms to be filled or visits to be made to the branch.

**30) Answer: D**

The Government of India and the Government of West Bengal and the World Bank signed a \$105 million project to improve the inland water transport infrastructure in Kolkata, West Bengal.

The \$105 million loan from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), has a maturity of 17 years, including a grace period of 7 years.

The West Bengal Inland Water Transport, Logistics and Spatial Development Project will facilitate passenger and freight movement across the Hooghly river; undertake spatial planning to improve accessibility in the Kolkata Metropolitan Area;

enhance the quality of life of its residents; and contribute to the growth of the state's logistics sector.

The project will cover the five most populous districts of southern West Bengal, including its urban agglomeration the Kolkata Metropolitan Area (KMA) where around 30 million people or one-third of West Bengal's population live.

**31) Answer: C**

World Hindi Day is celebrated every year on January 10.

Vishwa Hindi Divas commemorates the anniversary of the first World Hindi Conference held in Nagpur on January 10, 1975.

The conference was inaugurated by the then prime minister Indira Gandhi in Nagpur.

World Hindi Day was first celebrated in 2006 by former Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh.

The aim of the conference was to promote Hindi language worldwide.

National Hindi Divas which is celebrated annually on September 14.

**32) Answer: D**

On Jan 09, 2021, A high-level committee headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi was formed to commemorate the 125th birth anniversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose.

The members include 10 Union ministers and seven chief ministers who will decide on the activities to be undertaken for the year-long commemoration planned by the government.

The committee will decide on the activities for a year-long commemoration, beginning on January 23, 2021.

The committee will lend guidance to the commemoration activities in Delhi, Kolkata and other places associated with Netaji and the Azad Hind Fauj, both in India as well as overseas.

The members of the committee include distinguished

citizens, historians, authors, experts, family members of Subhas Chandra Bose, as well as eminent persons associated with the Azad Hind Fauj (INA).

**33) Answer: E**

National Youth Parliament Festival, 2021 will be held in the Central Hall of Parliament.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will address the Valedictory Function of second National Youth Parliament Festival, 2021 through video conferencing.

The first three winners will get an opportunity to speak before the Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister will also interact with the youth on the occasion.

84 winners from States and Union Territories will get an opportunity to be present in the Central Hall of Parliament before the Lok Sabha Speaker, Deputy Chairman of Rajya Sabha along with Youth Affairs and Sports Minister Kiren Rijju and other dignitaries.

29 National winners will get an opportunity to speak before the National Jury comprising of Rajya Sabha MP Roopa Ganguly, Lok Sabha MP Parvesh Sahib Singh and eminent journalist Prafulla Ketkar.

**34) Answer: D**

The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has issued a notification to facilitate the issuance of International Driving Permit (IDP) for Indian citizens whose IDP has expired while they are abroad.

There was no mechanism for its renewal while citizens were abroad and their IDP expired.

After this amendment, Indian citizens can apply for renewal through Indian Embassies and Missions abroad, from where these applications will move to the VAHAN portal in India, to be considered by the concerned Road Transport Officers (RTOs).

The International Driving Permit will be couriered to the citizen at his or her address abroad by the respective RTOs.

The Ministry said that the notification also removes the conditions of a Medical Certificate and a valid visa

at the time of making the request for the IDP in India.

The idea is that a citizen who has a valid driving license should not have a requirement for another medical certificate.

Further, there are countries where the Visa is issued on arrival or Visa is issued at the last moment and in such cases, VISA is not available when applying for the IDP in India before travel.

Therefore, IDP applications can now be made without VISA.

**35) Answer: B**

Union Minister for textile and women and child development Smritilrani has said that India has become the second largest manufacturer of PPE kits and suits in the world in record three months' time during the corona virus induced lockdown in March 2020.

She was speaking after inaugurating – Surat International Textile Expo -SITEX at Surat, the Gujarat's first physical exhibition after Covid19.

Speaking on this occasion, the Union Minister of state for women and child welfare DebasreeChaudhuri has said that industrial revolution can be brought in West Bengal, if it follows the Gujarat model.

**36) Answer: C**

Indian Railways has started the New Year by achieving a landmark to enhance the maximum speed to 130 kmph for 1,280 km length out of 1,612 Km in Golden Quadrilateral – Golden Diagonal route.

This covers the entire GQ-GD route over South Central Railway, except Vijayawada – Duvvada section, where signaling up gradation work is in progress.

This included heavier rails, laying of 260 meters long welded rail panels, improvement of curves and gradients among others.

PiyushGoyal is the Union minister for Railways and Minister of Railways and Minister of Commerce & Industry in the Government of India.

**37) Answer: D**

The Education Ministry has issued guidelines for identification, admission and continued education of migrant children.

The guidelines highlight the continuation of non-residential training for identified out of school children through volunteers, local teachers and community participation.

States and UTs to carry out proper identification of OoSC for 6 to 18 years age group through a comprehensive door to door survey and prepare action plan for their enrolment.

It also stressed to undertake awareness generation among parents and community for enrolling and attendance of children.

The main features of the guidelines are identifying out of school children, continued education for out of school children (OoSC) and children with special needs and enrolment drives and awareness generation.

**38) Answer: E**

Javadekar says nearly Rs1,200cr to be spent for safe movement of wildlife on National Highway

Environment Minister PrakashJavadekar has said that over Rs.1,200crore will be spent by the Road Transport and Highways Ministry to create infrastructure for safe movement of wildlife on the National Highway.

This includes construction of underpasses on the Nagpur-Jabalpur National Highway which passes through the Pench National Park and also at highways including Gadchiroli-Chandrapur and Chimur-Vadodara.

**39) Answer: C**

Union Health Minister Dr.HarshVardhan dedicates coastal research vessel to the Nation at Chennai Port Trust and said that the Central Government under the leadership of Prime Minister NarendraModi has been creating milestones in every field.

Speaking at the SagarAnveshika dedication function



at the Chennai Port Trust he said that Prime Minister's AtmaNirbhar schemes have helped Indian scientists to formulate research activity in deep ocean research.

SAGAR ANVESHKA, a very complex platform which will enable scientists to conduct various oceanographic research missions aboard, will house state of the art laboratories equipped with modern scientific instruments.

Indian scientists were the first in the world to isolate the Corona virus and begin genome sequencing of the virus braving the fight against Covid in an intelligent manner.

**40) Answer: D**

Addressing the 16th PravasiBharatiya Divas convention through virtual mode, Prime Minister NarendraModi urged the youth to use technology to take forward India's pride and culture across the globe.

He said the internet has connected people from various corners of the world but our hearts are connected with our mutual love for the country.

He said, in the past years, Non-Resident Indians have strengthened their identity by showing their commitment for the betterment of the society.

MrModi said, he feels proud to hear heartwarming stories of NRIs coming forward and helping those in need.

The Chief Guest of the PravasiBharatiya Divas convention, President of Suriname ChandrikaPersadSantokhi said, Suriname shares deep bonds with India and both the countries have managed to maintain their heritage, culture and customs.

He said, the two countries should increase their business to strengthen the bond.

The President said, India and Suriname are bonded on many levels historically, religiously and culturally.

**41) Answer: C**

Indian Armed Forces Veterans Day is observed each

year on 14 January since 2017.

This day is celebrated on 14th of January every year to honour services rendered by veterans of the Army.

This year is being celebrated as Swarnim Vijay Varsh.

It marks the 50th Anniversary of 1971 Indo-Pak War.

Significance : This day is celebrated mainly for a recognition of the services rendered by the first Commander-in-Chief of Indian Armed Forces, Field Marshal KM Cariappa, OBE who retired on 14 Jan 1953.

**42) Answer: D**

Elon Musk-owned electric vehicle (EV) company Tesla has registered a fully-owned subsidiary in Bengaluru, Karnataka.

The firm is looking at setting up an R&D facility and eventually an assembly plant.

Tesla's global senior director David Jon Feinstein, chief accounting officer VaibhavTaneja and Bengaluru-based entrepreneur VenkatrangamSreeram are on the board of the India unit, Tesla India Motors and Energy Pvt Ltd.

The total paid up capital of the company is Rs 1,00,000 and authorised share capital is Rs 15 lakhs.

**43) Answer: E**

Haryana Chief Minister ManoharLalKhattar launched an air taxi service between Chandigarh and Hisar from the Chandigarh International Airport under the UDAN scheme of the central government.

The airline Aviation Connectivity & Infrastructure Developers Pvt. Ltd (Air Taxi) was awarded the Hisar – Chandigarh – Hisar route under the UDAN 4 bidding process.

The airline has become the first startup airline of the country to assist the nation with Air Taxi services.

These UDAN flights will reduce the journey time between Hisar to Chandigarh from 4.50 hours to a comfortable 45 minutes journey that too at an

affordable fare since financial incentives in the form of Viability Gap Funding (VGF) is being provided from the Centre, State governments & airport operators to selected airlines to encourage operations from unserved and underserved airports under the scheme.

**44) Answer: D**

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh unveiled the country's first indigenously designed and developed Driverless Metro Car at the BEML manufacturing facility in Bengaluru.

The indigenously designed & developed state-of-the-art Driverless Metro trains are being manufactured at BEML Bangalore manufacturing facility, for Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA).

BEML bagged a total order of 576 cars for Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA)'s MRS1 project and the supply is scheduled progressively up to January 2024.

BEML recently opened its Depot office at Charkop Metro Depot, MMRDA, Mumbai for commissioning, testing and round-the-clock services for Driverless Metro cars.

**45) Answer: B**

Army Day is celebrated on January 15 every year to honor the soldiers of the country, who have set the greatest example of selfless service and brotherhood and more than anything the love for the country.

In 2021 Marks India's 73rd Army Day.

Army Day is celebrated every year at all Army Command headquarters.

On the occasion of the 73rd Indian Army Day, the Indian Army will organise a marathon 'Vijay Run' to commemorate Swarnim Vijay Varsh celebrations of India's resounding victory over Pakistan in 1971.

**46) Answer: C**

The 19th Dhaka International Film Festival (DIFF) will be inaugurated on 16th January. The film festival this year is dedicated to the birth centenary of

Bangabandhu Sheikh MujiburRahman.

The Festival that will Screen 225 films from 73 countries will be screened during the 9 day long festival between 16-24 January.

The festival will have 10 categories including Cinema of the world, Children's Film, Women Film Maker's section, Spiritual Films, Bangladesh Panorama, Tribute and Retrospective among others.

Spring Blossom, a film from France, directed by Suzanne Lindon will be the opening film of the festival.

The tribute section of the festival will be dedicated to the legendary filmmaker Satyajit Ray to commemorate his birth centenary.

The festival will also hold seminars and discussions around the work and life of Satyajit Ray.

The section will showcase PatherPanchali, Aparajito, Jalsaghar, Sonar Kella and HirokRajarDeshe directed by Satyajit Ray.

**47) Answer: E**

OdishaChief Minister Naveen Patnaik inaugurated the 'Fire Park', a first of its kind initiative in the country, to bring awareness on fire safety measures.

This Will Facilitate Demonstrations on use of first aid fire-fighting equipment, rescue and disaster operations, visit to exhibition hall, screening of films and distribution of leaflets on fire safety will be part of the activities. Students from schools and colleges will be the focus group.

He also launched a dynamic online portal, 'AgnishamaSeva' of Odisha Fire Service on virtual platform.

**48) Answer: C**

The Union Minister of Science &Technology, Earth Sciences and Health & Family Welfare Dr. Harsh Vardhan inaugurated a new institute of Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and National Institute of Science Communication and Policy Research (CSIR-NIScPR), in New Delhi.

The new institute has been established consequent to the merger of two prestigious institutes of CSIR namely, CSIR-National Institute of Science Communication and Information Resources (CSIR-NISCAIR) and CSIR-National Institute of Science, Technology and Development Studies (CSIR-NISTADS) which work at the interface of S&T and Society; and Science Communication and Policy Research.

The purpose of this merger is to combine the strength of the two institutes in a synergistic way with a VISION to become a globally respected Think Tank and Resource Centre for understanding Science, Technology & Innovation (STI) Policy Research and Communication.

**49) Answer: D**

An ICT Grand Challenge for development of a 'smart water supply measurement and monitoring system' is underway.

It was launched on the 15th of September, 2020 by National JalJeevan Mission in partnership with the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.

JalJeevan Mission would be the user agent of the Grand Challenge and C-DAC, Bangalore is the implementing agency, providing technical support for the challenge.

Currently, 10 applicants which were selected are developing prototypes.

They will be evaluated in the last week of January wherein best four techno-economically viable prototypes will be selected for product development.

JalJeevan Mission is a flagship programme of the Union Government which aims to provide tap water connection to every rural household by 2024. Announced by the Prime Minister on 15th August 2019, the Mission so far has provided 3.13 crore household tap connections in rural areas.

**50) Answer: B**

The Reserve Bank of India has set up a working group to study digital lending activities of the regulated and unregulated players.

The group will suggest steps to regulate digital lending including online lending platform and mobile lending.

The six-member panel comprised of four RBI internal and two external members

Chairman : Jayant Kumar Dash, Executive Director,

Ajay Kumar Choudhary, Chief General Manager-in-Charge, Department of Supervision,

P Vasudevan, Chief General Manager, Department of Payment and Settlement Systems, RBI

Manoranjan Mishra, Chief General Manager, Department of Regulation.

The two external members are

Vikram Mehta, Co-founder, MonexoFintech and Rahul Sasi,

Cyber Security Expert & Founder of CloudSEK.

This Group will submit its report within 3 months.

The group will evaluate digital lending activities and assess the penetration and standards of outsourced digital lending activities in RBI regulated entities.

**51) Answer: C**

The National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) celebrated its 16th Raising Day On 18th January.

About NDRF :

The National Disaster Response Force is an Indian specialized force constituted "for the purpose of special response to a threatening disaster situation or disaster" under the Disaster Management Act, 2005.

The Apex Body for Disaster Management in India is the National Disaster Management Authority

**52) Answer: B**

Union Minister of Road Transport and Highways, Nitin Gadkari, inaugurated Road Safety Month where he highlighted the Central Government's commitment

towards safety.

National Road Safety Month to be held from January 18 to February 17, 2021 and India accounts for 11 percent of accident-related fatalities worldwide

The function was launched by Union Minister for Defence, Rajnath Singh and Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways & MSME, NitinGadkari. The Minister of State for RTH, Gen (Retd) VK Singh and CEO, NITI Aayog, Amitabh Kant also participated.

The initiative aims to build awareness about road safety and reduce road accidents in the country. It will be held till 17 February 2021.

Globally India is one of the worst-hit nations when it comes to road accidents. India accounts for about 5 lakh road accidents annually, one of the highest in the world, in which about 1.5 lakh people die and another 3 lakh become crippled.

Centre is also taking several measures to reduce road accidents by Restructuring and Strengthening 4E's of Road safety, which are:

Engineering

Education

Enforcement

Emergency care Services

**53) Answer: E**

The United States has designated the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Bahrain as its major strategic partners of the Country.

The announcement was made by White House Press Secretary KayleighMcEnany here.

A new level of partnership between the United States, the United Arab Emirates, and the Kingdom Bahrain, and represents an enduring commitment to economic and security cooperation.

It also reflects their extraordinary courage, determination, and leadership in entering into the

Abraham Accords.

In addition to that, Both of the countries have been designated for their commitment to countering violent extremism across the region, exceptional security partnership and exemplified by their hosting thousands of US airmen, soldiers, marines and sailors.

**54) Answer: D**

On Jan 17, 2021, Prime Minister NarendraModi flagged off eight trains connecting different regions of the country to Kevadiya with an aim to facilitate seamless connectivity to the Statue of Unity in Gujarat.

Gujarat chief minister Vijay Rupani and Union railways minister PiyushGoyal were also present on the occasion.

These trains will connect Kevadia to Varanasi, Dadar, Ahmedabad, HazratNizamuddin, Rewa, Chennai and Pratapnagar.

PM Modi also inaugurated the DabhoiChandod converted broad gauge railway line, ChandodKevadia new broad gauge rail line, newly electrified PratapnagarKevadia section and the new station buildings of Dabhoi, Chandod and Kevadia.

Purpose :

This connectivity will be beneficial for tourists coming to see the Statue of Unity but it will also help in changing the lives of the tribal community of Kevadiya.

It will bring new opportunities for jobs and self-employment.

These trains will help boost tourism in the tribal region and increase connectivity to the world's tallest statue, the Statue of Unity, which he inaugurated in October 2018 on the occasion of SardarVallabhbai Patel's 143rd birth anniversary.

**55) Answer: C**

CARE Ratings has revised downwards its projection of the Centre's fiscal deficit to 7.8 percent of GDP during FY21 against its earlier estimate of 9-9.5 per



cent.

The combined effect of lower revenues and higher expenditure is likely to push the fiscal deficit to 7.8 percent of GDP

**56) Answer: B**

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) is looking to carry out the eighth and final test in its "Green Run" test series on January 17.

This eighth stage, termed hot fire will bring to an end a series of tests which, NASA says, will gradually bring together the core stage of the Space Launch System (SLS) to life for the very first time.

The core stage of the SLS will form the backbone of what NASA says will be the "most powerful rocket in the world" and will power its next-generation human Moon Missions

**57) Answer: E**

The Pakistan government has issued at least seven special permits to Dubai Ruler Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum and six other members of the ruling family to hunt the internationally protected bird houbara bustard during the 2020-21 hunting season.

After the Permission, eleven members of the UAE royal family reached the Panjgur district in Balochistan, Pakistan for hunting the highly vulnerable and internationally protected houbara bustard under Pakistan's foreign ministry license.

**58) Answer: D**

Union Health Minister Dr. Harsh Vardhan digitally chaired the 148th session of the Executive Board of the World Health Organization through video conference.

Distinguished Members of the WHO Executive Board, Hon'ble Ministers, Excellencies & Member State representatives, WHO Director-General, Regional Director of WHO South-East Asia and Other Regional Directors, Heads & Representatives of UN Agencies and Partner Organizations

The 148th session of the Executive Board has been

organised from 18-26 January 2021.

In addition to that the WHO has declared the Year 2021 as the Year of Global Solidarity and Survival.

The meeting provides a platform to bring together all member states to set the directions and agenda to continue striving for our objective of health as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being.

**59) Answer: B**

India and Japan have signed a Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) on a basic partnership framework for operation of the 'specified skilled worker' (SSW) system under which the Japanese government accepts foreign nationals who have a certain level of expertise and skill.

The memorandum was signed by Japanese Ambassador to India Suzuki Satoki and Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla

There are 14 specified industry fields that fall under SSW and workers and professionals in those sectors could be eligible,

These are: nursing care (caregiving); building-cleaning management; machine parts and tooling industries; industrial machinery industry; electric, electronics and information industries; construction industry; shipbuilding and ship machinery industry; automobile repair and maintenance; aviation industry; accommodation industry; agriculture, fishery & aquaculture; manufacture of food and beverages; and food service industry.

**60) Answer: E**

Kerala Governor Arif Mohammad Khan has launched Vedhik Erudite Foundation's ambitious scheme to provide free coaching for civil services and other competitive examinations to 10,000 meritorious students.

This higher education platform will give children a chance to completely redecorate their future plans and broaden their horizons totally, rewriting their value capital.

The Programme will be providing free training to the students who are economically backward but are

academically brilliant aspirants of civil service and other competitive exams.

The beneficiaries will be selected by a panel headed by the heads of respective educational institutions.

**61) Answer: C**

Union Minister Kiren Rijiju has been assigned the additional charge of the Ministry of AYUSH.

During the hospitalization and treatment of AYUSH Minister Shripad Naik following a road accident

The President has directed that this arrangement may continue till Mr Naik resumes his work related to the Ministry of AYUSH.

The President of India, as advised by the Prime Minister, has directed that during the hospitalization and treatment of Shripad Yesso Naik, Minister of State (Independent Charge) of Ministry of Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, and Homeopathy (AYUSH); and Minister of State in Ministry of Defence, following a road accident, his portfolio related to Ministry of AYUSH, be temporarily assigned to Kiren Rijiju, Minister of State (Independent Charge) in addition to his existing portfolios.”

**62) Answer: D**

The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has notified Inter Country Transport Vehicles Rules, 2021 which would facilitate and regulate the movement of passenger and goods vehicles between India and neighbouring countries.

As per the rules, the State Transport Authority has been given the power to grant the Inter Country Transport Permit after thoroughly examining the application.

The permit will remain valid for a period of one year from the date of its issue and it will be renewable for a period of five years on a yearly basis.

The State Transport Department will take care of formalities like provisioning of tickets, debugging of bus, frisking or checking of passengers, handling of luggage before departure from the designated place. The frequency can be reviewed by the State Transport Department and it can be increased as per

the demand.

The decision has been taken considering the requests made by the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways to notify rules under provisions of the Motor Vehicles Act 1988 to facilitate movement of vehicles carrying goods and passengers between India and neighbouring countries.

**63) Answer: E**

Netherlands Prime Minister Mark Rutte and his entire Cabinet resigned to take political responsibility for a scandal involving investigations into child welfare payments that wrongly labeled thousands of parents as fraudsters.

Mr. Rutte and his cabinet will continue running the government in a caretaker capacity, with general elections already scheduled for March 2021.

The resignation brings to an end a decade in office for Rutte, although his party is expected to win the election, putting him first in line to begin talks to form the next government. If he succeeds in forming a new coalition, Rutte would most likely again become prime minister.

**64) Answer: D**

India and Singapore signed an implementing agreement on submarine rescue support and cooperation between their navies during the 5th Defence Minister's Dialogue held over video conference,

Both ministers were pleased to witness the signing of the implementing agreement on submarine rescue support and cooperation between the two navies.

Rajnath Singh and his Singaporean counterpart Ng Eng Hen conveyed their full support towards early conclusion of agreements to “facilitate conduct of live firings and to establish reciprocal arrangements for the cross-attendance of military courses”

**65) Answer: D**

Petroleum and Natural Gas Minister Dharmendra Pradhan inaugurated the LNG truck-loading unit of Shell India at Hazira, Gujarat.

The unit will boost availability of natural gas in off-grid areas where there are no gas pipelines. It will also promote the use of LNG in long-haul trucking.

Increasing competition in the LNG sector will help in emergence of new markets, creating new employment opportunities, ensure cleaner fuels for industries and facilitate environment conservation.

This is another big step towards a cleaner and greener future for India.

The LNG sector will help in the emergence of new markets, create new employment opportunities, ensure cleaner fuels for industries and facilitate environment conservation.

**66) Answer: B**

Flight lieutenant BhawanaKanth is set to become the first woman fighter pilot to take part in the Republic Day parade.

She will be a part of the Indian Air Force's (IAF's) tableau that will showcase mock-ups of the light combat aircraft, light combat helicopter and the Sukhoi-30 fighter plane.

She is currently posted at an airbase in Rajasthan where she flies the MiG-21 Bison fighter plane.

Kanth is also one of the first women fighter pilots in the IAF.

She, along with AvaniChaturvedi and Mohana Singh, was inducted into the IAF as the first women fighter pilots in 2016.

Ten women have been commissioned as fighter pilots after an experimental scheme for their induction into the IAF's combat stream was introduced in 2015.

India's 2021 Republic Day parade

**67) Answer: C**

The country's first Labour Movement Museum, showcasing the history of world labour movement, would be launched in Kerala's houseboat tourism hub, Alappuzha.

The museum will feature a huge repository of documents and exhibits that shaped the labour movements across the continents and impacted Alappuzha, the cradle of the labour movement in the country.

The museum would be launched as part of the LDF government's second 100-day programme.

The New Model Cooperative Society Limited, previously run by the Bombay Company, has been converted into the Labour Movement Museum.

**68) Answer: E**

In Gujarat, Chief Minister Vijay Rupani announced the 'Horticulture Development Mission' (BagayatVikas Mission).

Aim : this mission is to double the income of farmers involved in medicinal and horticulture farming.

Under this mission, the waste land of the government will be given on 30-year lease for farming of horticulture and medicinal crops.

As per an estimate, the government has about 50,000 non-cultivated land waste lands. The government intends to convert this land into cultivation.

A list of land blocks for land allotment in transparent manner will be released on I-Khedut portal. The government will also offer priority assistance to lease owners for drip-sprinkler fountains.

Surendranagar, Patan, Sabarkantha and Banaskantha districts in the first phase.

**69) Answer: C**

The Maharashtra government renamed Nagpur's Gorewada International Zoo as Balasaheb Thackeray Zoological Park .

The zoological park, spread over 1,900 hectares, will be inaugurated on January 26 by Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray.

Three special 40-seat capacity vehicles and an online ticket booking facility will be made available to the

people as soon after the Indian safari is inaugurated,

Aim : to protect forests and promote tourism, Prakash Javadekar, Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC), had announced the setting up of the 'international-standard' bio park in August 2019.

The task was entrusted to the Forest Development Corporation of Maharashtra Ltd.

**70) Answer: D**

Kerala has become the 8th State in the country to successfully undertake Ease of Doing Business reform stipulated by the Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance.

The State has become eligible to mobilise additional financial resources of Rs.2,373 crore through Open Market Borrowings.

Permission for the same was issued by the Department of Expenditure, on 12th January 2021,

Kerala has now joined the seven other States namely, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, and Telangana, who have completed this reform. On completion of reforms facilitating ease of doing business, these eight States have been granted additional borrowing permission of Rs 23,149 crore.

**71) Answer: C**

Indian Railways in a tribute to freedom fighter Subhas Chandra Bose who is also known as 'Netaji' has decided to rename the Howrah-Kalka Mail as 'Netaji Express'

The train first operated in the year 1866 and it has been in service of the nation for more than 150 years.

The Howrah-Kalka Mail is one of the oldest running trains at present in the Indian Railways network.

The Howrah-Kalka Mail runs between Howrah (Eastern Railway) and Kalka (Northern Railway) via Delhi.

**72) Answer: D**

Uttarakhand Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat inaugurated the state's first child friendly police station describing it as a major reformative step by the police.

Purpose : It is a new initiative and a major reformative step towards protection of children by the state police, Rawat said after inaugurating the BalMitra police station in Dalanwala area here.

The child friendly police unit has been set up in the Dalanwala police station with a budget of about Rs five lakhs on the recommendation of the Child Protection Committee of Uttarakhand.

According to the chairperson of State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (SCPCR) Usha Negi, the children who are either victims or need proper counselling or visit police stations due to other reasons should be provided with a comfortable and intimidating environment rather than keeping them in a dull and scary atmosphere.

To keep children at ease, the walls are painted in bright colours and cartoons and the police personnel will also be dressed in casual clothes rather than their uniforms.

**73) Answer: E**

In its judgment, the apex court, while upholding the validity of Section 32 A of IBC, said it was important for the IBC to attract bidders who would offer reasonable and fair value for the corporate debtor to ensure the timely completion of corporate insolvency resolution process (CIRP). The Supreme Court held that the successful bidders for a corporate debtor under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) would be immune from any investigations being conducted either by any investigating agencies such as the Enforcement Directorate (ED) or other statutory bodies such as Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI).

Successful bidders for corporate debtors under IBC would be immune from any investigations being conducted by any investigating agencies or Enforcement Directorate (ED).

**74) Answer: B**



The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) has launched a regulatory compliance portal that will act as a bridge between citizens, industries and the government to minimise burdensome compliances.

It will also act as a first-of-its-kind central online repository of all central and state-level compliances

**Objective :** The objective of this portal is to act as a bridge between citizens, industries and the Government in order to minimize burdensome compliances.

**About Regulatory Compliance Portal :**

The Regulatory Compliance Portal will be instrumental in achieving the vision of a truly Atmanirbhar Bharat and help usher ease of doing business for industry and ease of living for Indian citizens.

**75) Answer: C**

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has imposed a monetary penalty of Rs.2 crore on Standard Chartered Bank–India for delays in reporting of frauds.

The penalty has been imposed on the bank for non-compliance with certain directions issued by it contained in the 'Reserve Bank of India (Frauds – Classification and Reporting by commercial banks and select FIs) Directions 2016'.

A notice was issued to the bank advising it to show cause as to why penalty should not be imposed on it for such non-compliance with the directions.

After considering the bank's reply to the notice and oral submissions made in the personal hearing, the RBI concluded that the charge of non-compliance with the aforesaid RBI directions was substantiated and warranted imposition of monetary penalty.

This action is based on the deficiencies in regulatory compliance and is not intended to pronounce upon the validity of any transaction or agreement entered into by the bank with its customers.

**76) Answer: D**

The Union Home Minister ShriAmit Shah inaugurated the new 4-lane Thaltej-Shilaj-Rancharda railway overbridge, in Ahmedabad city of Gujarat through video conferencing from New Delhi.

It has been built at a cost of Rs 55 crore.

Several dignitaries including Gujarat Deputy Chief Minister ShriNitin Patel were present at the programme

**77) Answer: E**

The RBI state-owned SBI, along with private sector lenders ICICI Bank and HDFC Bank continue to be Domestic Systemically Important Banks (D-SIBs) or institutions which are 'too big to fail'.

SIBs are subjected to higher levels of supervision so as to prevent disruption in financial services in the event of any failure.

The Reserve Bank had issued the framework for dealing with D-SIBs in July 2014.

SBI, ICICI Bank, and HDFC Bank continue to be identified as Domestic Systemically Important Banks (D-SIBs), under the same bucketing structure as in the 2018 list of D-SIBs.

The D-SIB framework requires the central to disclose the names of banks designated as D-SIBs starting from 2015 and place these lenders in appropriate buckets depending upon their Systemic Importance Scores (SISs).

The additional Common Equity Tier 1 (CET1) requirement for D-SIBs was phased-in from April 1, 2016 and became fully effective from April 1, 2019. The additional CET1 requirement will be in addition to the capital conservation buffer.

SIBs are seen as 'too big to fail (TBTF)', creating expectations of government support for them in times of financial distress. These banks also enjoy certain advantages in funding markets.

**78) Answer: B**

Axis Bank has unveiled a credit 'AURA' exclusively loaded with several health and wellness benefits for

its users at an affordable price.

The bank has also tied up with Decathlon. As part of the welcome benefit, cardholders get a Decathlon voucher of Rs750.

It also offers up to four free online interactive fitness sessions per month powered by Fitternity, a health and fitness platform. Cardholders also get access to 16 recorded training sessions per month and can choose from various sessions such as yoga and cross-functional training programmes.

According to the bank's website, the joining and annual fee for the card is Rs749. The finance charges will be 3.4% a month or 49.36% a year.

**79) Answer: E**

Meghalaya chief minister Conrad K Sangma inaugurated India's longest road arch bridge, the Wahrew Bridge at Sohbar in East Khasi Hills district.

The bridge has been constructed at a cost of Rs 49.395 crore under Non Lapsable Central Pool of Resources (NLCPR) of the DoNER ministry.

The bridge connects Bholaganj and Sohbar to Nongjri in East Khasi Hills, bordering Bangladesh.

The 169 metre Wahrew suspension bridge connects Bholaganj and Sohbar to Nongjri. The project was sanctioned in 2013 while work started the following year and was completed in December, 2018.

**80) Answer: C**

Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister of Health and Family welfare today inaugurated the 7th Edition of "MASCRADE 2021"- Movement against Smuggled & Counterfeit Trade

The aim of MASCRADE 2021 is to foster a healthy discussion on newer and practical strategies to mitigate the challenges of counterfeiting and smuggling especially in a post COVID era.

The two-day programme was organized by FICCI CASCADE (Committee Against Smuggling and Counterfeiting Activities Destroying the Economy).

It provided a platform to deliberate and discuss

actionable, innovative policy solutions that can reverse the rising incidences of counterfeit, smuggled and spurious products, causing significant damage to the economy of the nation

**81) Answer: C**

Every year on 26th January, International Customs Day (ICD) is celebrated worldwide .

To commemorate the very first official conference of the Customs Co-operation Council which means the World Customs Organization (WCO) which was established in the year 1952 comprising 182 custom administration members and is called as the only intergovernmental organization which solely features the customs matters.

Theme of 2021 is "Customs bolstering Recovery, Renewal and Resilience".

In 1994 the CCC was renamed World Customs Organization (WCO).

The day is observed for recognizing the role of custom officials and agencies in maintaining border security across the globe by focusing on the challenges and the working conditions that are faced by the customs officials.

**82) Answer: D**

In UP, a new 3300 meter long airstrip has been constructed near Kurebhar On Purvanchal Expressway.

Uttar Pradesh has become the first state in the country with two airstrips on expressways to facilitate emergency landing and take-off of fighter planes.

Airstrips on expressways are designed to facilitate emergency landing and take-off of fighter planes.

One airstrip is on Lucknow-Agra Expressway while the other is on Purvanchal Expressway.

**83) Answer: E**

Mongolia's Prime Minister Khurelsukh Ukhnaa submitted his resignation to parliament after protests in the capital Ulaanbaatar over the government's handling of the Covid-19 pandemic, the state news

agency Montsame reported.

The 52-year-old served as the Prime Minister of Mongolia from 4 October 2017 to 21 January 2021.

Prime Minister KhurelsukhUkhnaa submitted his resignation and a proposal to dissolve his government Thursday after hundreds gathered outside the parliament building to demonstrate against the policies.

Parliament, which is controlled by Khurelsukh's Mongolian People's Party, voted overwhelmingly Thursday to accept his resignation.

**84) Answer: D**

On 24 Jan 2021, SpaceX created a unique world record of launching 143 satellites on a single vehicle.

The firm broke the record previously held by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), which launched 104 satellites in 2017.

In this launch, SpaceX broke the record set by ISRO in February 2017 for deploying 104 satellites onboard PSLV in a single mission.

The US-based space company launched 143 satellites through its Falcon 9 rocket.

The launch vehicle for the SpaceX record-breaking flight was the Falcon 9 and the mission was designated as Transporter-1.

With these satellites, SpaceX aims to provide near-global broadband internet coverage all over the world by 2021.

The 143 satellites included 133 commercial and government satellites and 10 Starlink satellites of SpaceX

**85) Answer: B**

China climbed to the No.1 ranking globally attracting foreign direct investment (FDI) of \$163 billion in 2020.

The report was released by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

China's \$163 billion in inflows last year, compared to \$134 billion attracted by the United States.

In 2019, the United States had received \$251 billion in inflows and China received \$140 billion.

China's gross domestic product grew 2.3% in 2020, official data showed last week, making China the only major economy in the world to avoid a contraction last year.

The world's second-largest economy has surprised many with the speed of its recovery from the coronavirus jolt, especially as policymakers have also had to navigate tense U.S.-China relations on trade and other fronts.

Overall, global FDI had collapsed in 2020, falling by 42% to an estimated \$859 billion, from \$1.5 trillion in 2019.

**86) Answer: C**

Border Security Force (BSF) launched Operation SardHawa on the western international border of Rajasthan.

It aims to increase security on the borders in Jaisalmer.

This operation will continue till January 27 with an aim that there is no intrusion.

It was launched on 21 January 2021, and will continue till 27 January 2021, keeping in view Republic Day of India.

**87) Answer: D**

India is Celebrating the 72nd Republic Day on 26 January 2021, with celebrations at the majestic Rajpath in New Delhi.

To commemorate the day the Government of India Act (1935) set by the British Raj was replaced by the Indian Constitution as the governing document of India.

This Day marks the date on which the Constitution of India came into effect on 26 January 1950.

On Republic Day, the President of India distributes Padma Awards to the civilians of India.

Padma Awards are given in three categories – Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan and Padma Shri.

**88) Answer: E**

For the 71st foundation day of Uttar Pradesh, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath launched 'UdyamSarathi' app to help youth to explore self-employment opportunities.

About the app :

This application will provide all information related to self-employment and the job industry at one click.

The app, prepared under the ODOP scheme and considered to be a master-key for exploring self-employment opportunities to the youth.

Through the UdyamSarathi app, youth would easily be able to get a varied range of business opportunities in different departments and sectors of the state and the Central government.

Under the vision of 'SabkaSaathSabkaVikas and SabkaVishwas', this App is poised to benefit the women and farmers looking for avenues of self-employment.

It has been launched under the One District One Product (ODOP) scheme.

The Uttar Pradesh Day celebration will run from 24 January to 26 January, 2021.

The theme of Uttar Pradesh Day 2021 is 'Respect for self-reliant Uttar Pradesh, women young farmers, development of all'.

Uttar Pradesh was recognised as a state of India on January 24, 1950.

**89) Answer: B**

Civil servant, historian, author, poet and chronicler Narendra Luther passed away. He was 89.

A 1955 batch IAS officer who served in various

positions, Luther later wrote several books about the history and culture of Hyderabad.

In 1991, he was Chief Secretary of undivided Andhra Pradesh.

Luther wrote several books about the history and culture of Hyderabad. Muhammad QuliQutb Shah, the Founder of Hyderabad is one of the books he is well-known for. For those looking to learn more about the history of Hyderabad and Secunderabad, Luther's well-researched books are a goldmine of information.

**90) Answer: C**

To mark the National Girl Child Day, Haridwar teenager SrishtiGoswami will take charge as the chief minister of Uttarakhand for one day.

She will take part in the child assembly session in Dehradun.

Goswami, a student of BSc Agriculture, lives in Daulatpur village of the district.

For the first time in the history of Uttarakhand, a girl will become the state's chief minister.

It has received a nod from the incumbent chief minister Trivendra Singh Rawat.

The one-day chief minister will administer from Gairsain, the summer capital of the state, and will review various schemes run by the state government that include AtalAyushman Scheme, Smart City project, Homestay Scheme by the tourism department, and other development projects.

**91) Answer: C**

Data Privacy Day is an international event that occurs every year on 28 January.

The purpose of Data Privacy Day is to raise awareness and promote privacy and data protection best practices.

It is currently observed in the United States, Canada, Israel and 47 European countries.

Surveys and industry reports show that many of us



feel an increasing lack of control over our own data.

The theme for DPD 2021 is "Own Your Privacy."

Surveys and industry reports show that many of us feel an increasing lack of control over our own data.

**92) Answer: D**

In Maharashtra, Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray inaugurated Balasaheb Thackeray Gorewada International Zoological Park in Nagpur.

The park has been developed by the State Forest Department and Forest Development Corporation.

It is spread across an area of 1,914 hectares and includes a wildlife sanctuary, Indian safari, African safari biodiversity park and night safari.

The park has been opened for the Indian safari.

Registration can be done on the website [www.wildgorewada.com](http://www.wildgorewada.com).

**93) Answer: E**

India has announced a pledge of \$150,000 to activities of the Peacebuilding Fund this year and said that 2021 provides the international community with an opportunity to look at peace-building in a more focused manner.

India's Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador T S Tirumurti.

The Peacebuilding Fund has put forth a comprehensive scenario covering a horizon of five years. The Fund requires 1.5 billion dollars for 2020-2024.

The recently concluded 2020 review of the UN peacebuilding architecture provides a framework to strengthen peace building collectively.

**94) Answer: B**

Prime Minister NarendraModi chaired the meeting of 35th edition of PRAGATI, the ICT based multi-modal platform for Pro-Active Governance and Timely Implementation, involving Central and State

governments.

In the meeting, ten agenda items were taken for review including nine projects and one program.

Among the nine projects, three projects were from the Ministry of Railways, three from Ministry of Road Transport and Highways and one project each from Department of Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, Power Ministry and Ministry of External Affairs.

These nine projects have a cumulative cost of 54 thousand 675 crore rupees concerning the 15 States.

The States are Odisha, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Punjab, Jharkhand, Bihar, Telangana, Rajasthan, Gujarat, West Bengal, Haryana, Uttarakhand, and Uttar Pradesh.

**95) Answer: D**

Prime Minister NarendraModi will address the rally of the National Cadet Corps at Cariappa Ground in Delhi.

Defence Minister, Chief of Defence Staff and the three armed services Chiefs will also be present on the occasion.

The Prime Minister will inspect the Guard of Honour, review March Past by NCC contingents and witness cultural performance during the event.

**96) Answer: E**

Bharat Parv 2021, a festival to celebrate the spirit of India has begun on Jan 26, 2021.

The festival is being organised on a virtual platform [www.bharatparv2021.com](http://www.bharatparv2021.com) this year from Jan 26 to till 31st of January.

The mega event envisages generating patriotic fervour and showcases the rich and varied cultural diversity of the country.

The Ministry of Tourism organizes Bharat Parv every year since 2016 in front of the ramparts of the Red Fort on the occasion of Republic Day Celebrations.

PrasarBharati has set up its virtual stall which will

showcase its efforts towards promoting Ek Bharat-Shrestha Bharat.

**97) Answer: D**

Bangladesh Liberation War fighter Lt. Col. (Retd.) Quazi Sajjad Ali Zahir and well known musicologist, Rabindra Sangeet exponent and academic Sanjida Khatun from Bangladesh has been awarded the Padma Shri for the year 2021.

Padma awards are one of the highest civilian awards of the country.

The awards were announced on the eve of the Republic Day of India.

According to the official press release, 7 Padma Vibhushan, 10 Padma Bhushan and 102 Padma Shri awards have been conferred on people for their distinguished work in various fields.

**98) Answer: B**

D K Joshi, the Lieutenant Governor of Andaman and Nicobar Islands flagged-off a fleet of electric buses.

The project for 40 electric buses is being executed by NTPC Vidyut Vyapar Nigam Limited (NVTN Limited), a 100% subsidiary of NTPC Limited, a PSU under the Ministry of Power, Government of India.

The introduction of electric buses in the Island union territory will help cut down tailpipe emissions as well as provide comfortable public transport.

These buses will provide last mile connectivity to NAMMA Metro network.

**99) Answer: C**

The Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, Meghalaya was selected for a Special Award for Information Technology applications in Elections by the Election Commission of India (ECI), in the National Best Electoral Practices Awards-2020.

President Ram Nath Kovind virtually conferred the award to Meghalaya CEO F.R. Kharkongor at the National Voters' Day Award function held in New Delhi, a statement from the CEO's office informed.

**100) Answer: E**

Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu inaugurated the Integrated Weapons System Design Centre at DRDO's Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Missile complex in Hyderabad.

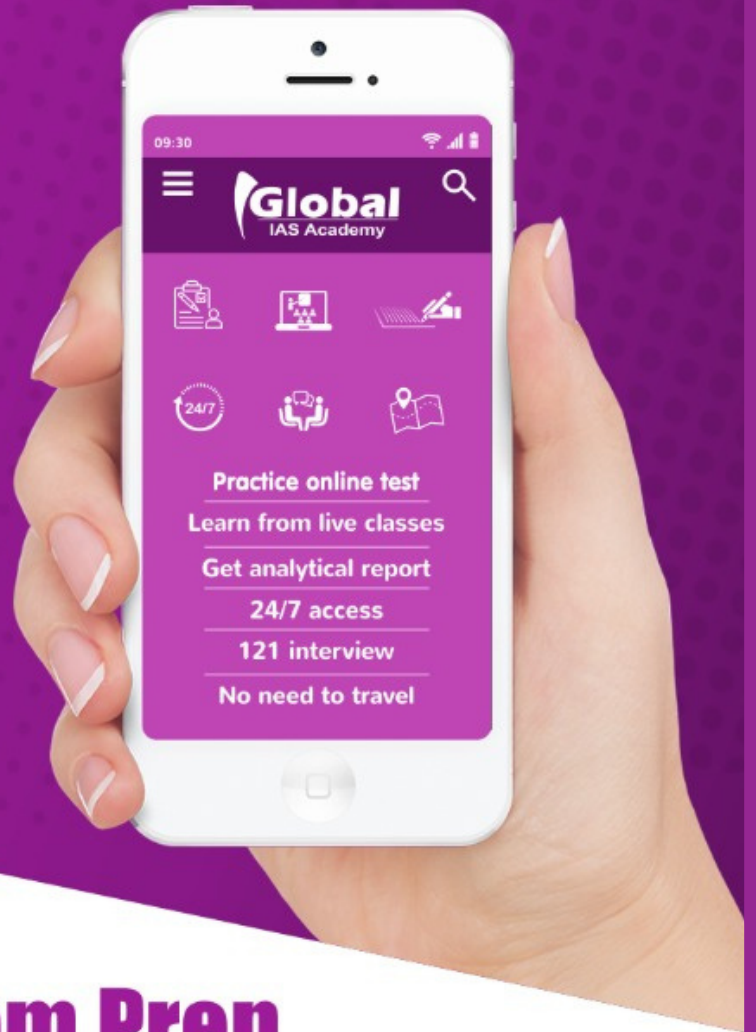
The facility would enhance the capability in design and development of command and control systems for surface-to-air missile (SAM) systems and ballistic missile defence (BMD) systems,

The DRDO officials briefed Naidu on the various ongoing projects and technological developments of missile complex laboratories Defence Research and Development Laboratory (DRDL) and Research Centre Imarat (RCI).

The exposition will display missile technologies and weapon systems and the centre will be the backbone for outreach activities.

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