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FEBRUARY 2021

GLOBAL IAS ACADEMY

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 February 2021.

The Magazine is divided into three sections:

Section 1: Topic Wise Current Affairs in Short Page 02 to Page 111

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 eventsPage 112 to Page 154

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 153 to Page 193

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

SECTION 1

Topic Wise Current Affairs in short

TOPIC 1 : IMPORTANT DAYS

World Wetlands Day: 02 February



- **World Wetlands Day** is observed every year on **February 2** globally. The day aims to raise awareness about the crucial role played by wetlands for people and our planet.
- The international theme for World Wetlands Day 2021 is **‘Wetlands and Water’**. 2021 marks 50 years of the Convention on Wetlands.
- The day is celebrated to mark the date of the adoption of the Convention on Wetlands on **February 2, 1971**, in the Iranian city of Ramsar on the shores of the Caspian Sea. World Wetlands Day was first celebrated in **1997**.

Indian Coast Guard celebrates its 45th Raising Day



- The **Indian Coast Guard (ICG)** is celebrating its **45th Raising Day** on **01 February 2021**. The ICG was formally established on **February 1, 1977**, by the **Coast Guard Act, 1978** of the Parliament of India. It operates under the **Ministry of Defence**.

- Beginning with just 7 surface platforms in 1978, ICG currently comprises of 156 ships and 62 aircraft in its inventory and is likely to achieve targeted force levels of 200 surface platforms and 80 aircraft by 2025.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- Director-General of Indian Coast Guard: Krishnaswamy Natarajan.

World Cancer Day: February 4



- **World Cancer Day** is observed every year on **4 February** by the **Union for International Cancer Control (UICC)**. The day is celebrated to raise awareness and education about cancer, and pressing governments and individuals across the world to take action against the disease.
- World Cancer Day 2019-21 theme: **‘I Am And I Will’**.
- Created in **2000**, World Cancer Day has grown into a positive movement for everyone, everywhere to unite under one voice to face one of our greatest challenges in history.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- Union for International Cancer Control Headquarters in: Geneva, Switzerland, Founded: 1933.

International Day of Human Fraternity: 4 February



- **International Day of Human Fraternity** is observed on **4th February** globally. International Day of Human Fraternity aims to underline the importance of raising awareness about different cultures and religions, or beliefs, and the promotion of tolerance.
- It also aims to educate people that tolerance, pluralistic tradition, mutual respect, and the diversity of religions and beliefs promote human fraternity.
- This year International Day of Human Fraternity 2021 theme: **A Pathway to the Future.**
- The UN General Assembly on **21 December** adopted a resolution declaring **4 February** as the International Day of Human Fraternity. The day is to be observed each year, beginning in **2021**.

International Day of Zero Tolerance to Female Genital Mutilation



- **International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female** is observed globally on **6 February**. This day is sponsored by the United Nations for their efforts to eradicate female genital mutilation. It was first introduced in **2003**.
- This year theme of International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female: **No Time for Global Inaction: Unite, Fund, and Act to End Female Genital Mutilation.**
- Female genital mutilation (FGM) comprises all procedures that involve altering or injuring the female genitalia for non-medical reasons and is recognized internationally as a violation of the human rights, the health and the integrity of girls and women.
- Girls who undergo female genital mutilation face short-term complications such as severe pain, shock, excessive bleeding, infections, and difficulty in passing urine, as well as long-term consequences for their sexual and reproductive health and mental health.

World Pulses Day: 10 February



- The **United Nations** designated **World Pulses Day** is observed every year on **10 February**.
- The day has been established by the **Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)** of the United Nations to recognize the importance of pulses (dry beans, lentils, dry peas, chickpeas, lupins) as a global food.
- The theme, "**Nutritious Seeds for a Sustainable Future,**" was decided back in 2016 when the

year was nominated to be celebrated as International Year of Pulses. Since then, the theme has remained the same from 2019 to 2021.

- In **2018**, the UN General Assembly decided to mark 10 February as World Pulses Day. The first WPD was held on **February 10, 2019**.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- Food and Agriculture Organization Head: Qu Dongyu.
- Food and Agriculture Organization Headquarters: Rome, Italy.
- Food and Agriculture Organization Established: 16 October 1945.

World Unani Day: 11 February



- **World Unani Day** has observed every year on **11th February**. The main objective of World Unani Day is to spread awareness about health care delivery through the Unani system of medicine through its preventive and curative philosophy.
- This day is celebrated every year to mark the birth anniversary of great Unani scholar and social reformer **Hakim Ajmal Khan**. The first Unani Day was celebrated in **2017** at **Central Research Institute of Unani Medicine (CRIUM), Hyderabad**.
- **Hakim Ajmal Khan** was an eminent Indian Unani physician who was a versatile genius, a

great scholar, a social reformer, a noted freedom fighter, an Unani medical educationist and founder of scientific research in Unani System of Medicine. He was one of the founders of the **Jamia Millia Islamia in New Delhi**.

International Day of Women and Girls in Science



- **International Day of Women and Girls in Science** is observed globally on **11 February**. International Day of Women and Girls in Science to recognize the critical role of women and girls play in science and technology.
- In December **2015**, the United Nations adopted a resolution to celebrate February 11 as the International Day of Women and Girls in Science.
- The Day is implemented by **UNESCO and UN-Women** in collaboration with institutions and civil society partners that aim to promote women and girls in science.
- The 2021 theme of the Day is **“Women Scientists at the forefront of the fight against COVID-19”**.
- In 2016 is the first time it was celebrated. The idea behind this day is to ensure equal participation and involvement of women and girls in the fields of **Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM)**.

International Epilepsy Day 2021



International Epilepsy Day

#EPILEPSYDAY *Second Monday in February*

- The **International Epilepsy Day** is observed on the **second Monday of February** every year across the world. In 2021, the International Epilepsy Day was observed on **February 08**.
- The day is organised jointly by the **International Bureau for Epilepsy (IBE)** and the **International League Against Epilepsy (ILAE)** to raise awareness about epilepsy and highlight the kinds of problems faced by victims, their friends and family.
- Epilepsy is a neurological disorder which makes a person go through sudden and recurrent episodes of sensory disturbances.

National Women’s Day of India 2021



- In India, the **National Women’s Day** is observed every year on **13 February** to commemorate the birth anniversary of **Sarojini Naidu**. This year Nation celebrates its **142nd** Birth Anniversary.
- She was born on **February 13, 1879**. She was famous for her nickname **‘Nightingale of India’** or **‘Bharat Kokila’** because of her poems.
- Sarojini Naidu was not only a freedom fighter,

but she also became the **first woman governor** of the **United Provinces, the present Uttar Pradesh**.

- She was one of the forefront leaders who led the Civil Disobedience Movement and the Quit India Movement. She was an important figure in India’s struggle for independence from colonial rule.

World Radio Day: 13 February



- **World Radio Day** is celebrated on **13 February** each year to recognize radio as a powerful medium, which brings people together from every corner of the globe, to promote diversity and help build a more peaceful and inclusive world.
- The theme of World Radio Day 2021 is **“New World, New Radio”**.
- The day was Proclaimed in **2011** by the Member States of UNESCO and adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in **2012** as an International Day, **February 13** became World Radio Day (WRD).

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- UNESCO headquarters: Paris, France.
- UNESCO Head: Audrey Azoulay.
- UNESCO Founded: 16 November 1945.
- United Nations Headquarters in New York, USA.
- Mr Antonio Guterres is the Secretary-General of

the United Nations.

February

National Productivity Day 2021

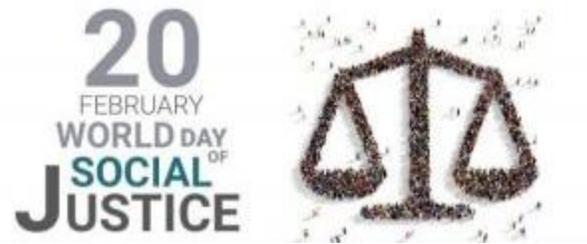


- **National Productivity Day** is observed every year in **India** on **February 12**. The objective of National Productivity Council is stimulating and promoting productivity and quality consciousness across all sectors in the country.
- The main observance of the day is to encourage all stakeholders in the implementation of productivity tools and techniques with contemporary relevant themes.
- The day is celebrated by the **National Productivity Council (NPC)** to promote productivity culture in India.
- National Productivity Council (NPC) under the **Ministry of Commerce and Industry Government of India** is a premier institution for propagating productivity movement in India. NPC works for providing solutions towards accelerating productivity, enhancing competitiveness, increasing productivity.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- Director-General of National Productivity Council: Arun Kumar Jha.
- National Productivity Council of India established: 1958.
- National Productivity Council of India HQ: New Delhi.

World Day of Social Justice observed globally on 20th



- **World Day of Social Justice** is celebrated annually all over the world on **20 February**. The **International Labour Organization** unanimously adopted the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization on **10 June 2008**.
- This year theme of World Day of Social Justice is **“A Call for Social Justice in the Digital Economy”**.
- Social justice is an underlying principle for peaceful and prosperous coexistence within and among nations. We uphold the principles of social justice when we promote gender equality or the rights of indigenous peoples and migrants. We advance social justice when we remove barriers that people face because of gender, age, race, ethnicity, religion, culture or disability.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- Headquarters of International Labour Organization: Geneva, Switzerland.
- Director-General of International Labour Organization: Guy Ryder.
- International Labour Organization Founded: 1919.

World Pangolin Day 2021: 20 February



- **World Pangolin Day** is celebrated on the “**Third Saturday of February**” every year. In 2021, the annual World Pangolin Day is being celebrated on **20 February 2020**. It marks the **10th** edition of the event.
- The day aims to raise awareness about these unique mammals and speed up conservation efforts. Pangolin numbers are rapidly declining in **Asia and Africa**.

6th Soil Health Card Day Observed on 19 February 2021



- Every year India observes the **Soil Health Card Day** on **19 February** to commemorate the launch of the **Soil Health Card (SHC) Scheme**, and create awareness about the benefits of the scheme.
- 2021 marks the **sixth year** of the launch of the SHC Scheme. Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the Soil Health Card (SHC) Scheme on **19th February 2015 at Suratgarh** in

Rajasthan.

- The scheme aims at issuing soil health cards to farmers every two years so as to provide a basis to address nutritional deficiencies in the soil. The scheme ensures additional income to farmers by an increase in yields and it also promotes sustainable farming.

World Thinking Day: 22 February



- **World Thinking Day**, originally known as **Thinking Day**, is celebrated annually on **22 February** by all Girl Scouts, Girl Guides and other girl groups worldwide.
- The day is observed to think about fellow brothers and sisters around the world, address their concerns and understand the true meaning of guiding.
- The theme for World Thinking Day 2021 is **peacebuilding**. Peacebuilding is at the heart of Girl Guiding and Girl Scouting and is as vital and relevant today as for the last 100 years.
- By completing the steps in the **Stand Together For Peace** activity pack, Girl Guides and Girl Scouts will; Stand Strong, Stand up and Stand Together for peacebuilding.

International Mother Language Day: 21 February

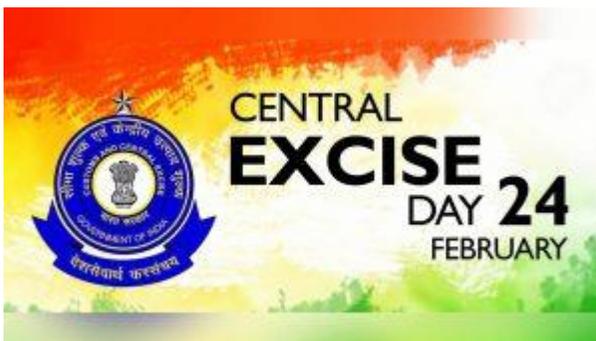


- The **International Mother Language Day (IMLD)** is observed annually on **21 February** to raise awareness regarding linguistic and cultural diversity and to promote multilingualism.
- The theme of the Day this year, **“Fostering multilingualism for inclusion in education and society”**.
- International Mother Language Day was proclaimed by the General Conference of the **United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)** in November **1999**. The UN General Assembly welcomed the proclamation of the day in its resolution of **2002**.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- UNESCO headquarters: Paris, France.
- UNESCO Head: Audrey Azoulay.
- UNESCO Founded: 16 November 1945.

Central Excise Day: 24 February



- **Central Excise Day** is celebrated every year on **February 24** across India. The day is being

celebrated to honour the service of the **Central Board of Excise and Custom (CBEC)** to the country.

- The day is celebrated to honour the officers associated with CBECE and their services. This is done to encourage the officers to carry out their duties with utmost sincerity.
- The officers, every year perform checking of corruption in goods from the manufacturing sector. The day is celebrated to commemorate the legislation of the **Central Excise and Salt act on 24 February 1944**.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- Chairman of Central Board of Excise and Custom: M. Ajit Kumar.
- Headquarters of Central Board of Excise and Custom: New Delhi.
- Central Board of Excise and Custom Founded: 1 January 1964.

World NGO Day: 27 February



- **World NGO Day** is celebrated every year on **27th February** globally. World NGO Day aims to inspire people to become more actively involved within NGOs (Charities, NPOs, CSOs) and encourage a greater symbiosis between NGOs and both the public and private sector.
- The universal concept of World NGO Day is

Celebrate, Commemorate and Collaborate the various NGOs around the world, and the people behind them. World NGO Day is a day for NGOs around the globe to share knowledge and experiences with one another.

- The Day was officially recognised and declared by the **12 member countries** (Belarus,

Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Russia, Norway and Sweden). It was marked for the first time by the UN, EU leaders and international organisations in **2014**.

TOPIC 2: AGREEMENTS

Ford joins hand with Google to offer cloud-based data services



- **Ford Motor Co** has joined hands with **Alphabet Inc's Google** to cooperate in software, **artificial intelligence and cloud computing**, to develop new consumer services and modernize internal operations.
- The automaker will deploy Google artificial intelligence technology to improve the efficiency of vehicle development, supply chain and manufacturing operations.
- The **Dearborn, Michigan-based automaker** has entered into a six-year partnership with the tech giant, under which it will incorporate the Android operating system of the Google into its Ford and Lincoln vehicles starting in **2023**. The customers of Ford will get built-in Google apps, including its map and voice technology.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- Ford Motor Co-Founder: Henry Ford.
- Ford Motor Co-Founded: 16 June 1903, Detroit, Michigan, United States.
- CEO of Google: Sundar Pichai; Headquarters: California, United States.

HAL inks deal with MIDHANI to develop, manufacture composite raw materials



- The state-owned aerospace and defence company, **Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL)** has signed a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** with Hyderabad-based **Mishra Dhatu Nigam Limited (MIDHANI)** for development and production of composite raw materials for use in aerospace.
- This is the first time that such an MoU has been signed for composite raw materials. The MoU was signed during the **Aero India 2021** on February 04, 2021, in **Bengaluru**.
- Composites raw materials are currently imported since there is no equivalent proven Indian approved/qualified supplier for these raw materials for the aircraft applications.
- These composite raw material, mainly in the

form of preregs, are used in platforms like **Light Combat Aircraft (LCA)**, **Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH)**, **Light Combat Helicopter (LCH)** and **Light Utility Helicopter (LUH)**.

India & Bahrain join hands for Renewable Energy



- The first **India-Bahrain Joint Working Group** meeting in the field of **Renewable Energy** was held in a virtual format on February 04, 2021, for promoting bilateral cooperation in the field of Renewable Energy.
- The Indian delegation was led by **Dinesh Dayanand Jagdale**, Joint Secretary, Ministry of New & Renewable Energy. **Abdul Hussain bin Ali Mirza**, President of Sustainable Energy Authority led the Bahraini delegation.
- Both sides also agreed to forge deeper engagement in capacity building and focused cooperation between concerned agencies as well as the private sector of the two countries in this sector, particularly in the field of **solar, wind and clean hydrogen**.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- King of Bahrain: Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa.
- Bahrain Capital: Manama.
- Bahrain Currency: Bahraini dinar.

Defence Ministry inks pact with BEL to procure ship-borne modern radio system



- The **defence ministry** has signed a contract with **Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL)** to procure a **software-defined radio tactical (SDR-Tac) ship-borne system** worth over **Rs 1,000 crore**. The procurement of SDR-Tac (software-defined radio tactical) “will bring strategic depth to the armed forces.
- The SDR-Tac is a four-channel multi-mode, multi-band, 19-inch rack-mountable, ship-borne software-defined radio system to serve ship-to-ship, ship-to-shore and ship-to-air voice and data communication for network-centric operations.

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.

ONGC to establish India’s first geothermal field development project in Ladakh



- India's first-ever **geothermal power project** will be implemented by state-owned **Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC)** at Puga village of eastern **Ladakh**. The project, known as **Geothermal Field Development Project**, will be implemented in three phases and is planned to commission by the end of **2022**.
- A tripartite agreement for this historic geothermal project was signed between Union Territory Administration Ladakh, Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC)-Leh and Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) Energy Centre on February 08, 2021.
- Energy from the project will be used for giving round-the-clock power supplies to neighbouring villages
- Hot Water from the springs will be used for space-heating
- Constructing hot swimming pools to attract tourists
- The development of geothermal potential will be useful during winter months, as Ladakh's hydropower stations are shut or work at lower efficiencies due to low flow rates.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- ONGC Energy Centre Chairman & Managing Director: Shashi Shanker.
- ONGC Energy Centre Headquarters: New Delhi.
- Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh: Radha Krishna Mathur.

India and Afghanistan Inks MoU for the construction of the Lalandar "Shatoot" Dam



- **India and Afghanistan** have signed a **Memorandum of Understanding MoU** over video-teleconferencing (VTC), for the construction of the **Shahtoot Dam (Lalander Dam)** on a tributary of the **Kabul river in Afghanistan**.
- The project, which costs nearly **\$ 300 million**, is a part of the New Development Partnership between India and Afghanistan.
- The MoU was signed between External Affairs Minister **Dr Jaishankar** and Afghanistan Foreign Minister **Mr Hanif Atmar**, in the presence of Indian Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and Afghanistan President Dr Mohammad Ashraf Ghani.
- The **Lalander [Shatoot] Dam** would meet the safe drinking water needs of **Kabul City**, provide irrigation water to nearby areas, rehabilitate the existing irrigation and drainage network, aid in flood protection and management efforts in the area, and also provide electricity to the region.
- This is the second major dam being built by India in Afghanistan, after the **India-Afghanistan Friendship Dam [Salma Dam]**, which was inaugurated in **June 2016**.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- Afghanistan Capital: Kabul.
- Afghanistan President: Ashraf Ghani.

- Afghanistan Currency: Afghan afghani.
- Afghanistan Official languages: Pashto, Dari.

Skyroot, Bellatrix signs MoU to use latter's orbital transfer vehicle

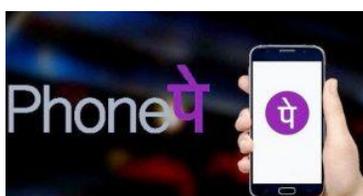


- **Skyroot Aerospace** has signed a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** with **Bellatrix Aerospace** to make use of the **Orbital Transfer Vehicle**, being developed by Bellatrix Aerospace, in the upper stage of **Vikram series** of launch vehicles, being developed by **Skyroot**.
- The vehicle is expected to launch to low earth orbit in **2023 on the Vikram rocket**. The vehicle is expected to help global operators reduce time and costs for launching communication and earth observation satellites.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- Founder and CEO of Skyroot Aerospace: Pawan Kumar Chandana.
- Skyroot Aerospace Founded: 12 June 2018.
- Skyroot Aerospace Headquarters location: Hyderabad.

PhonePe partners with Axis Bank on UPI multi-bank model



- Digital payments platform, **PhonePe** has announced that it has partnered with **Axis Bank** on a **Unified Payments Interface (UPI)** multi-bank model. The partnership will provide PhonePe users with the option to create and use multiple UPI IDs with **Axis Bank's "@axl" handle**.
- This collaboration with PhonePe strengthens our commitment towards digitisation of the **Indian payment ecosystem**. It will help expand our reach to customers and the merchant community while offering secure and seamless payment experiences.
- PhonePe had emerged as the top UPI app in January, processing **968.72 million transactions** worth ₹1.92 trillion, according to data by **National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)**.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- CEO of Phonepe: Sameer Nigam
- Headquarters location of Phonepe: Bengaluru, Karnataka.

India's Homegrown App MapMyIndia Ties Up With ISRO



- India's homegrown app **MapMyIndia** ties up with **ISRO** to build an alternative to **Google Maps**. The agreement between ISRO and MapmyIndia is suggested to become an alternative to Google maps and similar platforms. The collaboration with MapMyIndia will turn out to be a benefit for users because it will use digital maps of MapmyIndia and satellite imagery and earth observation data of

ISRO.

- According to this collaboration the mapping data along with the information regarding pollution, agricultural output, weather, land-use changes, flood and several disasters will be visible to the users. Rohan Verma, CEO of MapmyIndia, called the agreement a path-breaking milestone with the aim of fulfilling the objective of **Atamanirbhar Bharat**.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

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

Skill ministry launches fellowship programme in partnership with IIMs



- The **Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship** has launched the **Mahatma Gandhi National Fellowship (MGNF)** programme in partnership with **nine Indian Institutes' of Management (IIM)** across **India**.
- Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Minister **Mahendra Nath Pandey** chaired the event on **'Transforming skilling through strategic partnerships under SANKALP'** and rolled out the MGNF and other initiatives.
- The two-year government-funded programme has been launched under the World Bank loan

assisted programme **SANKALP (Skills Acquisition and Knowledge Awareness for Livelihood Promotion)**.

- The selected fellows under the programme will be given a stipend of about **Rs 50,000 per month** during the first year and **Rs 60,000 per month** during the second year.
- Initially, the fellows will be imparted training by the nine top IIMs of the country and after that, the fellows will work on strengthening the **District Skill Committees and the District Skill administration**.

HCL Tech inks pact with IIT Kanpur to build up competence in cybersecurity



- **HCL Technologies** has inked an agreement with the **Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur (IITK)** to collaborate in the area of cybersecurity. As part of the pact, the IT company will work with **C3iHub**, a specialised cybersecurity research centre at IITK.
- This collaboration will bring together the country's brightest minds, advanced research capabilities and global resources to develop advanced solutions in the area of cybersecurity.
- HCL and IITK will bring in real-world industry exposure to carry out joint initiatives and research.
- The teams will develop a security framework and solutions for cybersecurity challenges in current and future operational technologies as one of the first areas of interest.
- They will also work together to discover and manage cyber threats, vulnerabilities, and risks

for critical infrastructure.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- HCL Technologies CEO: C Vijayakumar.
- HCL Technologies Founded: 11 August 1976.
- HCL Technologies Headquarters: Noida.

CSIR inks MoU with Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to promote health research



- The **Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)** has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation** to support the development, conduct and promotion of health research in India.
- Gates Foundation and CSIR will work together to identify opportunities to initiate scientific and technological collaborations. These will focus on developing and testing new preventions, therapies and interventions that can help to solve major health concerns that affect India and other developing countries.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- CSIR Head: Shekhar C. Mande.
- CSIR Founded: 26 September 1942.
- CSIR HQ: New Delhi.

India & Ethiopia Sign Agreements On Visa Facilitation

and Leather Technology



- **India and Ethiopia** signed two agreements related to **visa facilitation and leather technology**. The Ethiopia Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Demeke Mekonnen Hassen is on a 4-day visit to India to hold useful and productive discussions on a range of bilateral and regional issues.
- During the course of meetings, India's External Affairs Minister **S Jaishankar** and Ethiopian minister **Hassen** agreed to expand India and Ethiopia bilateral agenda especially **defence, economic, S&T, digital and cultural cooperation**.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- Ethiopia Capital: Addis Ababa.
- Ethiopia Currency: Ethiopian Birr.
- Ethiopia President: Sahle-Work Zewde.
- Ethiopia Prime minister: Abiy Ahmed.

Indian Oil signs pact with Greenstat Norway for hydrogen fuel



- **Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL)** has signed a Statement of Intent with **Greenstat Hydrogen India Pvt. Ltd.**, a subsidiary of **Greenstat Norway**, to set up a **Centre of Excellence on Hydrogen**.
- Under this association, a Center of Excellence on Hydrogen (CoE-H) including CCUS and Fuel Cells, would be developed for clean energy by IndianOil and M/s Greenstat in cooperation with Indo-Norwegian Hydrogen Cluster companies/organizations.
- Facilitate transfer and sharing of technology, know-how and experience through the green Hydrogen value chain and other relevant technologies including hydrogen storage and fuel cells.
- CoE-H will be a vehicle for promoting R&D projects in Green and Blue Hydrogen between Norwegian and Indian R&D institutions/universities.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- Indian Oil Corporation Limited Headquarters: New Delhi, India.
- Indian Oil Corporation Limited Chairman: Shrikant Madhav Vaidya.

India & Maldives sign 5 deals to boost infrastructure



- External Affairs Minister (EAM), **S. Jaishankar** was on a two-day official visit to the archipelago nation the **Maldives** to review bilateral ties and development cooperation.

During this visit, Mr S Jaishankar handed over **1 lakh** additional doses of the made-in-India **COVID-19 vaccine** to the Maldives.

- With this, the total Covid vaccine doses gifted by India for the Maldives reaches two lakh. Jaishankar also offered a **\$40-million line of credit (LoC)** to support the development of sports infrastructure in the **Maldives**.
- Amendatory Agreement to repurpose an older **EXIM Bank of India Line of Credit of USD 25 million for Road Devt.**
- Letter of Intent between EXIM Bank and local authorities for financing a housing project of **2000 units** in Hulhumale.
- MoU on grant funding **USD 0.5 million** for a fish processing plant in Kendhikulhudhoo in the northern Maldives.
- MoU on capacity building and exchange of content and expertise between **Prasar Bharati and Public State Media, Maldives**.
- MoU on sustainable urban development between MoHUA and Ministry of national planning, housing and infrastructure, Maldives.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- President of the Maldives: Ibrahim Mohamed Solih.
- Capital of Maldives: Male; Currency of the Maldives: Maldivian Rufiyaa.

India, World Bank ink project for enhancing school education in Nagaland



- The **Government of India**, the **Government of**

Nagaland and the **World Bank** signed a **\$68 million** agreement for **“Nagaland: Enhancing Classroom Teaching and Resources Project”**, to enhance the governance of schools across Nagaland.

- The \$68 million loan from the **International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)**, has a final maturity of 14.5 years including a grace period of **5 (five) years**.
- The “Nagaland: Enhancing Classroom Teaching and Resources Project” will improve classroom instruction; create opportunities for the professional development of teachers, and build technology systems to provide students and teachers with more access to blended and online learning as well as allow better monitoring of policies and programmes.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- Chief Minister of Nagaland: Neiphiu Rio; Governor of Nagaland: R. N. Ravi.
- World Bank Headquarters: Washington DC, United States.
- World Bank President: David Malpass.
- World Bank Founded: July 1944.

India signs trade deal, \$100 million defence agreement with Mauritius



- The Indian foreign minister **S Jaishankar** was on an official visit to two key Indian Ocean region

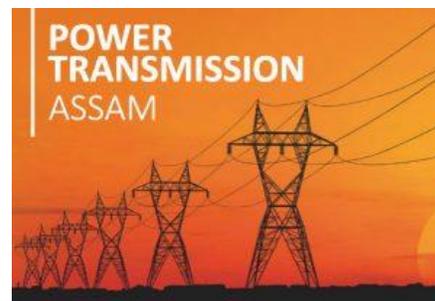
countries- **Maldives and Mauritius**. The External Affairs Minister (EAM) S Jaishankar visited the Island nation **Mauritius** to review the comprehensive and important bilateral relationship between the two nations.

- India signed a **Free Trade Agreement (FTA)** or **(Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Partnership Agreement- (CECPA))** with Mauritius.
- The FTA or CECPA is the first such pact with any African country, and will help Mauritius to emerge as a **“hub of Africa”**.
- India has also offered a **USD 100 million** Line of Credit (LoC) to Mauritius to facilitate the procurement of defence assets.
- Apart from this, an agreement has also been signed between the two countries to provide a Dornier aircraft and an **Advanced Light Helicopter Dhruv** on lease to Mauritius on a gratis basis for 2 years, so that the country can carry out patrolling activities and monitor its vast maritime domain more effectively.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- Prime Minister of Mauritius: Pravind Jugnauth; President: PrithvirajsingRoopun.
- Mauritius Currency: Mauritian rupee.
- Mauritius Capital: Port Louis.

India, AIIB sign agreement to improve Assam power transmission



- The **Government of India** and the **Asian**

Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) has signed a **\$304 million** loan agreement on February 23, 2021, for the **Assam Intra-State Transmission System Enhancement Project**.

- The project aims to improve the reliability, capacity and security of the power transmission network in the **northeastern state of Assam**.
- It includes constructing 10 transmission substations and laying transmission lines with the associated infrastructure, upgrade 15 existing substations, and transmission lines and existing ground wire to optical power ground

wire and provide technical assistance to support project implementation.

- The total estimated cost of the project is \$365 million. AIIB will finance \$304 million while the remaining funding of \$61 million will be done by the state government.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- President of Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank: JinLiquan.
- Headquarters of AIIB: Beijing, China.
- AIIB established: 16 January 2016.

TOPIC 3: APPOINTMENT

Facebook appoints Henry Moniz as its First Chief Compliance Officer



- **Facebook Inc.** has appointed **Henry Moniz** as its first-ever **Chief Compliance Officer**. He will join Facebook on **February 8** to lead the company’s global compliance team, to enhance its global compliance and risk management and promote the highest standards of legal and ethical conduct at the company.
- Prior to this, Henry Moniz had been the chief compliance officer and chief audit executive at

media company **ViacomCBS Inc.**

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- Chief Executive Officer of Facebook: Mark Zuckerberg.
- Facebook Headquarters: California, US.

Anish Shah appoint as new chairman of Mahindra Finance



- **Mahindra & Mahindra Financial Services** has announced the appointment of **Anish Shah** as

the chairman of the board, effective **April 2, 2021**. Shah is already a director of the company.

- He is the deputy managing director and group CFO of Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd. Shah takes over from **Dhananjay Mungale**.
- Mungale shall continue to be an Independent Director on the Board of MMFSL.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- Mahindra & Mahindra Financial Services Headquarters: Mumbai.
- Mahindra & Mahindra Financial Services Founded: 1991.

Ajay Singh re-elected Boxing Federation of India President

- Spicejet chairman **Ajay Singh** defeated **Ashish Shelar** in a high-profile contest to get re-elected as **president of Boxing Federation India** for a second term.
- As for his second tenure, Singh said the focus will be developed at the grassroots, sports science, women’s boxing and involving young administrators in the sport. He will focus on training of **Tokyo Olympics-bound boxers, grassroots development and women’s boxing**.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- Boxing Federation India established: February 25, 1949.

Andy Jassy set to replace Jeff Bezos as Amazon CEO



- **Amazon.com Inc** founder and CEO, **Jeff Bezos** has announced that he would step down as CEO of the company and become Executive Chairman in Q3 of 2021, i.e. with effect from July 01, 2021.
- **Andy Jassy**, who is currently serving as the chief executive of **Amazon Web Services (AWS)**, will replace Bezos as CEO of Amazon. Bezos started the company 27 years ago, on **5 July 1994**, as an internet bookseller.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- Amazon.com Inc Founded: 5 July 1994.
- Amazon.com Inc Headquarters: Seattle, Washington, United States.

Centre Appoints Praveen Sinha as interim Director of CBI



- **Department of Personnel and Training, under Personnel Ministry**, has appointed **Praveen Sinha**, as the interim director of the **Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI)**, with immediate

effect on 03 February 2021.

- He has been appointed in place of the incumbent chief **RK Shukla**, whose tenure came to an end on February 03, 2021.
- Sinha, a **1988-batch Gujarat cadre Indian Police Service (IPS) officer**, is currently an additional director at CBI, the premier investigating agency of India.
- Sinha shall look after the duties of Director CBI till the appointment of new director CBI, or until further orders, whichever is earlier.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- Central Bureau of Investigation Headquarters: New Delhi.
- Central Bureau of Investigation Founded: 1 April 1963.

S.N. Subrahmanyam appointed as Chairman of the National Safety Council



- The Ministry of Labour & Employment has appointed **S.N. Subrahmanyam** as the new **Chairman** of the **National Safety Council (NSC) of India** for a period of three years. Subrahmanyam is the CEO and Managing Director of L&T Ltd., India’s largest construction company.
- National Safety Council plays a major role to ensure safety in workplaces under new Occupational Safety, Health and Working

Conditions code, 2020 (OSH Code, 2020).

Google Cloud appoints Bikram Singh Bedi as MD for India



- **Google Cloud** has appointed **Bikram Singh Bedi** as the new **Managing Director** for its India Business. He will succeed **Karan Bajwa**, who has been elevated as **Vice president for the Asia Pacific (APAC) region** cloud operations at Google Cloud.
- At Google, Bikram Bedi will be responsible for leading Google Cloud’s sales and operations teams in this dynamic market.
- **Google Cloud** is also on track to launch its **Delhi** cloud region in India this year – its second after **Mumbai** that was launched in **2017**.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

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

Nigeria’s Okonjo-Iweala set to become the first female Chief of WTO



- Nigerian economist Ngozi **Okonjo-Iweala** has been chosen as the next Director-General of the **World Trade Organization (WTO)**.
- She would be the first woman as well as the first African nation to lead the organization. Okonjo-Iweala, the former finance minister of Nigeria, will succeed **Roberto Azevedo**, who stepped down in August 2020.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- World Trade Organization
Headquarters: Geneva, Switzerland.
- World Trade Organization Founded: 1 January 1995.

Michael Bloomberg Re-Appointed as United Nations Climate Envoy



- The United Nations Secretary-General **Antonio Guterres** re-appointed **Michael Bloomberg** as his Special Envoy on **Climate Ambition and Solutions**.
- Bloomberg is the founder and owner of Bloomberg LP, the parent company of

Bloomberg News. He was previously appointed as the U.N. special envoy for climate action between March 2018 and November 2019.

- Bloomberg will work to **strengthen the group of governments, companies, cities and financial institutions** that are working to reach carbon neutrality by 2050, in line with the goals of the **Paris Agreement**.
- He would also work to mobilise stronger and more ambitious climate action in the lead-up to 2021 United Nations Climate Change conference in Scotland in November 2021.

Satishwar Balakrishnan appointed as Aegon Life’s MD & CEO



- **Aegon Life Insurance**, India’s first digital-only life insurance company, elevated **Satishwar Balakrishnan** to be the **Managing Director & Chief Executive Officer**. Prior to joining Aegon Life, he has worked with IndiaFirst Life, Reliance Life and ICICI Prudential Life. He is a Chartered Accountant by qualification.
- **Satishwar**, who joined the company in July 2019 as Chief Financial Officer, will spearhead Aegon Life’s transformation into a digital-only life insurance company.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- Aegon Life Insurance is headquartered in Mumbai.
- Aegon Life Insurance Founded in 2008.

Tata Motors appoints Marc Llistosella as new CEO &MD



- **Tata Motors Limited** has appointed **Marc Llistosella** as its new **Chief Executive Officer (CEO)** and **Managing Director (MD)**. The appointment of Llistosella will be effective from July 1, 2021.
- He will replace current CEO & MD of Tata Motors, **Guenter Butschek**, who had expressed his desire to relocate to Germany at the end of the contract for personal reasons. Llistosella is the former president and CEO of Fuso Truck and Bus Corp. and head of Daimler Trucks in Asia.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- Tata Motors Founder: J. R. D. Tata.
- Tata Motors Founded: 1945, Mumbai.

Ajay Mathur elected new DG at special assembly of ISA



- The **International Solar Alliance (ISA)** has announced **Dr Ajay Mathur** as its new **Director-General** following his election at the first special assembly of ISA members. Dr Mathur

replaces **Mr Upendra Tripathy**, who has served as Director-General since the ISA was founded in 2015.

- ISA accelerate the demand for and use of safe, sustainable, and affordable solar energy for all. It aims to mobilize over \$1 trillion USD of investment into solar projects by 2030 through focused advocacy, policy and regulatory support, capacity building, and overcoming perceived investment barriers.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- International Solar Alliance Headquarters: Gurugram.
- International Solar Alliance Founded: 30 November 2015.
- International Solar Alliance Founded: Paris, France.

Justice Puligoru Venkata Sanjay Kumar sworn-in as Chief Justice of Manipur HC



- Justice **Puligoru Venkata Sanjay Kumar** has been sworn-in as the **Chief Justice of Manipur High Court** at Raj Bhavan, Imphal. He was appointed as Chief Justice of the High Court of Manipur by the President of India. Prior to this, he served as a Judge in the **Punjab and Haryana High Court**.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

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

Preeti Sinha appointed to head the United Nations Capital Development Fund



- The **UN Capital Development Fund** has appointed Indian-origin investment and development banker **Preeti Sinha** as its Executive Secretary, the highest leadership rank in the institution. She succeeds **Judith Karl**.
- He will work with a focus on providing micro-finance assistance to women, youth, small and medium-sized enterprises in under-served communities.
- The New York-based **United Nations Capital Development Fund** is an autonomous UN organization affiliated with UNDP. It was established in **1966**.
- The original mandate of UNCDF: to assist developing countries in the development of their economies by supplementing existing sources of capital assistance by means of grants and loans.
- The organisation provides micro-finance access to the 47 Least Developed Countries (LDCs) of the world, to help them unlock the full potential of public and private finance.

Ajai Malhotra becomes first Indian chairperson at UNHRC advisory



- **Ajai Malhotra** became the first Indian to be elected as the **Chairperson** of the **United Nations Advisory Committee** of the **Human Rights Council**. He has been on the Indian team negotiating issues such as biological diversity, climate change, desertification, education, energy, forestry, health, human rights, human settlements, intellectual property, international law, labour, ozone depletion, sustainable development and trade.
- Malhotra first joined the Indian Foreign Services in **1977**. Malhotra has previously served as ambassador to Russia, Kuwait, Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations, New York and Romania.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- Human Rights Council Founded: 15 March 2006.
- Human Rights Council President: Nazhat Shameem.
- Human Rights Council Headquarters: Geneva, Switzerland.

Vijay Sampla takes charge as Chairman of National Commission for SC



- Former Union Minister **Vijay Sampla** has assumed the charge of Chairman **National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC)**. He has been the former Union Minister of State for Social Justice & Empowerment from 2014 to 2019.
- NCSC is an Indian constitutional body under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, that works for the socio-economic development of the scheduled castes and to prevent atrocities against them.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- NCSC Founded: 19 February 2004.
- NCSC Headquarters: New Delhi.

Fullerton India Credit Company appointed Shantanu Mitra as CEO and MD



- **Fullerton India Credit Company** has appointed **Shantanu Mitra** as the new **CEO and Managing Director**. He has over 40 years of experience in financial services, with over 20 years at **Standard Chartered and Citibank**, where he had stints in **India, Singapore and Thailand**.
- His last role in Standard Chartered was Senior Regional Risk Officer, India, Middle East and Africa. His previous experience with Fullerton included a stint from 2010 to 2017.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- Fullerton India Credit Company Founded: 1994.
- Fullerton India Credit Company Headquarters: Mumbai.

Gautam Thakar made global CEO of OLX Autos



- **OLXGroup** appoints **Gautam Thakar** as global **CEO of OLX Autos**. He will lead a worldwide organisation with a workforce of more than 4,000 employees across **Asia, Africa, Latam, and the United States**.
- OLXGroup announced the appointment of Gautam Thakar as global CEO of OLX Autos effective March 15, 2021.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- OLXGroup Founded: 2006.
- OLXGroup Headquarters: Amsterdam, Netherlands.

Russian supermodel Vodianova is new UN goodwill ambassador



- Russian supermodel and philanthropist **Natalia Vodianova** has become a **United Nations goodwill ambassador**, to promote the sexual and reproductive rights of women and girls and tackle stigmas surrounding their bodies.
- She will be a campaigner for the **UN Population Fund**, which now calls itself the UN's sexual and reproductive health agency, known as UNFPA.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- UNFPA Headquarters: New York, New York, United States.
- UNFPA Head: Natalia Kanem.
- UNFPA Founded: 1969.

AU Small Finance Bank has named Sharad Goklani as President & CTO



- **AU Small Finance Bank** has named **Sharad Goklani** as its new President & CTO. He was earlier associated with **Equitas Small Finance Bank** as its EVP & Chief Technology Officer.
- As a part of his new appointment, Goklani will be based in Jaipur Rajasthan. Prior to Equitas, he was associated with Bharti Airtel and Bharti Telesoft. He holds a Master degree in computer application from Jaipur University.
- AU was started 25 years ago by Sanjay Agarwal, a merit holder Chartered Accountant and a first-generation entrepreneur.
- As per the official website, it was founded in Jaipur in 1996 as Au Financiers, a non-deposit taking **Non-Banking Finance Company (NBFC)**, it effectively worked on funding economic growth, especially for the under-served and un-served low & middle-class individuals.

TOPIC 4: AWARDS

50th Kerala State Film Awards conferred



- Chief Minister **Pinarayi Vijayan** has presented

the **50th Kerala State Film Awards 2019** and the **J C Daniel Award** at a function here. Pinarayi Vijayan released the **stamp** published in connection with the **International Film Festival of Kerala (IFFK)**.

- Veteran filmmaker **Hariharan**, who was conferred with the **J C Daniel Award**, is an artist who had travelled with cinema for about half a century and made films which went on to become milestones in the annals of **Malayalam tinsel town**. The film awards were also

distributed. Culture Minister A K Balan presided.

A.R. Rahman presented 'Alert Being Icon Award'



- Music composer **AR Rahman** and social activist from **Saidapet Hari Krishnan** were among the 14 people who were presented the fourth edition of the **Alert Being Awards 2020** by the NGO ALERT, for their **Good Samaritan work**.
- In his video message, Mr Rahman said ALERT had been doing a brilliant job in empowering a common man to save lives. Hari Krishnan had been appointed by the **Greater Chennai Corporation** as a district volunteer head for Covid-19 relief work.
- The Alert Being Icon Award for an organisation was presented to the Biocon Foundation founded by **Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw**.
- Thirty COVID-19 warriors were honoured with Alert Being Covid Frontline Warrior for their contribution during the pandemic. Alert Being Awards 2020 received 156 nominations from 15 States and 35 districts across India.

Steve Smith claims Allan Border Medal for third time in his career



- Former Australian captain **Steve Smith** won the **third Allan Border Medal** of his career at the Australian Cricket Awards for the period 2020-21. The Allan Border Medal recognises the most outstanding male Australian cricketer of the past season as voted by his peers, the media and umpires.
- Apart from this, **Beth Mooney** bagged Belinda Clarke Award, the top honour for a female player at the Australian Cricket Awards. This is the maiden Belinda Clarke Award for Mooney.

List of 2021 Australian Cricket Awards:

- Belinda Clark Award: Beth Mooney.
- Allan Border Medal: Steve Smith.
- Men's Test Player of the Year: Pat Cummins.
- Women's One Day International Player of the Year: Rachel Haynes.
- Male One Day International Player of the Year: Steve Smith.
- Female International Twenty20 Player of the Year: Beth Mooney.
- Male International Twenty20 Player of the Year: Ashton Agar.
- Female Domestic Player of the Year: Elyse Villani.
- Male Domestic Player of the Year: Shaun Marsh.
- Betty Wilson Young Cricketer of the Year: Hannah Darlington.
- Bradman Young Cricketer of the Year: Will Sutherland.
- Community Impact Award: Joshua Lalor.
- Hall of Fame inductions: Johnny Mullagh, Merv Hughes, Lisa Sthalekar.

Robert Irwin wins Wildlife Photographer of the Year 2021



- **Robert Irwin, an Australian wildlife photographer, has won the first prize in the Wildlife Photographer of the Year People’s Choice Award Contest.**
- Robert won the award for the image titled ‘bushfire’, which is the picture of the devastating **Australian Bushfire in 2020**, he captured using a drone, near the **Steve Irwin Wildlife Reserve in Cape York, Queensland**. The image shows a line of fire burning in between the bushes, dividing it into parts.
- Irwin’s image was chosen from a shortlist of **25 finalists** that received a total of **55,486 votes**. The Wildlife Photographer of the Year is the largest wildlife photography competition in the world, organised by the **Natural History Museum**.

Bengaluru Airport Bags ACI World’s ‘Voice Of The Customer’ Award



- The **Bangalore International Airport Limited’s (BIAL) or Kempegowda International Airport Bengaluru** has bagged global recognition from

the **Airports Council International World’s ‘Voice of the Customer’ award**.

- The ‘Voice of the Customer’ recognises airports that continued to prioritise their customers and remained committed to ensuring that their voice was heard during the **Covid-19 pandemic in 2020**.
- BLR Airport has made significant efforts in gathering passenger feedback through **ACI’s Airport Service Quality (ASQ) programme** and this helped better understand the customers and demonstrate BIAL’s commitment towards delivering a superior customer experience under trying circumstances.
- Under the **#WeAreHereForYou umbrella of BIAL**, various campaigns were launched to spread the message and rebuild passenger confidence in air travel following the outbreak of **Covid-19 in 2020**.

Manasa Varanasi crowned VLCC Femina Miss India World 2020



- Telangana-based **Manasa Varanasi** has been crowned as the winner of **VLCC Femina Miss India World 2020**. Manasa Varanasi was crowned by the winner of Miss India 2019, **Suman Ratan Singh Rao** from Rajasthan.
- The 23-year-old will now represent India at the **70th Miss World pageant** in December 2021. Born in Hyderabad, Manasa Varanasi is an engineer by profession and works as a financial information exchange analyst.

Other winners:

- **ManikaSheokand** of Haryana: **Miss Grand India 2020**
- **Manya Singh** of Uttar Pradesh: **Miss India 2020 runner-up**

“Koozhangal” Wins Tiger Award at Rotterdam International Film Festival 2021



- The Tamil film “Koozhangal” has won “Tiger” award, at the 50th edition of the International Film Festival Rotterdam 2021. The Tiger award is the top honour of the festival, given for best film. Koozhangal (meaning Pebbles) has been Produced by **Nayanthara** and directed by **Vinod Raj PS**.
- This is the second Indian film to win this international award and the first Tamil Film. The first Indian film was “Durga” directed by the Malayalam director **Shashidharan**. The Tiger Award worth **Euro 40,000 cash prize**, is shared between the director and producer of the winning film.

Four Women Scientists wins SERB Women Excellence Award 2021



- The **Science and Engineering Research Board (SERB)**, a statutory body of the **Department of Science and Technology (DST)** has announced the SERB Women Excellence Award for the year 2021, on the occasion of the **International Day of Women and Girls in Science**. Four young women fellows of **National Science Academies** have been awarded **SERB Women Excellence Award 2021**.

The winners include:

- **Dr Shobhna Kapoor** – Assistant Professor at Indian Institute of Technology Bombay, working in the area of Chemical Biology with expertise in ‘Host-Pathogen Interactions and Membrane Biology, Chemical Biology and Biophysics’
- **Dr Antara Banerjee** – Scientist B National Institute For Research In Reproductive Health, Mumbai, Maharashtra from the Health Sciences area with expertise in Signal Transduction, Biology of Reproduction and Endocrinology,
- **Dr Sonu Gandhi** – Scientist D from National Institute Of Animal Biotechnology, Hyderabad from Bionanotechnology area focusing on Nanosensors, Design and Fabrication of Label-free Biosensors

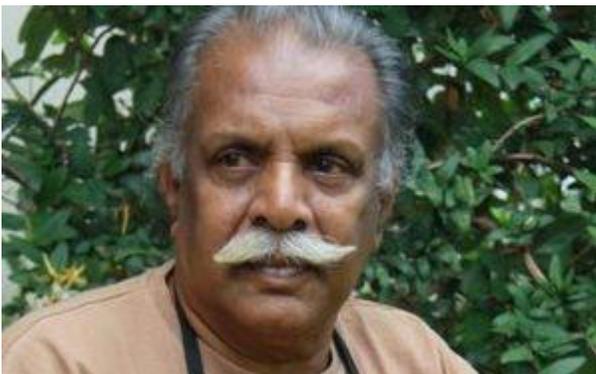
- **Dr Ritu Gupta** – Assistant Professor at Indian Institute Of Technology Jodhpur, Rajasthan working on Nanotechnology with expertise in Materials Science, Nanodevices and Sensors, Health & Energy.

Delhi Police receives Best Marching Contingent Trophy-2021



- Defence Minister **Rajnath Singh** presented the trophies of **best marching contingents** of the **Republic Day Parade 2021** in New Delhi on February 15, 2021.
- **Jat Regimental Centre** bagged the trophy of best marching contingent among the Tri-Services while **Delhi Police** was adjudged as the best marching contingent among the **Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF)** and other auxiliary services.

Theodore Baskaran won Sanctuary Lifetime Service Award 2020



- **S. Theodore Baskaran** who is a writer, a historian, a naturalist and an activist has won the **Sanctuary Lifetime Service Award, 2020**. The award was instituted by the **Sanctuary Nature Foundation**.
- Theodore Baskaran was chosen for the award in the light of his dedication to the wildlife conservation. He won the award for his writing prowess in English and Tamil contributing towards the conservation discourse. He was also chosen for the award in the backdrop of inspiring the young naturalists.
- Some of his books in the English language include- **Dance of the Sarus: Essays of a Wandering Naturalist; Book of Indian Dogs and A Day with the Shama: Essays on Nature**.

YS Jagan Mohan Reddy conferred SKOCH Chief Minister of the Year Award



- The **Andhra Pradesh** Chief Minister, **Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy** has been conferred the **Skoch Chief Minister of the Year Award**. The Award has been presented to the CM by Chairman, Skoch Group, **Sameer Kochhar** personally at Tadepalli in Andhra Pradesh. The award selection was based on a study of project-level outcomes in various States.
- Similarly, initiatives have been taken across the government to respond to COVID-19 and have shown desirable outcomes. All the above and more is evident in a year-long study of 123 projects from across sectors in Andhra Pradesh.

- The State has taken several revolutionary measures in the past two years to make governance more efficient and transparent. Innovative measures have been taken across sectors, the credit for which goes to the Chief Minister.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

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

Bhim Army’s Chandra Shekhar Azad named in TIME’s list



- Bhim Army Chief **Chandra Shekhar Aazad** and five Indian-origin personalities have been featured in the **2021 TIME100 Next**. TIME100 Next 2021 is the **second edition** of the annual list of **Time magazine’s 100 ‘emerging leaders who are shaping the future.’**
- Bhim Army is a **Dalit rights organisation** based in **Uttar Pradesh** to help Dalits escape poverty through education. It was founded by **Satish Kumar, Vijay Ratan Singh and Chandrashekhar Azad in 2015.**

The five Indian-origin persons in Time100 Next list are:

- Twitter lawyer: **Vijaya Gadde**
- UK’s Finance Minister: **Rishi Sunak**
- Instacart founder and CEO: **Apoorva Mehta**
- Get Us PPE executive director and

doctor: **Shikha Gupta**

- Founder of nonprofitUpsolve’s: **Rohan Pavuluri**

Hyderabad Recognised as ‘2020 Tree City of the World’



- Telangana’s capital, **Hyderabad** has been recognized as a **2020 Tree City of World**, by the **United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)** and the **Arbor Day Foundation**, for its commitment to growing and maintaining urban forests.
- Hyderabad is the only city from India to have been recognized as a Tree City, to date. With this recognition, it has joined a network of like-minded global cities that recognise the importance of trees in building healthy, resilient and happy cities.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- Food and Agriculture Organization Head: Qu Dongyu
- Food and Agriculture Organization Headquarters: Rome, Italy.
- Food and Agriculture Organization Established: 16 October 1945.

Union Bank Of India wins World HRD Congress Awards



- **Union Bank of India** was awarded “**Best Service Provider**” in **Human Resources** and also the best institution for “**Excellence in Learning & Development**” at the **29th Global HRD Congress awards**.
- **Kalyan Kumar**, Chief General Manager, HR was named as “**Chief Human Resources Officer of the Year**”.
- Global HRD Congress Awards are given to institutions annually for the best HR practices under different categories. The eminent jury which consists of the best in the industry will select the organizations taking into account their remarkable achievements in HR.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- Union Bank of India Headquarters: Mumbai.
- Union Bank of India CEO: Rajkiran Rai G.
- Union Bank of India Founded: 11 November 1919.

Dadasaheb Phalke International Film Festival Awards 2021 announced



The prestigious **Dadasaheb Phalke International Film**

Festival awards 2021 were announced, to honour the best in Indian cinema, television, music, and OTT. Late actor **Sushant Singh Rajput** was posthumously awarded ‘**Critics Best Actor**’ for his performance in **Dil Bechara**.

The winner of the Award for 2021 are as follows:

1. Best Actor (Female): **Deepika Padukone, Chhapaak**
2. Best Actor (Male): **Akshay Kumar, Laxmii**
3. Critic’s Best Actress: **Kiara Advani, Guilty**
4. Critic’s Best Actor: **Late Sushant Singh Rajput, Dil Bechara**
5. Best Film: **Tanhaji: The Unsung Warrior**
6. Best International Feature Film: **Parasite**
7. Most Versatile Actor – **Kay Kay Menon**
8. Best Director: **Anurag Basu, Ludo**
9. Best Actor in a Supporting Role: **Vikrant Massey, Chhapaak**
10. Best Actress in Supporting Role: **Radhika Madan, Angrezi Medium**
11. Best Actor in Comic Role: **Kunal Kemmu, Lootcase**
12. Best Actor (Web Series): **Bobby Deol, Aashram**
13. Best Actress (Web Series): **Sushmita Sen, Aarya**
14. Best Web Series: **Scam (1992)**
15. Album of the Year: **Titliyaan**
16. Best Television Series: **Kundali Bhagya**
17. Photographer of the Year: **DabooRatnani**
18. Style Diva of the Year: **Divya Khosla Kumar**
19. Best Actress in Television Series: **Surbhi Chandna**
20. Best Actor in Television Series: **Dheeraj Dhoopar**

- 21. Performer of the Year: Nora Fatehi
- 22. Outstanding Contribution to Film Industry: Dharmendra
- 23. Outstanding Contribution to Literature in Indian Cinema: Chetan Bhagat

Biden admn names Anjali Bharadwaj for anti-corruption award



- **Anjali Bharadwaj**, an Indian social activist working on issues of transparency and accountability, is one of the 12 “courageous”

individuals named by the Biden administration for the newly-instituted **International Anti-Corruption Champions Award**.

- The 48-year-old Bhardwaj has served as an active member of the Right to Information Movement in India for over two decades. She is the founder of the **SatarkNagrikSangathan (SNS)**, a citizens’ group which promotes transparency and accountability in government and encourage the active participation of citizens.
- The Biden administration has announced this International Anti-Corruption Champions Award, to recognise individuals who have worked tirelessly, often in the face of adversity, to defend transparency, combat corruption, and ensure accountability in their own countries, so as to combat such issues.

TOPIC 5: BANKING

PNB Restricts Withdraw of Money from non-EMV ATMs



- **Punjab National Bank (PNB)** has decided to restrict its customers from withdrawing money from **non-EMV automated teller machines (ATMs)** with effect from **01 February 2021**, in an attempt to check frauds, related to money

transactions.

- This restriction will apply to both, financial and non-financial transactions. To overcome this, PNB will introduce **OTP based systems for withdrawing cash**.

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.

RBI to Set up Committee on Urban Co-op banks



- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** will set up an expert committee on **Urban Co-operative Banks (UCBs)**. The committee, involving all stakeholders, will provide a medium-term road map for strengthening the **sector, enable faster resolution/rehabilitation of UCBs**.
- Along with enabling faster resolution of UCBs, the committee will also examine critical aspects related to the urban co-op banks.
- The provisions of the **Banking Regulation (Amendment) Act, 2020** have become applicable to **Primary (Urban) Co-operative Banks (UCBs) from June 26, 2020**.
- The amendments have brought near parity in supervisory and regulatory powers between UCBs and commercial banks in respect of regulatory powers, including those related to **governance, audit, and resolution**.

Federal Bank launches ‘FedFirst’ savings account scheme for children



- **Federal Bank** has announced the launch of **“FedFirst”**, a special **savings account scheme** for children below **18 years of age**. The account helps children develop healthy saving and spending habits, thereby giving them the freedom to **save, spend and earn**.
- The account is designed to enable children to learn the importance of money management. The account comes with unique features and offers.
- The account holder is provided with a FedFirst contactless Debit Card with a daily cash withdrawal limit of **₹2,500** and POS/e-com limit of **₹10,000**, in addition to free online facilities including access to internet banking, mobile alerts and e-mail alerts.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- Federal Bank MD & CEO: Shyam Srinivasan.
- Federal Bank HQ: Aluva, Kerala.

RBI to conduct bond purchases for Rs 20,000 crore



- **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has announced that it will purchase four government securities (G-Secs) that amount to **₹20,000 crores**.
- The central bank will purchase it on February 10, 2021, under the **open market operations (OMOs)**.
- This move was announced in aftermath of the

yields that were moving up to touch the intra-day high of **6.1634 per cent recently**. The RBI was concerned about the higher government borrowing.

- After the announcement of the OMO purchase was made, the yield on the benchmark **10-year G-Sec slowed down by 3-4 basis points**. It now carries a coupon rate of **5.77 per cent** as opposed to its previous closing yield of **6.1283 per cent**.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

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

RBI Organises Financial Literacy Week from February 8-12



- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has launched the **Financial Literacy Week (FLW)** from February 8-12, 2021, to propagate financial education. RBI conducts Financial Literacy Week (FLW) every year **since 2016** to propagate financial education messages on a particular theme every year across the country, through a focused campaign.
- The theme for 2021 FLW is **"Credit Discipline and Credit from Formal Institutions"**.
- Banks have been advised to disseminate the information and create awareness among its customers and the general public. Further, RBI will undertake a centralized mass media campaign during the month of **February**

2021 to broadcast essential financial awareness messages to the general public.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

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

RBI releases Annual Report of Ombudsman Schemes for 2019-20



- **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has released the **Annual Report of the Ombudsman Schemes** for the year **2019-20**. There was an increase of around **65 per cent** in the receipt of complaints out of which almost **92 per cent** have been disposed of.
- RBI has three **Ombudsman- Banking, Non-Banking Finance Company (i.e. NBFC) and digital transactions**. A common man can approach this Ombudsman for their grievances.
- The Banking Ombudsman received major complaints regarding **ATM & Debit Cards, Mobile & Electronic Banking**.
- NBFC's Ombudsman received most complaints about non-observance of regulatory guidelines, lack of transparency in contract/ loan agreement and levy of charges without notice.
- Digital Transactions Ombudsmen received most complaints about fund transfer. RBI has taken various measures for creating awareness among various stakeholders to minimise the grievances.

- As announced in the Monetary Policy Statement last week, the three Ombudsman Schemes are being merged and integrated into a single scheme which will be rolled out starting from June this year.

ICICI Lombard launches Corporate India Risk Index



- Private general insurer **ICICI Lombard** has launched the ‘**Corporate India Risk Index**’. This is intended to be a unified, standardised corporate risk index that spans industries and companies.
- This will help companies understand the level of risk that their business is facing and also assist in developing a successful risk aversion plan. It has worked with consulting firm Frost and Sullivan to develop the risk measurement tool.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- ICICI Lombard CEO: Bhargav Dasgupta.
- ICICI Lombard Headquarters: Mumbai.
- ICICI Lombard Founded: 2001.

RBI constitutes 8-member expert panel for strengthening Urban Co-operative Banks



- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has constituted an eight-member expert committee on Primary (**Urban**) **Co-operative Banks (UCBs)** to examine issues and suggest a road map for strengthening the sector. The committee will be chaired by the former RBI Deputy Governor **N. S. Vishwanathan**
- Assess the regulatory measures taken by the RBI and other authorities in respect of UCBs and their impact over the last five years to identify key constraints and enablers in fulfilment of their socio-economic objective.
- Review the current regulatory approach and recommend suitable measures to strengthen the sector.
- Suggest effective measures for faster rehabilitation and resolution of UCBs and assess the potential for consolidation in the sector

Other members

- **Harsh Kumar Bhanwala:** Former Chairman of the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) ,
- **Mukund Chitale:** Chartered Accountant
- **NC Muniyappa and RN Joshi:** retired Indian Administrative Service officers
- **MS Sriram:** IIM Bengaluru Professor
- **Jyotindra Mehta:** President of the National Federation of Urban Cooperative Banks and

Credit Societies

- **Neeraj Nigam:** Chief General Manager-in-Charge, Department of Regulation, RBI

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

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

ICICI Lombard partners with Flipkart to offer 'Hospicash' insurance



- The e-commerce company **Flipkart** has partnered with **ICICI Lombard** to offer its customers the '**Group SafeGuard**' insurance, a group health insurance policy.
- The 'Group SafeGuard' comes with daily cash benefits starting from **Rs 500**, and '**Hospicash**' benefit for Flipkart consumers.
- The product will allow consumers to avail a payout for each day of hospitalisation.
- The fixed daily amount will enable consumers to pay for incidental medical or emergency expenses.
- The insurance is affordably priced, paperless, and flexible; covering both accidental hospitalisations or planned surgeries/treatment.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- Flipkart headquarters: Bengaluru, Karnataka.
- Flipkart CEO: Kalyan Krishnamurthy.
- ICICI Lombard CEO: Bhargav Dasgupta.
- ICICI Lombard Headquarters: Mumbai.
- ICICI Lombard Founded: 2001.

RBI permits residents to make remittances to IFSCs under LRS



- The **Reserve Bank of India** has permitted resident individuals to make remittances under the **Liberalised Remittance Scheme (LRS)** to **International Financial Services Centres (IFSCs)** in the country.
- The decision of the RBI is aimed at deepening the financial markets in the IFSCs and providing an opportunity for resident individuals to diversify their portfolios.
- The RBI has reviewed the extant guidelines on LRS and decided to permit resident individuals to make remittances under LRS to IFSCs set up in India under the **Special Economic Zone Act, 2005**.
- The remittance shall be made only for making investments in IFSCs in securities, other than those issued by entities/companies resident (outside IFSC) in India. Any funds lying idle in the account for a period up to **15 days** from the date of its receipt into the account shall be immediately repatriated to domestic **INR account** of the investor in India.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- RBI 25th Governor: Shaktikant Das; Headquarters: Mumbai; Founded: 1 April 1935, Kolkata.
- India's first IFSC: Gujarat International Finance Tec-City.

RBI brings State Bank of Sikkim under its regulatory purview

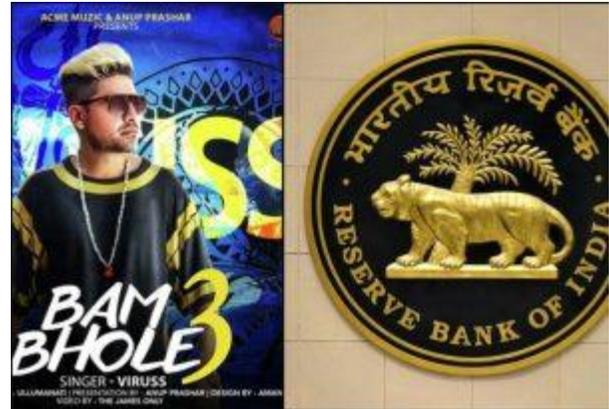


- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has brought the **State Bank of Sikkim** under its regulation. Till now, RBI had the right and obligation to function as a banker to all the state government except for the **state government of Sikkim**.
- Now the bank will be regulated by the RBI on a par with other banks, however, the bank's ownership structure will not change.
- The State Bank of Sikkim was established as an autonomous body wholly owned by the Government of Sikkim, in the year 1968, five years before Sikkim became part of India in **1973**.
- It was established under the **State Bank of Sikkim Proclamation, 1968**.
- The bank provides treasury operations for the state government and operates only within the jurisdiction of Sikkim.
- The bank currently has **42 branch offices** and operates three revenue counters for government works.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

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

RBI ropes in Punjabi rapper for awareness campaign on cyber fraud



- The **RBI** has roped in Punjabi singer-rapper **Viruss** in its public awareness campaign. The campaign also includes **Viruss' popular 2017 Indie hit 'Bam Bhole'** that was recreated for **Akshay Kumar-Kiara Advani starrer Laxmii**.
- As cyber frauds continue to increase, the Reserve Bank of India has undertaken an unusual measure to spread awareness.
- The apex bank that has been very active on social media since the lockdown urges tech-savvy netizens to stay alert or **'satark'** against common fraudsters and cybersecurity threats, including in UPI.
- The RBI has been running the campaign **'RBI Kehta Hai'** on social media accounts since 2016 but has never been accompanied by peppy music.
- Since 2016 when it created the tagline **RBI Kehta Hai**, the central bank's communication has been centred on financial literacy and public awareness towards frauds, etc.
- The bank uses social media to talk about the

facilities it offers for senior citizens, cybersecurity, digital banking, and setting limits on card transactions.

ICICI Bank launches 'Namma Chennai Smart Card'



- **ICICI Bank** has announced the launch of a **Common Payment Card System (CPCS)** in partnership with the **Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC)** and **Chennai Smart City Limited (CSCL)** to provide citizens with a one-stop solution for making various kind of payments.
- The prepaid card also facilitates retail payments within Chennai as well as in retail stores and e-commerce websites across the country. This will offer a common payment card platform to residents for making payments for various services within the city.
- The Namma Chennai Smart Card has various features, which residents can manage seamlessly online on a dedicated customer portal*. These include features like **card block/unblock, activation, pin-reset, etc.**
- Additionally, in the coming days, residents will also be able to reload the card digitally through UPI on the customer portal or the iSmart City app. Customers will also get exciting discount offers on the card around the year, which will be promoted in the coming days on the Bank's website.
- Users also have the option to manage the card

online through a dedicated customer portal or the iSmart City app.

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.

SBI joins JPMorgan's blockchain payments network



- **State Bank of India** has tied up with **JPMorgan** to use the US bank's blockchain technology to speed up overseas transactions.
- The tie-up is expected to reduce SBI customers' transaction costs and time taken for payments. SBI has joined **Liink**, a new blockchain-based interbank data network developed by JPMorgan. By integrating the technology, the bank expects to reduce transaction costs and improve cross-border payments for its customers.
- Liink is a peer-to-peer network and ecosystem operating under the umbrella of JPMorgan's blockchain- and digital-currency-focused business, dubbed Onyx.
- **Piloted in 2017**, the product was originally referred to as Interbank Information Network and rebranded as Liink in **October 2020**.
- The Liink solution has enlisted more than 400

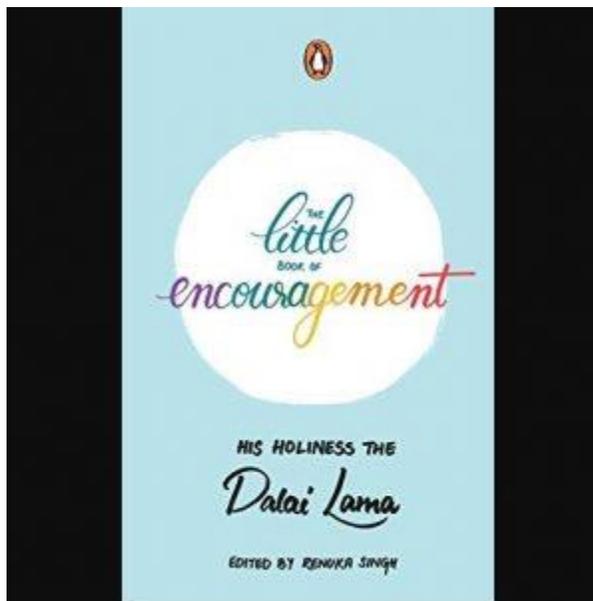
financial institutions and corporations in 78 countries, including 27 of the world’s top 50 banks. The network has around 100 live banks on the network, including both state-owned and private institutions.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- JPMorgan CEO: Jamie Dimon.
- JPMorgan Headquarters: New York, United States
- JPMorgan Founder: J. P. Morgan.
- SBI Chairperson: Dinesh Kumar Khara.
- SBI Headquarters: Mumbai.
- SBI Founded: 1 July 1955.

TOPIC 6: BOOKS AND AUTHOR

Dalai Lama pens new book ‘The Little Book of Encouragement’



- Tibetan spiritual leader the **Dalai Lama** has come out with his new book titled ‘**The Little Book of Encouragement**’, in which he has shared quotes and words of wisdom to promote human happiness. The book has been edited by **Renuka Singh** and published by **Penguin Random House**.
- The Little Book of Encouragement contains 130 quotes related to how to deal with the new realities of the panic-stricken world, combat rising extremism, polarity and climate change

besides Dalai Lama’s views on Tibet.

Hunter Biden to Release Memoir ‘Beautiful Things’



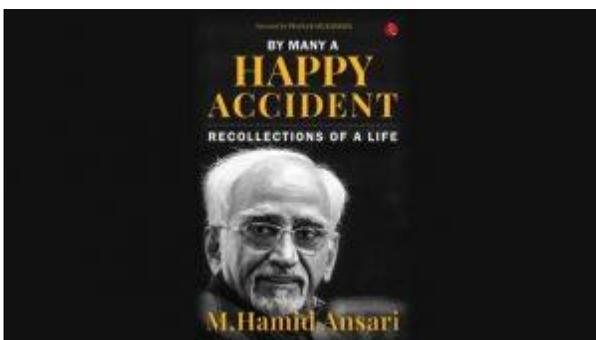
- United States President **Joe Biden’s** son, **Hunter Biden**, is publishing his memoir titled “**Beautiful Things**”, which narrates about his struggles with addiction and drug abuse. The book is scheduled to be published in the United States on April 6 by Gallery Books, an imprint of **Simon & Schuster**.
- The 51-year-old Hunter Biden has narrated his personal story about how he was a drug addict-from his first sips of alcohol as a child, when he was dealing with the aftermath of a family tragedy, to his crack-cocaine use and how he fixed that problem.

“Platform Scale: For a Post-Pandemic World”
authored by Sangeet Paul Choudhary



- A Book titled **‘Platform Scale: For a Post-Pandemic World’** has been authored by **Sangeet Paul Choudhary**. It is published by **Penguin Random House India**. It explains the importance of inner workings of platform business models and their ability to scale rapidly. The 1st edition of Platform Scale was published in **2015**.
- The book tells how the decade leading up to the COVID-19 pandemic witnessed the rise of platform business models as they drove stock market gains and extended their influence across the economic and political activity.

‘By Many a Happy Accident: Recollections of a Life’
 authored by **M Hamid Ansari**

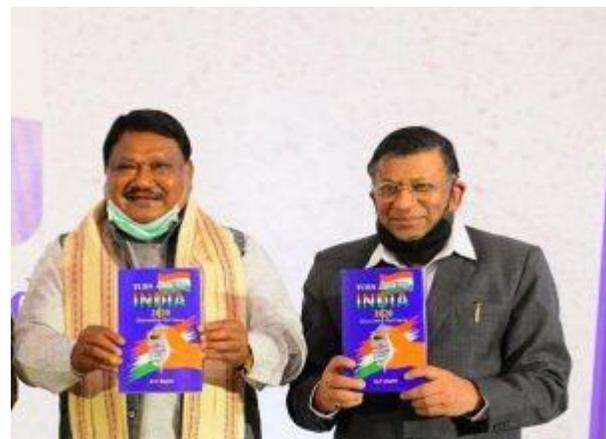


- A book titled **‘By Many a Happy Accident: Recollections of a Life’** has been authored by **M Hamid Ansari**. Mohammad Hamid Ansari was the **vice president of India and chairman of the Rajya Sabha** for two consecutive terms from **2007 to 2017**.
- A former diplomat, he served as ambassador to the United Arab Emirates, Afghanistan, Iran, and Saudi Arabia, as high commissioner to

Australia and as permanent representative to the United Nations in New York.

- The book is an account of a life of unplanned happenings that took M. Hamid Ansari away from his preferred fancy for academia to professional diplomacy and then be co-opted in public life and catapulted to the second-highest office in the land for two consecutive terms. None of his predecessors, except Dr Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, had experienced this honour.

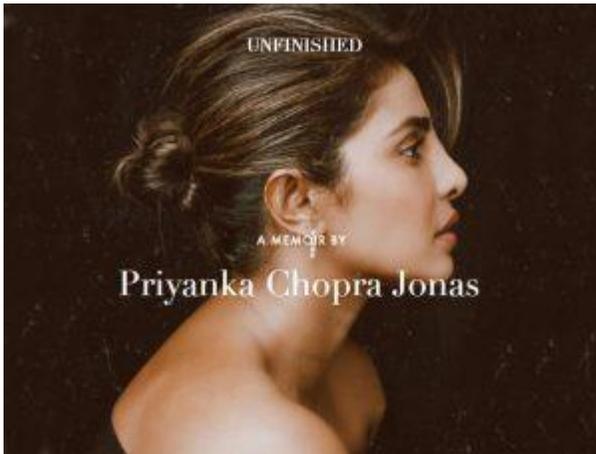
JualOram launches book on economic awareness in India



- Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Defence and MP **JualOram** has launched **‘Turn Around India: 2020- Surmounting Past Legacy’**, a book on creating economic awareness among masses. The book is authored by **RP Gupta**.
- ‘Turn Around India: 2020’ is an intimate narrative of Gupta’s experiences and how he attained success through sheer hard work and determination.
- The book provides a practical and viable option for reviving Indian economy for creating new jobs and enlarging public income and also, the structural reforms such as fiscal and monetary stimuli for overcoming economic crisis arising due to pandemic.
- The book talks about the economic history of

India enabling to identify the strengths and weakness and take corrective actions.

Actor Priyanka Chopra Jonas’ memoir named ‘Unfinished’



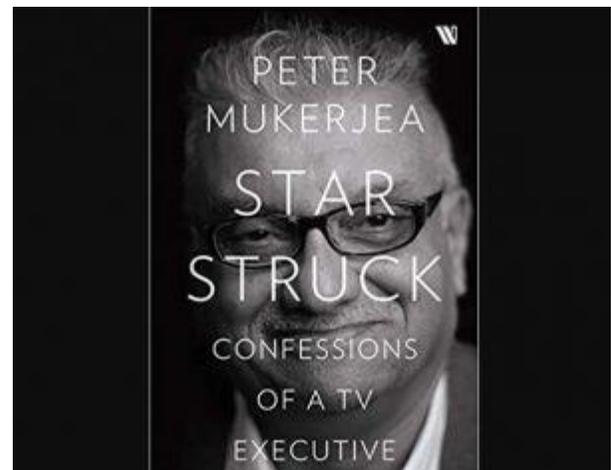
- Actor-producer **Priyanka Chopra Jonas** officially turned author with the release of her first book, “**Unfinished: A Memoir**”, which she described as “honest, raw and vulnerable”. The end result is a book, published by the Michael Joseph imprint, which covers her dual-continent 20-year-long career as an actor and producer and her work as a **Unicef Goodwill Ambassador**.
- The memoir promises to offer insights into Priyanka Chopra Jonas’ childhood in India, her formative teenage years in the US. Her return to India resulted in the newcomer to the pageant world, against all odds, winning the national and international beauty competitions – Miss India and Miss World – that launched her global acting career.

Meghna Pant’s new book “The Terrible, Horrible, Very Bad Good News”



- Award-winning writer, journalist and speaker, **Meghna Pant** has penned a new book “**The Terrible, Horrible, Very Bad Good News**”. The book will be released in April 2021, and soon be seen as a major motion picture under the title **BadnamLadoo**.
- The book is about a small-town woman, Ladoo, who scandalizes her conservative family when she decides to use a sperm donor to have a baby while continuing to look for Mr Right. This book takes a humorous and light approach to address an important issue, relevant to every woman in the world, without being belligerent or pedantic.

Peter Mukerjee pens memoir ‘Starstruck: Confessions of a TV Executive’



- Former media baron **Peter Mukerjee** has come out with his memoir ‘**Starstruck: Confessions of a TV executive**’. The book is presented as a recollection of his experiences in the satellite television industry in India and the changes it

has gone through over the years.

- Mukerjea is the former chief executive of Star India. Through this book, he has shared his journey, to highlight and showcase the plenty of mistakes made and the plenty of lessons learnt over almost three decades. It must be remembered that Mukerjea was arrested by the **Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI)** in November 2015 in connection with the **Sheena Bora murder case**.

Award winning Author Irwin Allan Sealy’s new novel ‘ASOCA’



- Prizewinning writer **Irwin Allan Sealy’s** new novel **‘ASOCA: A Sutra’**, an imagined memoir of Ashoka The Great.
- The novel will be presented as an imagined memoir of Ashoka The Great, the emperor who ruled most of the Indian Subcontinent and played a pivotal role in the spread of Buddhism from India to other parts of Asia in the 3rd century BC. It will be published by **Penguin Random House India**.
- Earlier, Penguin had published the thirtieth-anniversary edition of Sealy’s critically acclaimed debut novel *The Trotter-Nama* and this is the second book by the author to be published by PRH. This book will be released under Penguin’s Viking imprint in July 2021.

Vice President releases ‘Maverick Messiah’, a political

biography on NTR



- Vice President **M. Venkaiah Naidu** has released **“Maveric Messiah”**, a political biography on former Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister **N.T. Rama Rao** authored by senior journalist **Ramesh Kandula**.
- NTR was ranked among the top pioneers of ‘alternative politics’. His entry into politics and ‘dramatic’ success within about nine months of floating a regional party gave a new direction to national politics.

Home Minister released a book ‘Rashtra Pratham – 82 varshonkiSwarnim Gatha’



- Home Minister **Amit Shah** has released a book **‘Rashtra Pratham – 82 varshonkiSwarnim Gatha’** in New Delhi.
- The book chronicles the glorious history of CRPF since its raising in 1939 and it has detailed and thoroughly researched accounts of CRPF’s journey, challenges, successes, and sacrifices and said it will become a source of inspiration

for personnel joining the force.

- CRPF jawans have always remained at the forefront be it in Left Wing Extremism affected areas, borders or providing security ring to the Indian Parliament.

Kabir Bedi's autobiography to release in April



- Veteran actor **Kabir Bedi** will tell his life story in his memoir, which will be released in April. Entitled **"Stories I Must Tell: An Actor's Emotional Journey,"** the actor will provide an honest glimpse into his life.
- The book will take readers through the ups and downs of Kabir Bedi's life, both professional and personal. He will also talk about his relationships, including marriage and divorce, why his beliefs have changed, and his days in movies, television and theatres in India, Europe and Hollywood.

TOPIC 7: BUSINESS

Paypal to shut domestic payments service in India from April 1



- The California-based global digital payment platform **PayPal** has announced that the company has decided to **wind down** its domestic payment services in India with effect from **April 01, 2021**. The decision has been taken because **the company wants to shift its focus on cross-border payments business**.
- However, the global customer will be able to

pay Indian merchants using Paypal. PayPal was a payments options on many Indian online apps such as **travel and ticketing service MakeMyTrip, online film booking app BookMyShow, and food delivery app Swiggy.**

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- PayPal Founded: December 1998, Palo Alto, California, United States.
- PayPal CEO: Dan Schulman.

New Development Bank Commits \$100 million in NIIF Fund of Funds



- The **New Development Bank (NDB)** has committed to invest **USD 100 million** (Rs 727.6 crore), into the **National Investment and Infrastructure Fund Limited (NIIF) Fund of Funds (FoF)**.
- With NDB’s investment, the total commitments secured by the FoF has reached **\$800 million (about Rs 5,820 crore)**. This investment marks NDB’s first equity investment into India and its first-ever investment into a Fund of Funds.
- Currently, the Government of India (GoI), **Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB)** and **Asian Development Bank (ADB)** are the investor in the FoF. Now NDB has joined the group. The FoF was established in **2018** with the objective of providing homegrown Indian private equity fund managers access to an India-focused institutional investor that operates at scale.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- NIIFL Managing Director & Chief Executive Officer (CEO): Sujoy Bose.
- NIIFL Headquarters: Mumbai, Maharashtra.
- New Development Bank Chairperson of the Board of Governors: Anton Siluanov (Russia).
- New Development Bank Headquarters: Shanghai, China.

Exim Bank to provide USD 400 mn funding for the Maldives



- The **Export-Import Bank of India (Exim Bank)** will provide **USD 400 million** to the **Maldives** through **Line of Credit (LoC)** to fund the Greater Male Connectivity Project. The agreement under the LoC will be effective from **January 28, 2021**.
- The **6.7 km Greater Male Connectivity Project (GMCP)** will be the largest civilian infrastructure project in the Maldives, connecting Male with three neighbouring islands – **Villingili, Gulhifahu and Thilafushi**.
- The Government of India will be funding the implementation of a major connectivity project in the Maldives through a USD 400 million lines of credit and **USD 100 million grant**.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- Export-Import Bank of India CEO: David Rasquinha.
- Export-Import Bank of India Founded: 1 January 1982.
- Export-Import Bank of India Headquarters: Mumbai, Maharashtra.
- President of the Maldives: Ibrahim Mohamed Solih.
- Capital of Maldives: Male; Currency of the Maldives: Maldivian Rufiyaa.

NPCI enables UPI AutoPay live on music streaming

platform 'Gaana'



- **National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)** has announced that **UPI AutoPay** has now gone live on **Gaana**. Its integration with **UPI AutoPay** has made Gaana the 1st player in the Media & Entertainment industry to roll out the innovative e-mandate feature on UPI.

- The introduction of UPI AutoPay will empower Gaana's users to experience a smooth and seamless mechanism of renewing their subscriptions.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- National Payments Corporation of India MD & CEO: DilipAsbe.
- National Payments Corporation of India Headquarters: Mumbai.
- National Payments Corporation of India Founded: 2008.

TOPIC 8: DEFENCE

Rajnath Singh inaugurates HAL's second Tejas Light Combat Aircraft's



- Defence minister **Rajnath Singh** has inaugurated **Hindustan Aeronautics Limited's (HAL)** second **Light Combat Aircraft (LCA)-Tejas** production line in **Bengaluru**, ahead of the upcoming Aero India 2021.
- The deal to be signed in the next few days with HAL would strengthen the Indian Air Force's fleet of homegrown fighter jet '**LCA-Tejas**' and **overall combat capability**.
- Last month, the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS), chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, had approved the largest indigenous defence procurement deal worth about **Rs 48,000 crores** to buy **83 LCA Tejas Mark1A**

fighter jets.

- The Aero India, which provides a platform for aerospace companies to showcase their products and services is scheduled to be held from February 3 to 5 at the **Yelahanka Air Force Station in Bengaluru**. During the inaugural day, 41 aircraft including **Dakota, Su-30 MKI** would participate in the flight display while there would be 63 aircraft on static display.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- Hindustan Aeronautics Limited: CMD: R Madhavan;
- Hindustan Aeronautics Limited HQ: Bengaluru.

Aero India 2021 Begins in Bengaluru



- The **Aero India 2021 event**, country's premier

aerospace and defence exhibition, kick-started at **Air Force Station Yelahanka** in **Bengaluru**.

- The **13th** edition of the international event touted as the world’s first-ever hybrid aero and defence show will see several aircraft of the **Indian Air Force (IAF), Army, Navy, Hindustan Aeronautics (HAL),** and the **Coast Guard** participating in the show.
- The three-day event will focus on India’s indigenous defence sector capabilities amid buzz around Atmanirbhar Bharat and Make in India campaigns.
- This 13th edition will see a combination of both physical and virtual exhibition with **601 exhibitors, including 523 from India and 78 from 14 foreign countries.**
- Hindustan Aeronautics Limited would exhibit its **Aatmanirbhar Formation Flight.**

16th India-US joint military exercise ‘YudhAbhyas 20’ commenced



- The **India-US joint military** exercise “**YudhAbhyas 20**” commenced in Mahajan Field Firing Range of **Bikaner district in Rajasthan.**
- This is the **16th edition** of an annual bilateral joint exercise of both the armies. It will continue till the 21st of this month.
- About **250 US and 250 Indian army soldiers** are participating in the exercise. Both the armies will share their war-related techniques, skills and experience with each other during this

exercise. The exercise is one of the largest military training and defence cooperation efforts between India and the United States.

First Women Team Inducted in CRPF’s CoBRA Commando Unit



- A maiden contingent of **34 CRPF women personnel** has been inducted into its specialized **jungle warfare commando force CoBRA.** The contingent will soon be deployed in the anti-Naxal operations grid of the country.
- This women’s contingent will undergo pre-induction training for 3 months and then deployed with the units in Naxal violence-affected districts of Chhattisgarh like Dantewada, Sukma, and Bijapur. The members of the 34 CRPF women personnel contingent have been chosen from the 6 all-women battalions of CRPF.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- Central Reserve Police Force Director-General: AP Maheshwari.
- Central Reserve Police Force Headquarters: New Delhi, India.

Indian Navy undertaking exercise “TROPEX” in Indian Ocean Region



- The **Indian Navy** is carrying out a mega war game involving almost all operational assets like warships, submarines and aircraft over a vast geographical expanse in the **Indian Ocean Region** to test the force's combat readiness in a complex multi-dimensional scenario.
- The biennial '**Theatre Level Operational Readiness Exercise (TROPEX)**' aims to validate the Navy's offensive as well as defence capabilities and safeguard national interests in the maritime domain besides promoting peace and stability in the Indian Ocean.
- The exercise is being conducted over a vast geographical expanse in the Indian Ocean Region including its adjunct waters and is aimed at testing combat readiness of the Navy in a complex multi-dimensional scenario set in the context of the current geostrategic environment.

Prime Minister hands over indigenous Arjun Mk-1A tank to Army



- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** has handed over the indigenous main battle tank **Arjun Mk-1A** to the Army in a function at the **Jawaharlal Nehru Indoor Stadium** in Chennai.
- Chief of the Army Staff General **Manoj Mukund Naravane** received the model of the tank, designed and developed by Chennai-based **Combat Vehicles Research & Development Establishment (CVRDE)**, a unit of the **Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO)**.
- A tank made in Tamil Nadu will be used in our northern borders to keep the nation safe. This showcases India's united spirit — **Bharat's Ekta Darshan,**". The indent for 118 of these tanks would be placed shortly with the Heavy Vehicle Factory (HVF) at Avadi near Chennai.

India joins Iran-Russia's two-day navy exercise



- **India** joined **Iran and Russia** in the naval exercise dubbed as "**Iran-Russia Maritime Security Belt 2021**", which kicked-off in the northern part of the Indian Ocean. The Chinese navy will also join the exercise.
- The purpose of the drill is to enhance the security of international maritime trade, confront maritime piracy and terrorism, and exchange information.
- The drill will cover an area of **17,000 square kilometres (6,500 square miles)**.
- It will include shooting at sea and air targets and liberating hijacked ships, as well as search

and rescue and anti-piracy operations.

- The exercise ‘**Iran-Russia Maritime Security Belt**’ is so flexible that any country could join if they wish to do so.

Indian Navy Ship Pralaya Participates in NAVDEX 21 and IDEX 21



- **Indian Naval Ship Pralaya** reached **Abu Dhabi in UAE** to participate in the **Naval Defence Exhibition (NAVDEX 21)** and **International Defence Exhibition (IDEX 21)** from February 20 to 25, 2021.
- NAVDEX 21 and IDEX 21 is one of the leading international naval and defence exhibitions of the region. Participation of INS Pralaya will showcase the strengths of India’s indigenous shipbuilding, in line with the Hon’ble Prime Minister’s vision of ‘**AtmaNirbhar Bharat**’.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

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

India successfully test-fires Helina, Dhruvastra anti-tank guided missiles



- **Defence Research and Development Organisation** has successfully carried out joint user trials of indigenously developed **Helina** and **Dhruvastra Anti-Tank Guided Missiles (ATGM)** from the **Advanced Light Helicopter** at the **Pokhran deserts in Rajasthan**.
- Helena is the Army version and Dhruvastra is the Air Force version of the ALH. The missile systems have been designed and developed indigenously by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).
- The **Helina and Dhruvastra** are the third generation, “**Lock-on-Before-Launch (LOBL)**” fire and forget ATGMs that can engage targets both indirect hit mode as well as top attack mode.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

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

L&T delivers 100th K9 Vajra howitzer to Indian Army



- Army Chief Gen **Manoj Naravane** has flagged off the **100th K9 Vajra** tracked self-propelled howitzer built by **Larsen & Toubro (L&T)** at its armoured system complex at **Hazira in Gujarat**. L&T had completed the delivery of all the howitzers under the contract awarded in **May 2017 ahead of schedule**.
- The K9 Vajra programme involved the delivery of 100 howitzers with associated engineering support package covering spares, system documentation and training. It also involves the maintenance transfer of technology to an army base workshop to support the howitzers throughout their operational life cycle.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- L&T CEO: S. N. Subrahmanyan.
- L&T Founded: 7 February 1938.
- L&T Headquarters: Mumbai.
- L&T Chairman: Anil Manibhai Naik.

Indian And Indonesian Navies Conduct PASSEX Exercise



- The **Indian Navy** and the **Indonesian Navy** conducted the **Passage Exercise (PASSEX)** on February 18, 2021, in the **Arabian Sea**.
- The military exercise between the navies of both countries aims to enhance operational interoperability and overall cooperation among them. Indian naval ship **INS Talwar** and the Indonesian Navy’s multirole corvette **KRI Bung Tomo** participated in the exercise.

ICGS C-453 Interceptor boat commissioned into services in Chennai



- The **Indian Coast Guard Ship (ICG)** named **C-453** was commissioned into services in **Chennai, Tamil Nadu**. This was the **17th interceptor boats** out of the 18 which are being indigenously built by **Larsen & Toubro Ltd**.
- It is a **27.80-m-long** interceptor boat. The boat has a displacement of **105 tonnes**. It can attain a maximum speed of **45 knots (85 kmph)**.
- It is capable to undertake multifarious tasks such as surveillance, close-coast patrol,

interdiction, and search & rescue. It will also provide assistance to the boats and craft in case of distress at sea.

- The ship will be deployed to do surveillance of the **Exclusive Economic Zone** and other duties in accordance with the **Coast Guard Charter**. This will help in safeguarding the maritime interests of India.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- Larsen & Toubro Ltd CEO: S. N. Subrahmanyam.
- Larsen & Toubro Ltd Founded: 7 February 1938, Mumbai.
- Larsen & Toubro Ltd Headquarters: Mumbai.

DRDO Conducts Two Successful Launches of VL-SRSAM Missile System



- **Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO)** has conducted two successful launches of **Vertical Launch Short Range Surface to Air Missile (VL-SRSAM)**. DRDO carried out the launch from a static vertical launcher from **Integrated Test Range (ITR), Chandipur off the coast of Odisha**.
- The launches were monitored by senior scientists from various DRDO labs involved in the design and development of the system. During the test launches, flight path and vehicle performance parameters were monitored using flight data, captured by various Range instruments.

- The VL-SRSAM is indigenously designed and developed by DRDO for the **Indian Navy**, VL-SRSAM aims to neutralize various aerial threats at close ranges including sea-skimming targets.
- The missiles intercepted the simulated targets with pinpoint accuracy. The missiles were tested for minimum and maximum range. VL-SRSAM with **Weapon Control System** was deployed during the trials.

Rajnath Singh inaugurates DRDO skill centre for fire safety training



- Defence Minister, **Rajnath Singh** has inaugurated **Skill Development Centre (SDC) for Fire Safety Training of Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** through virtual mode at **Pilkhuwa in Uttar Pradesh**.
- The first of its kind in India facility has been created by Delhi based **DRDO laboratory 'Centre for Fire, Explosive and Environment Safety (CFEES)'**.
- The SDC DRDO facility will help in developing trained human resources, fire safety technology and products to save precious human lives and valued assets.
- The facility would be utilised for imparting fire prevention and fire-fighting training to the Fire Service personnel of Indian Armed Forces, DRDO, Ordnance Factories, Coast Guard and defence undertakings

TOPIC 9: ECONOMY

RBI Monetary Policy: Policy Rate unchanged



- The six-member **Monetary Policy Committee** of the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)**, headed by Governor **Shaktikanta Das**, has decided to maintain the status quo on policy rate amid sticky rate of inflation.
- At this point, the repo rate or the rate at which RBI lends to banks stands unchanged at **4 per cent**. The reverse repo rate also stayed unchanged at **3.35 per cent**. The MPC committee members voted unanimously in favour of the decision.

The key decisions taken in the Monetary Policy Committee meeting are:

- Policy Repo Rate: **4.00%**
- Reverse Repo Rate: **3.35%**
- Marginal Standing Facility Rate: **4.25%**
- Bank Rate: **4.25%**
- CRR: **3%**
- SLR: **18.00%**

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

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

RBI: India's GDP growth projected at 10.5 per cent for

FY22



- In the last bi-monthly monetary policy meet for the current, the **Reserve Bank of India** projected India's GDP growth rate at **10.5 per cent** for the fiscal year **2021-22**. The growth outlook has improved significantly, and the vaccination drive will further boost the economic rebound.
- The apex bank expects the Indian economy to grow in the range of 8.3 per cent to 26.2 per cent in the first half of FY22, followed by a 6 per cent growth in Q3FY22. The central bank's projection is lower than that of the Economic Survey that projected India to grow at a rate of 11 per cent in the coming fiscal.

SBI revises India's GDP estimates to -7.0 percent for FY21



- The **State Bank of India's (SBI) Economic**

Research Department has revised GDP estimates of India for FY21 to **contract 7.0%**. Earlier this was estimated GDP at - **7.4%**. The SBI Research Report has retained its GDP forecast for FY22 at **11 per cent**.

India Ratings: India will grow 10.4% in FY22



- **India's growth** would bounce back to **10.4%** in the upcoming fiscal according to **India Ratings and Research (Ind-Ra)**. FY22 would broadly be covering the lost ground of FY21.
- Regarding this reduced allocation to the **rural employment guarantee scheme**. The rating agency expects GDP growth to turn positive at **0.3 per cent** in the January-March quarter of FY21 after shrinking in the first nine months of the year.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- MD & CEO of India Ratings and Research: Rohit Karan Sawhney.
- India Ratings and Research Headquarters: Mumbai, Maharashtra.

Oxford Economics Revises India's GDP to 10.2% for 2021



- The global forecasting firm **Oxford**

Economics has revised India's economic growth projection for the Calendar year 2021 to **10.2 per cent**, compared to a previous estimate of **8.8 per cent**.

- The reason for the upward revision is the receding COVID-19 risks and the shift in the monetary policy outlook.
- Oxford Economics is headquartered in Oxford, United Kingdom and has 6 office locations across **5 countries**. It provides global forecasts and analysis to predict and manage economic risk.

S&P Global Ratings: India to be among fastest-growing emerging economies in FY22

S&P Global Ratings

- The **S&P Global Ratings** has projected that India will be one of the fastest-growing emerging market economies in the fiscal year 2021-22, with a GDP growth rate of **10 per cent**.
- The continuous good performance by the agriculture sector, flattening of COVID-19 infection curve, pickup in government spending and the recently released budget are some of the factors for the positive growth prospect of the country.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- S&P Global Ratings Headquarters: New York, United States.
- President of S&P Global Ratings: John Berisford.

HSBC Raises India's GDP Forecast for FY22 to 11.2%



- **HSBC** has raised its growth forecasts for India in the coming fiscal year 2021-22 (FY22), from **9 per cent to 11.2 per cent**, following a pick up in business activity and a steady fall in COVID cases.
- The 2020-21 GDP forecast of India by HSBC remains **-6.3 per cent**, as projected earlier.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- HSBC CEO: Noel Quinn.
- HSBC Headquarters: London, United Kingdom.
- HSBC Founder: Thomas Sutherland.
- HSBC Founded: 3 March 1865, Hong Kong.

ICRA expects Indian economy to contract 7% in FY21



- India’s rating agency, **ICRA** has projected the Indian economy to **contract 7 percent** in the **current fiscal (FY21)**.
- For the next fiscal, i.e. FY22 (2021-22), ICRA expects a considerable rebound in India’s economic growth to **10.5 per cent** due to higher central government spending, and a pick-up in consumption.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

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

Moody’s projects India’s GDP to contract 7% in FY21



- The US-based rating agency **Moody’s** has revised its growth projection for India, and now expects the economy to **contract 7 per cent** in fiscal **2020-21 (FY21)**. This is lower than its previous estimate of **10.6 per cent contraction**.
- For the next financial year, FY22, beginning April 1, Moody’s has projected the economy to grow to **13.7 per cent**, as compared to **10.8 per cent** estimated earlier.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- Headquarters of Moody’s: NewYork, United States.
- President & CEO of Moody’s: Raymond W. McDaniel, Jr.

NSO expects the Indian economy to contract by 8% in 2020-21



- The GDP growth of India during 2020-21 is estimated to **contract 8 per cent**, as per the second advanced estimates projected by the **National Statistical Office (NSO)**.
- This was 4.9 per cent in 2019-20. NSO had projected a GDP contraction of **7.7 per cent** in its first advance estimate.

TOPIC 10: INTERNATIONAL

Indian-American Bhavya Lal appointed Acting Chief of Staff of NASA



- Indian-American **Bhavya Lal** was appointed by **NASA** as the **Acting Chief of Staff** of the US space agency.
- She served as a member of the **Biden Presidential Transition Agency Review Team for the agency** and oversaw the agency’s transition under the administration of President Joe Biden.
- Lal brings extensive experience in engineering and space technology, serving as a member of the research staff at the **Institute for Defence Analyses Science and Technology Policy Institute (STPI)** from 2005 to 2020.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- Headquarters of NASA: Washington D.C., United States.

- NASA Founded: 1 October 1958.

Aung San Suu Kyi detained as army grabs power in Myanmar



- In **Myanmar**, a military coup was put in place on **1st February 2021**, after the country’s military detained State Counsellor **Aung San Suu Kyi** along with President **Win Myint** and other members of the ruling party.
- Myanmar military (also known as the Tatmadaw), took this step because they declared the November **2020 Myanmar general election results fraudulent**, in which Aung San Suu Kyi won a landslide victory in Parliamentary election 2020 to form next Government.
- The military has handed over the power to military chief **Min Aung Hlaing** and declared a state of **emergency for one year**. Apart from this, former general **MyintSwe** would be acting president for the next year. The **2021 coup**

d'état is the third in Myanmar's political history. The first two was held in **1962 and 1990**.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- Myanmar Capital: Naypyitaw.
- Myanmar Currency: Kyat.

Nguyen PhuTrong re-elected as Chief of Vietnam for 3rd term



- The ruling **Communist Party of Vietnam** has re-elected its 76-year-old General Secretary **Nguyen PhuTrong** for a **third five-year term**.
- He is serving the post since **2011**. Trong was granted an exemption to contest in the election, though he was above the age limit of 65.
- The General Secretary is the highest office within the Communist Party of Vietnam. Trong also holds the position of the **President of Vietnam since 2018**.
- Vietnam has a communist government, which means that the country does not have a single strongman at the apex.
- There are four main leaders that collectively run the show which includes: The Communist Party general secretary, the prime minister, the president and the chair of the National Assembly.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

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

World's First 'Energy Island' to be built by Denmark



- The **Government of Denmark** has approved a project to build the world's first energy island, in the North Sea that will produce and store enough green energy to meet the electricity needs of three million households in **European countries**.
- The hub will strengthen the integration of Europe's power grids and increase renewable electricity production necessary for a climate-neutral Europe.
- The energy hub will serve as an offshore power plant gathering and distributing green electricity from hundreds of wind turbines surrounding the island directly to consumers in countries surrounding the North Sea. It is the long-term ambition to be able to store green electricity on the island, convert it to liquid green fuel, and send it via subsea cables to **Denmark and neighbouring countries**.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- Denmark Capital: Copenhagen.
- Denmark Currency: Danish krone.

South Korea to Build World's Largest Offshore Wind

Farm



- President **Moon Jae-in-led**, South Korea Government has approved a plan to build the world’s largest **wind power plant** in the country by **2030**. Currently, the world’s largest offshore wind farm is **Hornsea 1 in Britain**, which has 1.12 GW capacity.
- The project will help to foster an environmentally-friendly recovery from the **COVID-19** pandemic and fasten the step to achieve the target of becoming carbon neutral by **2050**.
- The estimated cost of the project is **48.5 trillion won (\$43.2 billion)**.
- The Windpower Plant will be located in the southwestern coastal town of Sinan. It will have a maximum capacity of **8.2 gigawatts**.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- South Korea Capital: Seoul.
- South Korea Currency: South Korean won.

14th International Children’s Film festival concludes in Bangladesh



- The **14th International Children’s Film Festival of Bangladesh (ICFFB)** came to an end in Dhaka. A total of **12 awards** were presented to the winners at the concluding ceremony. 179 films from 37 countries were shown at various venues during the 7-day long festival organised by the **Children’s Film Society (CFS) of Bangladesh**.
- Apart from Bangladesh, films from **India, Armenia, US, UK, Ireland, Japan and China** among others were shown in the course of the festival. Dutch Film **Jackie and Oopjen** were awarded the **Best International Feature Film Award**. Bangladeshi film **Maati** got **The Young Talent Award** while Lottery won the Special mention under the Young Talent Award.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

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

UAE Hope Probe successfully enters Mars’ orbit



- The **United Arab Emirates (UAE)** has put a probe called Hope in the orbit around the **MARS**.
- UAE has become the fifth country to launch the spacecraft into the orbit of MARS after **United States, Soviet Union, Europe and India**. With the successful launch of spacecraft in orbit, UAE scientists can now study the planet's atmosphere.
- The space mission will carry the study on daily and seasonal weather cycles and weather events such as dust storm in the lower atmosphere. It will study how the weather varies in different regions on the MARS.

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.

Pakistan Army successfully test-fires Babur cruise missile



- The **Pakistan Army** conducted a successful test-firing of a short-range surface-to-surface ballistic missile '**Babar**' on February 11, 2021. This test was the third missile test carried out over the past three weeks.
- The Babur cruise missile IA was launched from **Multi Tube Missile Launch Vehicle**.
- This missile is capable of hitting land and sea

targets with "**high precision**" up to **450 kilometres away**.

- Earlier, Pakistan army conducted a successful test of the surface-to-surface ballistic missile **Shaheen-III** in January 2021, followed by the '**training launch**' of nuclear-capable ballistic missile **Ghaznavi** in February 2021.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

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

Mario Draghi sworn in as Italy's new prime minister



- The former European Central Bank Chief **Mario Draghi** has been sworn in as the **new Prime Minister of Italy** on 12 February 2021. The 73-year-old had served as President of the European Central Bank from 2011 until 2019.
- He replaces **Giuseppe Conte**, who resigned recently after losing majority support from his coalition government over his handling of the coronavirus pandemic. Here Italy goes again, with its **67th government** since **World War Two**.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

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

US-Russia Extends New START Arms Reduction Treaty



- The **United States** has extended the “**New START**” nuclear disarmament treaty with **Russia** for a period of **five years**. The New START, which stands for **Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty**, is a nuclear arms reduction treaty between the United States and the Russian Federation.
- The new strategic arms reduction treaty was formally signed on April 8, 2010, and after ratification, entered into force on 5 February 2011. The New START treaty was set to expire on February 5, 2021, but both the parties have further extended it for five more years, till **February 2026**.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- President of United States: Joe Biden; Capital: Washington, D.C.
- Russia President: Vladimir Putin.
- Russia Capital: Moscow.
- Russia Currency: Russian Ruble.

‘PahelaPhagun’ spring festival celebrated in Bangladesh



- The first day of the spring called ‘**PahelaPhagun**’ was celebrated in **Dhaka, Bangladesh** despite the continued shadow of **Corona pandemic in the country**. Cultural organisations held programmes at different venues in the city to herald the beginning of the spring. Programmes were held at the Suhrawardy Udyan, Nandan Manch of Shilpakala Academy and several other locations.
- The **JatiyaBasantaUtsabUdJapan Parishad** organized the programme at the Suhrawardy Udyan in Dhaka. Young women wearing yellow saris and youth dressed in ‘**Punjabis**’ took part in the festivity.
- The programme featured dance and musical performances. The traditional programme of ‘**BasantaUtsab**’ at the Fine Arts faculty in Dhaka university was cancelled since educational institutions have been closed till Feb. 28 by the government due to the Corona pandemic.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

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

China Overtakes the US as Largest Trading Partner of European Union



- The **People’s Republic of China** has overtaken the **United States (US)** as the biggest trading partner of the **European Union (EU)** in **2020**, according to the data by the European Union statistics agency, Eurostat.
- **Britain**, which left the European Union in 2020, was the third-largest trading partner for the bloc, behind China and the United States.
- The trade volume of the EU with China reached **586 billion euros** (\$711 billion) in 2020, compared to **555 billion euros** (\$673 billion) for the US. Bilateral trade with the UK reached **444.7 billion euros**.
- The EU exports to China rose by 2.2 per cent to 202.5 billion euros while imports from China increased by 5.6 per cent to 383.5 billion euros.
- Similarly, EU exports to the United States fell by 13.2 per cent in the same period and imports by 8.2 per cent.
- Exports to the UK fell by 13.2 per cent, while imports dropped by 13.9 per cent.

Georgian Prime Minister Giorgi Gakharia resigns



- The Prime Minister of Georgia, **Giorgi Gakharia** has announced his resignation. The 45-year-old Gakharia served as the Prime Minister from **8 September 2019 to 18 February 2021**.
- He was stepping down because of disagreements within his own team over the decision to arrest **Nika Melia**, chairman of the **United National Movement opposition party**.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- Georgia Capital: Tbilisi; Currency: Georgian lari.

United States officially re-joins Paris Climate Agreement



- The **United States** has officially rejoined the **Paris Agreement**, under the Presidency of US President **Joe Biden**. Earlier, in November 2020, the US had officially exited the agreement on the order of then-President **Donald Trump**.
- The landmark Paris climate agreement was signed in **2015**, as per which countries are expected to enhance their commitments to

curb greenhouse gas emissions every five years. The goals of the global pact are to limit global warming to well below 2°C and pursue efforts to limit it to 1.5°C.

Israel launches “green pass” for people with vaccination certificate



- Israel has launched a coronavirus “green pass” system, which allows people who have been vaccinated to access public facilities that would otherwise be off-limits. As of Sunday COVID-19 inoculation is a sort of status symbol in Israel.
- Israelis who have gotten both Pfizer vaccine shots and those who have recovered from the virus get a “Green Pass” certificate in the form of a QR code or printout for people without smartphones.
- The pass allows entry to **gyms, swimming pools, hotels, entertainment venues and sporting events**. Green Pass privileges and restrictions are raising legal and moral questions.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- Prime Minister of Israel: Benjamin Netanyahu.
- Israel Capital: Jerusalem.
- Israel Currency: Israeli Shekel.

China Surpasses US to become India’s top trade partner in 2020



- China has regained its position as the **top trading partner of India in 2020**, which was held by the **United States**, since 2018-19. The two-way trade between India and China stood at **\$77.7 billion** in 2020 despite the conflict along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) and the rising anti-China sentiment.
- The India-US bilateral trade stood at **\$75.9 billion**, according to provisional data from the commerce ministry. Meanwhile, the **UAE** continues to remain India’s **third-biggest** trading partner.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

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

Irakli Garibashvili as New Prime Minister of Georgia



- The **Parliament of Georgia** confirmed **Irakli**

Garibashvili as Prime Minister along with a vote of confidence in the cabinet Garibashvili put forward. Garibashvili pledged to create a long-term development strategy for Georgia in his first one hundred days in office.

- First, on the agenda, Garibashvili will continue the essential work of the government to ably

manage the pandemic and accelerate the focus on rebuilding the economy while continuing to strengthen Georgia’s security and democratic institutions.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- Georgia Capital: Tbilisi; Currency: Georgian lari.

TOPIC 11: MISCELLANEOUS

UN World Tourism Organization confirms 2020 as ‘worst year on record’



- In accordance with the latest **United Nations World Tourism Organization (UN-WTO) “World Tourism Barometer”**, the year 2020 was the **“worst year on record”** as global tourism suffered adversely due to international travel bans implemented to contain the **COVID-19 outbreak**.
- International arrivals dropped by **74%** & worldwide destinations welcomed 1 billion fewer international arrivals than in 2019.
- This collapse in travel represents an estimated loss of **\$1.3 trillion** in export revenues, more than 11 times less during the **2009 crisis**.
- On the regional front, Asia and the Pacific aced sharpest year-on-year contraction of **84% (-84%)**. It was followed by the Middle East (-75%) and Europe (-70%).

Ministry of Education launched ASEAN India

Hackathon 2021



- The **Union Education Minister, Ramesh Pokhriyal ‘Nishank’** has addressed the inaugural ceremony of the **ASEAN India Hackathon 2021** on February 1. The Ministry of Education has launched the **ASEAN India Hackathon 2021**.
- The ASEAN India Hackathon 2021 is being conducted virtually from **February 1 to 3, 2021**. The 10 ASEAN countries are- **Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, Philippines, Brunei, Thailand, Myanmar, Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam**.
- The ASEAN-INDIA Hackathon is an initiative by PM Modi and is launched by the Ministry of Education.
- This unique hackathon presents opportunities for India and all the 10 ASEAN countries to improve and strengthen their economic and

cultural ties through cooperation in science and technology and education.

India gets its first Centre for Wetland Conservation and Management



- A dedicated Centre for **Wetland Conservation and Management (CWCM)** has been established at the **National Centre for Sustainable Coastal Management (NCSCM), Chennai**, an institution under the **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change**.
- This was announced by Minister of State for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, **Babul Supriyo** on the occasion of the **World Wetland Day on 2nd February 2021**.
- The dedicated CWCM Centre would address specific research needs and knowledge gaps, give a fillip to capacity development and cutting-edge research on wetlands of India, as well as aid in the application of integrated approaches for conservation, management and wise use of the wetlands.

'Atmanirbharta' named Oxford Hindi word of 2020



- **Oxford Languages**, the world's leading dictionary publisher, has named '**Aatmanirbharta**' as the **Hindi word of the year 2020**.
- The Oxford Hindi word of the year is a word or expression that is chosen to reflect the ethos, mood, or preoccupations of the passing year, and have lasting potential as a term of cultural significance.
- '**Aatmanirbharta**' means **self-reliance**. The word was chosen as it "**validated the day-to-day achievements of the countless Indians who dealt with and survived the perils of a pandemic**".

India's First Amputee Clinic Launched In Chandigarh



- The first of its kind '**amputee clinic**' in India, has been launched by the **Post Graduate Institute of Medical Education and Research (PGIMER)**, a premier medical and research institution in **Chandigarh**.
- The basic intent of this initiative is to bring an Amputee as a near-normal functional human being in society. This initiative will attempt to provide appropriate management to amputees to guide them in their path to rehabilitation in society and will support patients with counselling and medical facilities during their treatment and recovery.
- '**PGI Amputee Clinic**' in Chandigarh has been set up with the aim of improving amputation patient care by providing a collection of services under one roof with significant coordination.

The clinic will provide social, mental and physical support to its patients.

Andaman and Nicobar Islands becomes first Union Territory to be corona free



- **Andaman and Nicobar Islands** has become the first state or **Union territory** in the country to become **Covid-19 free** with active cases falling to zero in the islands. Health ministry’s website reported that the last four infected persons in Andaman and Nicobar Islands have been **declared cured**. The UT had reported a total of **4,932 cases** and **62 deaths** from the virus.
- The share of Kerala in India’s daily cases crossed 50 per cent for the first time. There were 11,024 fresh cases in the country out of which **Kerala** alone reported **5,716, 51.8 per cent** of the total. The state also has the highest count of active cases at **69,157**, out of around **1 lakh 61 thousand in the country**.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- Andaman and Nicobar Capital: Port Blair.
- Andaman and Nicobar Lieutenant Governor: Admiral D K Joshi.

Ayesha Aziz becomes India’s Youngest Female Pilot at 25



- A 25-year-old Kashmiri woman, **Ayesha Aziz**, has become the youngest female pilot in the country. She became the youngest student pilot to get a license at the **age of 15** in 2011.
- The 25 -year-old from Kashmir who is the youngest female pilot in the country acts is a source of inspiration and a beacon of empowerment for numerous **Kashmiri women**.
- In the year 2011, Aziz became the youngest student pilot to get a license at the age of 15 and underwent training to fly a **MIG-29 jet** at Russia’s Sokol airbase the following year. She later graduated in aviation from the **Bombay Flying Club (BFC)** and obtained a commercial license in 2017.

Reliance sources world’s first ‘carbon-neutral’ oil from United States



- Billionaire **Mukesh Ambani**-owned **Reliance Industries** Ltd has received the world’s first consignment of **‘carbon-neutral oil’** from **Oxy Low Carbon Ventures (OLCV)**, a division of **United State oil major Occidental**.
- This feat will further help the oil major to accomplish its target of becoming a net zero-

carbon company by 2035.

- The **Very Large Crude Carrier (VLCC) Sea Pearl** containing the carbon-neutral oil from Permian basin, unloaded the **cargo at Jamnagar on January 28, 2021**. It must be noted that Reliance operates the world’s largest single-location oil refining complex at Jamnagar in Gujarat with a capacity of 68.2 million tonnes a year.
- This transaction is the first major petroleum shipment of Reliance, for which greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from the entire crude lifecycle, including oil extraction, transport, storage, shipping, refining, subsequent use, and combustion, have been offset.

Ramnath Kovind Inaugurates Museum Dedicated to General KS Thimayya



- President **Ram Nath Kovind** has inaugurated a museum, dedicated to the life of former Army **Chief General KodanderaSubayyaThimayya**, in Karnataka. General Thimayya served as the Chief of Army Staff from 1957 to 1961.
- The ancestral house of General Thimayya called **“Sunny Side”** at Madikeri in Kodagu district of Karnataka has been renovated and converted into a museum.
- A museum celebrating the life of former Army Chief General KodanderaSubayyaThimayya, housing a variety of antique weaponry and war

relics.

- A statue of the General from Kodagu in uniform greets as one enters the museum, which also showcases a slice of Indian military history.
- The museum also acknowledges the contribution of General Thimayya’s siblings, including two of his brothers, who too were Army officers, and his wife Nina, who was bestowed with **“Kaiser-e-Hind” award** in recognition of her work in public service.
- Key attractions on the premises of this war memorial include a battle tank, one of those used by the Army during the war with **Pakistan in 1971**.

FSSAI caps trans fatty acids to 2% in food products from January 2022



- The **Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)** has restricted the permissible amount of industrial **Trans Fatty Acid (TFA)** in food products to **2 per cent**. The latest amendment will come into effect from January **01, 2022**. Currently, the permissible limit for trans fats in food products in 2021 is **3 per cent**, cut down from the previous limit of **5 per cent**.
- FSSAI has amended the **Food Safety and Standards (Prohibition and Restriction on Sales) Regulations, 2011** to put into effect the new **Food Safety and Standards (Prohibition and Restrictions on Sales) Regulations, 2021**.
- As per the new rule, the food products in which

edible oils and fats are used as an ingredient shall not contain industrial trans fatty acids more than **2%** by mass of the total oils/fats present in the product, starting from **January 01, 2022**.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

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

Indian Army lays foundation of 100-foot-high national flag in Gulmarg



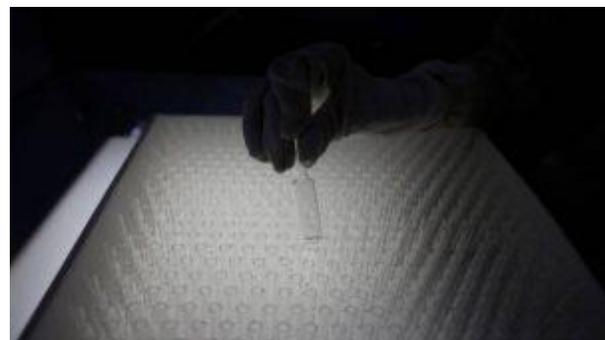
- The **Indian Army** has laid the foundation stone of the tallest '**Iconic National Flag**' at the famous ski-resort of **Gulmarg** in **Jammu and Kashmir**. The flag will be on a **100 feet-high pole**, the highest Tricolour in the Valley. The Indian Army in collaboration with the Solar Industry India will install the 'Iconic National Flag' at Gulmarg.
- The foundation stone for the iconic national flag was laid by **Dagger Division General Officer Commanding (GoC) Major General Virendra Vats** along with Bollywood actor-producer **Arbaaz Khan** and actress **Vidya Balan**.
- This iconic Indian national flag will be a first in many ways. The site is expected to become another tourist attraction, among the snow-clad mountains of Kashmir.

SamarpanDiwas: DeenDayal Upadhyay Death Anniversary



- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** pays floral tribute to former **Bharatiya Jana Sangh** leader **Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya** on his **53rd death anniversary** as part of 'SamarpanDiwas', in New Delhi on Feb. 11, 2021.
- Deendayal Upadhyaya was an Indian politician and thinker of right-wing Hindutva ideology espoused by the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, and leader of the political party Bharatiya Jana Sangh, the forerunner of Bharatiya Janata Party.

Puducherry launches campaign to become Covid-free by February 28



- In **Puducherry**, a campaign has been launched titled "**Zero Covid by Feb28**" to ensure that there are no COVID-19 cases by the end of February 2021, in the union territory. The overall caseload in Puducherry was **39,448** while **38,533** had recovered so far, leaving **258 active cases**.
- Under the campaign, all those who had come

into contact with people infected with coronavirus would be identified and provided treatment, so that the further spread of the pathogen could be prevented.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- Lieutenant Governor of Puducherry (UT): Dr Kiran Bedi.
- Chief Minister of Puducherry: V. Narayanasamy.

IIT Bombay launches fundraising campaign ‘Cherish IIT Bombay 2021’



- **IIT Bombay** has launched its first-ever annual fundraising campaign in India, **Cherish IIT Bombay 2021**. As per information shared by the IIT, the funds will be used for the creation of world-class laboratory complexes, modernization of lecture halls and continuation of awards to attract and retain faculty.
- The donations made to IIT Bombay by corporate bodies and individuals are **100%** tax-deductible under section **80G** of the **Indian Income Tax Act**.

Kanchoth festival celebrated across J&K’s Chenab valley



- The ancient **Kanchoth festival**, a symbol of ancient **Nag culture**, was observed with religious fervour and gaiety across the **Chenab valley region of Jammu and Kashmir**.
- The festival is celebrated by locals, mainly Nag followers who believe that on this day of Gouri Tritiya, Lord **Shiva and Goddess Parvati** got married and the latter insisted on a throne made of snow as her wedding gift.
- The festival is celebrated by locals, mainly Nag followers who believe that on this day of Gouri Tritiya, Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati got married and the latter insisted on a throne made of snow as her wedding gift.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- Lieutenant Governor of Jammu and Kashmir: Manoj Sinha.

11th Edition of ‘RashtriyaSanskriti Mahotsav’ inaugurated in WestBengal



- The Governor of West Bengal, **Shri Jagdeep**

Dhankhar inaugurated the **11th RashtriyaSanskriti Mahotsav** at Cooch Behar Palace at West Bengal.

- The RashtriyaSanskriti Mahotsav is a flagship programme of the Ministry of Culture, organised under the Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat Programme, since 2015, to celebrate the idea of unity in diversity. The event was inaugurated in the presence of Minister of State (I/C) for Culture and Tourism, Shri Prahlad Singh Patel.



Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- West Bengal Governor: Jagdeep Dhankhar.
- West Bengal Capital: Kolkata.
- West Bengal CM: Mamata Banerjee.

Kiran Bedi Removed As Puducherry Lt Governor



- **Kiran Bedi**, the Lieutenant-Governor of **Puducherry**, has been removed from the top position. **TamilisaiSoundararajan**, the Governor of Telangana, has been given additional charge as the Lieutenant Governor of Puducherry till a permanent replacement will be announced.
- The development comes in the backdrop of a major shake-up in the Puducherry Assembly after several Congress legislators resigned ahead of the Assembly elections due this year.

Puducherry Chief Minister V Narayanasamy Resigns

- The Chief Minister of the Union Territory of Puducherry, **V Narayanasamy** has submitted the letter of his resignation and his council of ministers on February 22, 2021, to Lieutenant Governor **TamilisaiSoundararajan**.
- The decision was taken as the Congress-led Government in the UT lost its majority in the House, which is 14. Following a series of resignations, the ruling government was reduced to a strength of 12. Two MLA resigned in January 2021 while 2 resigned in February 2021.

Jasmine Harrison from UK becomes youngest woman to row Atlantic Ocean



- A British woman, **Jasmine Harrison** of England has become the youngest woman to row solo across the **Atlantic Ocean**. The 21-year-old from Thirsk, North Yorkshire in the UK, achieved the feat by finishing top in the **2020 Talisker Whisky Atlantic Challenge**, organized by Atlantic Campaigns.
- Harrison, who is a swim instructor and bartender by profession, **travelled 3,000 miles (4,828km)** across the Atlantic Ocean

in 70 days, 3 hours and 48 minutes. Harrison began her journey in Spain’s Canary Islands on December 12, 2020, and arrived in Antigua on February 20, 2021.

Kushinagar Airport Gets International Airport Licence from DGCA



- The under-construction **Kushinagar Airport** in **Uttar Pradesh** has received the necessary clearances from aviation regulator **Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA)** to operate international flights. Once operational, Kushinagar airport will become the third functional international facility in the state.
- Currently, the two international airports functional in Uttar Pradesh are **Chaudhary Charan Singh International Airport** at Lucknow and **Lal Bahadur Shastri International Airport** at Varanasi.
- Kushinagar airport will serve as the closest international airport to several Buddhist pilgrimage sites in **Lumbini, Shravasti, and Kapilvastu**.
- The new airport will boost tourism in the region & facilitate travel on the Buddhist circuit by providing direct aviation connectivity to the city.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- HQ of DGCA: New Delhi; Established in Jan 1978.

Chandigarh became the first Union Territory in India to launch Carbon Watch



- **Chandigarh** became the **first state or Union Territory** in India to launch **Carbon Watch**, a mobile application to assess the carbon footprint of an individual. Although the app can be accessed by everyone, it has specific options for the residents of Chandigarh to compile a detailed study.
- As a person downloads the application, they will need to fill details in four parts Water, Energy, Waste Generation and Transport (Vehicular movement).
- In the category of Water, the person will be required to inform about the consumption of water.
- In the Energy category, the details regarding the electricity units consumed every month at the house, monthly bill etc and usage of solar energy will have to be furnished.
- In the Waste category, the individual will need to inform about the waste generated on their part and their family. In the transport section, the individual will have to inform them about the mode of transport used by the- four-wheeler, two-wheeler or bicycle.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- Chandigarh Administrator: V.P. Singh Badnore.

TOPIC 12: NATIONAL

Smriti Irani inaugurates 8th India International Silk Fair



- The Union Textiles Minister **Smriti Irani** inaugurated the **8th India International Silk Fair** on Virtual Portal on **31st January 2021**.
- The five days event is being held on the **Indian Silk Export Promotion Council's** virtual platform due to COVID-19 pandemic. The fair is considered to be India's biggest silk fair.
- More than 200 overseas buyers and an equal number of their representatives in India are participating to interact with more than 100 renowned and big Indian companies manufacturing and trading silk and silk blended products.
- India is the only country in the world which produces all the four major varieties of silk, which are **Mulberry, Eri, Tassar, and Muga**.

Venkaiah Naidu Inaugurates National Tribal Festival "Aadi Mahotsav"



- The Vice President of India Shri **M. Venkaiah Naidu** inaugurated the **National Tribal Festival "Aadi Mahotsav"** at DilliHaat, INA, New Delhi. The Aadi Mahotsav 2021 is being organized from **February 1-15, 2021**. The festival aims to familiarise the people with the rich and diverse craft, the culture of the tribal communities across the country, in one place.
- The **Aadi Mahotsav – A Celebration of the Spirit of Tribal Culture, Crafts, Cuisine and Commerce** – is an annual initiative being organized by **TRIFED, Ministry of Tribal Affairs since 2017**.
- The festival will comprise of display and sale of tribal art and craft, medicine & healers, cuisine and folk performances, in which around 1000 tribal artisans, artists and chefs from more than 20 States of the country shall participate and provide a glimpse of their rich traditional culture.

Gol launches unified web portal for monitoring progress of GOBARDHAN activities



- Agriculture Minister **Narendra Singh Tomar**, Petroleum Minister **Dharmendra Pradhan**, Animal Husbandry Minister **Giriraj Singh**, Jal Shakti Minister **Gajendra Singh Shekhawat** and Minister of State for Jal Shakti **Rattan Lal Kataria** jointly launched a unified web portal for monitoring the progress of **GOBARDHAN activities** across the nation.
- Gobardhan aims to positively impact village cleanliness and generate wealth and energy from cattle and organic waste.
- It focuses on managing and converting cattle dung and solid waste in farms to useful **compost, biogas and bio-CNG**.
- It will also help in keeping the village clean while increasing the income of farmers and cattle herders.
- It will be hugely beneficial for the country as India is home to the highest cattle population in the world (**around 300 million in number**) which produces around 3 million tonnes of dung.
- It will encourage farmers to consider dung and other waste not just as waste but as a source of income.
- It will provide many benefits to rural people by keeping villages clean and sanitized, improving livestock health and increasing farm yields.

PM Modi Inaugurates Chauri Chaura Centenary

Celebrations



- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** has inaugurated the centenary celebrations of the **Chauri Chaura** incident on February 4 via videoconferencing. **February 4, 2021** marks **100 years** of the '**Chauri Chaura**' incident, a landmark event in the country's fight for independence.
- PM Modi also released a **postal stamp** dedicated to the Chauri Chaura incident, to mark the beginning of the event. The state government of **Uttar Pradesh** has planned a year of celebrations in all **75 districts of the state in the memory of the martyrs**.
- On **February 4, 1922**, a group of freedom fighters had set ablaze a police station at Chauri Chaura in **Gorakhpur district** of the then **United Province (now Uttar Pradesh)** in British India, to protest against the high-handedness of the British regime.
- The incident claimed the lives of **22 policemen** and three freedom fighters.
- As many as **19 freedom fighters** were given capital punishment for this one incident.

4 more states complete 'Ease of Doing Business' Reforms



- As per the recent data by the **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)**, four more states have completed the reforms in the **‘Ease of Doing Business’**, as stipulated by the Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance.
- The four states are- **Assam, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Punjab**. These states have become eligible to mobilise additional financial resources to the tune of **Rs 5,034 crore** through open market borrowings.
- Now the total number of state that has undertaken the reforms to promote Ease of Doing Business till now has gone up to 12. The other states are **Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and Telangana**.

National Horticulture Fair 2021 begins



- The Union Minister of State for Agriculture and Farmer Welfare, **Kailash Choudhry** has inaugurated the **National Horticulture Fair (NHF) 2021** on February 08, 2021, in **Bengaluru** via **virtual mode**.
- The five-day-long event has been organised by the **Indian Institute of Horticultural Research (IIHR)**, from February 8 to February 12 at its IIHR campus situated in **Hesaraghatta, Bengaluru**.
- The theme of NHF 2021 is **‘Horticulture for Start-Up and Stand-Up India’**.
- For the first time, the event is being held in hybrid mode, i.e., the participants are allowed to attend the event online as well as offline.
- The NHF will showcase cutting edge technologies, crop varieties, pest and disease management practices and processing methods among others. The IIHR is a subsidiary of the **Indian Council for Agricultural Research (ICAR)**.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- ICAR Director: Trilochan Mohapatra.
- Headquarters of ICAR: New Delhi.
- ICAR founded: 16 July 1929.

Centre Launches Official Website of India Toy Fair 2021



- The **Government of India** will organise the first-ever **‘The India Toy Fair, 2021’** from February 27, 2021, to March 02, 2021, on a virtual

platform. The official website for India Toy Fair-2021 is www.theindiatoyfair.in. This initiative is in line with the Prime Minister’s vision of making India a global hub for the Toy Industry.

- The website and online registration were inaugurated on February 11, 2021, jointly by the Union Education Minister, **Dr Ramesh Pokhriyal ‘Nishank’**, Union Minister of Textiles, Smt. **Smriti Zubin Irani** and Union Minister of Commerce and Industry, Shri **Piyush Goyal**.

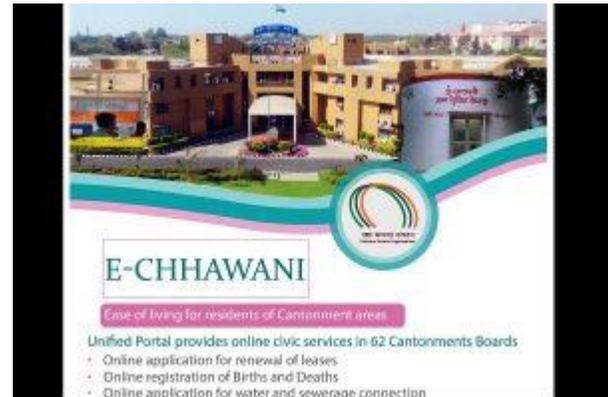
Gadkari launches India’s first CNG Tractor



- Union road transport and highways minister, **Nitin Gadkari** has launched India’s first-ever diesel tractor, converted to a much cleaner (**compressed natural gas**) **CNG variant**. With this, farmers will be able to save more than **₹1 trillion annually** on fuel cost, which will help them to improve their livelihood.
- This conversion is jointly done by **RawmattTechno Solutions** and **Tomasetto Achille India**. The CNG tractor will help farmers to increase their income, by lowering costs and help to create job opportunities in rural India.
- The farmers can save up to **50 per cent** on the fuel cost as the current Diesel prices are around **77 rupees per litre** whereas CNG is only **42 rupees per kilogram**.
- The conversion from diesel to CNG will be beneficial as it is a clean fuel with the lowest carbon and pollutant content. It is also economical as it has zero lead and is non-

corrosive, non-dilutive and non-contaminating which helps in increasing the life of the engine.

Rajnath Singh launches e-Chhawani portal for online civic services to Cantt Boards



- Defence Minister **Rajnath Singh** recently launched an online portal ‘**e-Chhawani**’ and mobile app, to facilitate ‘**ease of living**’ and ‘**ease of doing**’ for the residents of the Cantonment Boards across the country.
- The ‘e-Chhawani’ portal will provide online municipal services to more than 20 lakh citizens across all 62 Cantonment Boards of India while sitting at home.
- The residents of cantonment areas can register their complaints regarding civic issues and even get their documents like trade licence, sewerage connectivity applications through the portal
- Jointly been developed by eGov Foundation, **Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL)**, **Directorate General Defence Estates (DGDE)**, and **National Informatics Centre (NIC)**.
- A cantonment board is a civic administration body in India under control of the Ministry of Defence. It takes care of mandatory duties such as the provision of public health, water supply, sanitation, primary education, and street lighting etc.

Thaawarchand Gehlot Releases 3rd Edition of Indian

Sign Language Dictionary



- The Union Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment **Thaawarchand Gehlot** released the “**3rd edition** of the **Indian Sign Language (ISL) Dictionary**, in a virtual event.
- The 3rd edition of the ISL dictionary contains a total of **10,000 terms**. These include the 6000 terms of the first and second edition of the dictionary.
- The terms are of everyday use from academic terms, legal & administrative terms, medical terms, technical terms and agricultural terms.
- The Dictionary has been developed by the Indian Sign Language Research and Training Centre (ISLRTC), an autonomous Institute under the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan), Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment.
- The 1st edition of the ISL Dictionary was launched on 23 March 2018 with 3000 terms.
- The 2nd edition was launched on 27th February 2019, with 6000 terms (including earlier 3000 terms).

Centre Launches new Instant Messaging platform ‘Sandes’



- The **National Informatics Centre (NIC)**, under the **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology**, has launched an instant messaging platform called “**Sandes**”. Similar to WhatsApp, the new **government instant messaging systems (GIMS) platform** can be used for all kinds of communications by anyone using a mobile number or email id.
- The need to build a home-grown messaging platform was felt by the government to ensure secure communication between people as they worked from home, following the nationwide lockdown imposed to contain the spread of **Covid-19**.
- The Sandes app is also a part of the government strategy to encourage the use of India-made software so as to build an ecosystem of indigenously developed products.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- National Informatics Centre Founded: 1976.
- National Informatics Centre Director-General: Neeta Verma.
- National Informatics Centre Headquarters: New Delhi.

Cabinet approves PLI scheme for telecom sector worth Rs 12,195 crore



- The **Union Cabinet** approved a **Rs 12,195-crore Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme** for domestic manufacturing of telecom and networking products such as switches, routers, radio access network, wireless equipment and other IoT access devices.
- Through this decision, the government aims to offset the imports of telecom equipment worth more than **Rs 50,000** crore and reinforce it with **“Made in India”** products both for domestic markets and exports.
- The support under the PLI scheme will be provided to companies manufacturers of specified telecom and networking products in India like **Gigabit Passive Optical Networks (GPON), base routers, Dense Wavelength Division Multiplexing (DWDM), Multiprotocol Label Switching (MPLS/ IPMPLS) and 5G/4G radios.**
- The government will soon come up with a PLI scheme to encourage the production of laptops and tablet PCs.

Prime Minister launches ‘Mahabahu-Brahmaputra’ initiative in Assam



- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** has virtually launched **‘Mahabahu-Brahmaputra’** initiative in **Assam**. He laid the foundation stone for the **Dhubri Phulbari bridge**. PM also perform the bhumi puja for the construction of **Majuli Bridge in Assam**.
- PM has announced the details stated that the landmark day in the development journey for Assam as Mahabahu-Brahmaputra initiative is going to be launched.
- Mahabahu-Brahmaputra initiative is going to be marked with the inauguration of the Ro-Pax vessel operations.
- The Ro-Pax vessel operations will be launched in between the **Neamatighat&Majuli, Dhubri-Hatsingimari and North-South Guwahati**. This initiative also includes the inauguration of the **Inland Water Transport Terminal at Jogighopa**. The initiative will also be marked with the inauguration of various tourist jetties at four locations in order to promote the river tourism and employment across the state.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- Assam CM: SarbanandaSonowal.
- Assam Governor: Jagdish Mukhi.

Prakash Javadekar inaugurates Atal Paryavaran Bhavan in Lakshadweep



- The Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, **Prakash Javadekar**, inaugurated the **Atal Paryavaran Bhavan** at **Lakshadweep**. Prakash Javadekar is on a four-day official visit to Lakshadweep from February 19 to 22, 2021.
- During the visit, the minister attended high-level meetings with the Secretaries of various departments in the Lakshadweep administration, participated in various official programmes at Suheli, Kadmat and Bangaram islands.
- The minister will also evaluate the major innovative initiatives of the Union Territory’s Forest and Environment Department, so that Lakshadweep undergoes comprehensive development, without compromising its commitment to nature.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- Lakshadweep Capital: Kavaratti.
- Lakshadweep Administrator: Praful Patel.

Dr Harsh Vardhan launches Mission Indradhanush 3.0



- Union Health and Family Welfare Minister, **Dr Harsh Vardhan** has launched the **Intensified Mission Indradhanush 3.0, (IMI 3.0)**, to expand immunization coverage across the country.
- The focus of IMI 3.0 will be on children and pregnant women who missed their vaccine doses during the **COVID-19 pandemic**.
- The IMI 3.0 will have two rounds, of **15 days** each.
- The first round will begin on February 22, 2021, and the second round will begin on March 22, 2021.
- The vaccination drive will be conducted in pre-identified **250 districts** and urban areas across **29 States** and UTs in the country to reach out to every dropped out and left out the child and pregnant woman.
- The scheme was launched in **2014** to provide affordable and accessible healthcare to all citizens of the country.
- It aims to immunise all children under the age of **2 years**, as well as all pregnant women, against eight vaccine-preventable diseases.
- These diseases are **diphtheria, whooping cough, tetanus, poliomyelitis, tuberculosis, measles, meningitis and Hepatitis B**.

Rajnath Singh inaugurates 26th edition of ‘HunarHaat’



- Defence Minister **Rajnath Singh** has inaugurated the **26th**

edition of ‘HunarHaat’ in New Delhi. The “HunarHaat” will be held from February 21 to March 01, 2021, with the theme of “**Vocal for Local**”. More than 600 artisans and craftsmen from more than 31 states and UTs are participating.

- Through HunarHaat, the Union Ministry of Minority Affairs aims to provide employment and employment opportunities to 7,50,000 artisans by organising 75 HunarHaats by 2022, when India will celebrate its 75 years of Independence.
- The HunarHaat is also available online at hunarhaat.org and on the Government e-Marketplace portal. Indians living abroad can buy products online as well.
- HunarHaat is a beautiful exhibition of India’s traditional art and craft and brings together indigenous artisans and craftsmen from across the country for the display and sale of their exquisite indigenous handmade products.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- Minister of Minority Affairs: Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi.

National Urban Digital Mission Launched by Centre

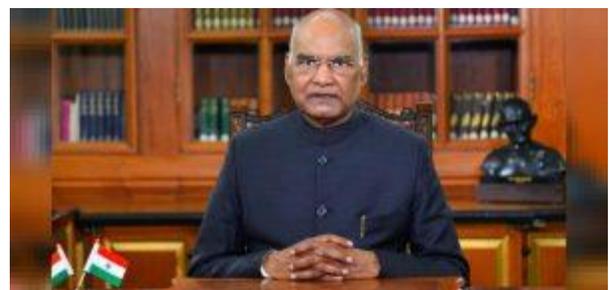


- Union Housing and Urban Affairs Minister, **Hardeep Singh Puri** and Minister of Electronics and IT **Ravi Shankar**

Prasad launched the **National Urban Digital Mission’ (NUDM)** at a virtual event, to create a digital infrastructure for cities in India.

- The NUDM has been launched jointly by the **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs** along with the **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology**.
- The mission aims to put in place a “**citizen-centric**” and “**ecosystem-driven**” approach to ‘urban governance and service delivery in cities by 2022, and across all cities and towns by 2024. The mission has three pillars – people, process, and platform.
- The NUDM will create a shared digital infrastructure for Urban India that can consolidate and cross-leverage the various digital initiatives of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, to enable cities and towns across India to benefit from holistic and diverse forms of support, in keeping with their needs and local challenges.
- Apart from this, several other digital initiatives of MoHUA was also launched which includes: India Urban Data Exchange (IUDX), SmartCode platform, Smart Cities 2.0 website, and Geospatial Management Information System (GMIS).

Union Cabinet approves President’s Rule in Puducherry



- The **Union Cabinet** has approved to dissolve the **Puducherry Assembly** and

impose **President’s rule** in the Union Territory, following the resignation of the Chief Minister, **V Narayanasamy**, whose government lost majority power in the assembly. The decision was taken as no party claimed to form a government, following which, Lieutenant Governor **Tamilisai Soundararajan** had recommended President’s Rule.

- The approval will now be sent to the President, **Ram Nath Kovind**. The legislative assembly of the UT will be dissolved once the President accords his permission. Prior to this, the President’s rule was imposed in Puducherry between March and July in 1991 when the JD-DMK coalition government fell.

PM Modi virtually addresses 2nd Khelo India National Winter Games



- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** has delivered the inaugural address at the **2nd Khelo India National Winter Games** through a video conference.
- The second edition of the Khelo India-Winter Games has been organised at the world-famous ski-resort **Gulmarg in the Baramulla** district of **Jammu and Kashmir**.
- The event has been organised by the Union Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, in collaboration with the Jammu and Kashmir Sports Council and the Winter Games Association of J&K. The sports activities at the games will include alpine skiing, nordic ski, snowboarding, ski mountaineering, ice hockey, ice skating, ice stock etc.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- Union Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports: Kiren Rijju.

TOPIC 13: OBITUARIES

Pioneering US actress Cicely Tyson passes away



- Pioneering US actress **Cicely Tyson** has passed away. Cicely Tyson, the pioneering Black actor who gained an Oscar nomination for her role as the sharecropper’s wife in **‘Sounder’** & won a **Tony Award in 2013** at age 88.
- She touched TV viewers’ hearts in **” The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman”** & won 2 Emmys for playing the 110-year-old former slave.

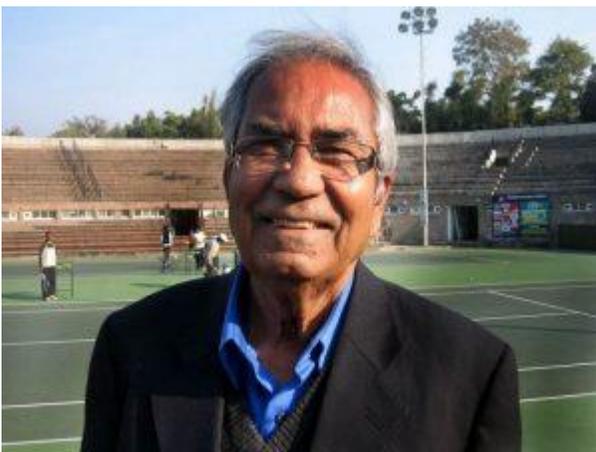
Oscar-winning Canadian actor Christopher Plummer

passes away



- Oscar-winning actor **Christopher Plummer**, who rose to prominence for his critically-acclaimed film **‘Sound of Music’**, has passed away. He won the Academy Award for Best Supporting Actor at the age of 82 for *Beginners* (2010), becoming the oldest person to win an acting award.
- The prolific and versatile Canadian-born actor has received various awards for his work, which includes Academy Award, two Primetime Emmy Awards, two Tony Awards, a Golden Globe Award, a Screen Actors Guild Award, and a British Academy Film Award.

Indian tennis great Akhtar Ali passes away

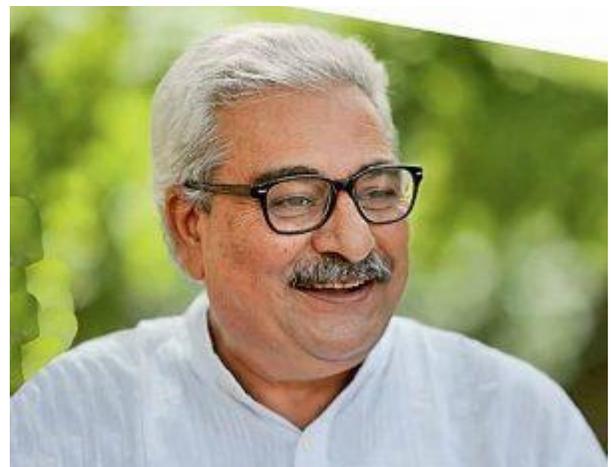


- Tennis legend **Akhtar Ali**, a father figure in Indian tennis, passed away. He represented India in eight Davis Cup ties against Pakistan,

Malaysia, Iran, Mexico, Japan and Monaco between 1958 and 1964.

- Born on July 5, 1939, Akhtar made his mark in **1955** when he became the National junior champion and reached the junior Wimbledon semifinals. He played alongside stalwarts like Ramanathan Krishnan, Naresh Kumar, PremjitLall and JaidipMukerjea.

Founder of Rang Vidushak, Padma Shri Bansi Kaul Passed away



- Founder of **Rang Vidushak** and theatre director Padma Shri **Bansi Kaul** passed away. He was born in 1949 in a Kashmiri Pandit family, Bansi Kaul was a Hindi theatre director and the founder of Rang Vidushak, a theatre group and theatre institute in Bhopal.
- He was awarded **Sangeet NatakAkademi Award** in **1995** and **Padma Shri** in **2014**. He received **Rashtriya Kalidas Samman** for the year 2016–17.

Bollywood actor Rajiv Kapoor passes away



- Bollywood actor and Raj Kapoor’s son **Rajiv Kapoor** passed away. He made his acting debut with **1983 movie EkJaan Hain Hum**. He gained recognition with his father’s last directorial **Ram Teri Ganga Maili (1985)**.
- Some of his other memorable films include *Aasmaan (1984)*, *Lover Boy (1985)*, *Zabardast (1985)* and *Hum To Chale Pardes (1988)*. But soon Rajiv also addressed as Chimpu, moved to film direction and production.

Indo-Pak War Veteran retired Major General BK Mahapatra passes away



- War veteran Major General (retired) **Basant Kumar Mahapatra**, who had participated in major battles including the 1962 Indo-China war, and 1965 and 1971 India-Pakistan war, has passed away.
- Hailing from Bhubaneswar in Odisha, Mahapatra was commissioned into armoured corps (Tanks) of the Indian Army as a Combat Officer and was popularly known as ‘Tank Man’. He was conferred with the prestigious

AtiVishishtSeva Medal (AVSM).

Former Bihar-Jharkhand Governor & Jurist M Rama Jois, passes away



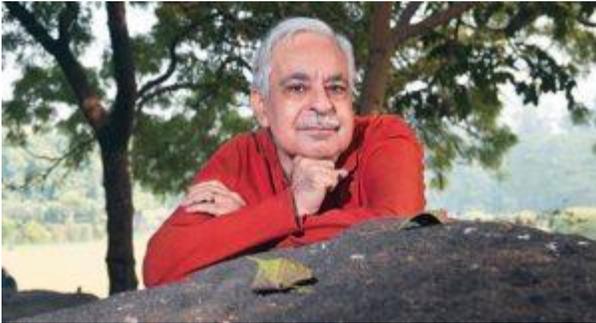
- Noted jurist and a former Governor of Bihar and Jharkhand, Justice (Retd.) **M. Rama Jois** has passed away. The former Rajya Sabha MP, had also served as the **Chief Justice of Punjab and Haryana High Court**. He was also a senior advocate in the **Supreme Court of India**.

Former Union Minister Captain Satish Sharma passes away



- Veteran Congress leader and former Union Minister Captain **Satish Sharma** passed away. He served as the **Union Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas** from **1993 to 1996** in the Narasimha Rao government.
- Captain Satish Sharma was a close aide of former prime minister **Rajiv Gandhi**. He was a three-time Lok Sabha MP, representing Rae Bareli and Amethi constituencies and Rajya Sabha member for three terms representing the states of Madhya Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh.

Former TRAI Chairman Rahul Khullar passes away



- **Rahul Khullar**, the former chairman of the **Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI)** has passed away. He was a 1975-batch Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer, who was appointed as TRAI chief in May 2012.
- He served at TRAI for three years. Prior to being appointed as TRAI chief, he was a secretary of the Ministry of Commerce and Trade.

Padma Shri Malayalam Poet Vishnunarayanan Namboothiri passes away

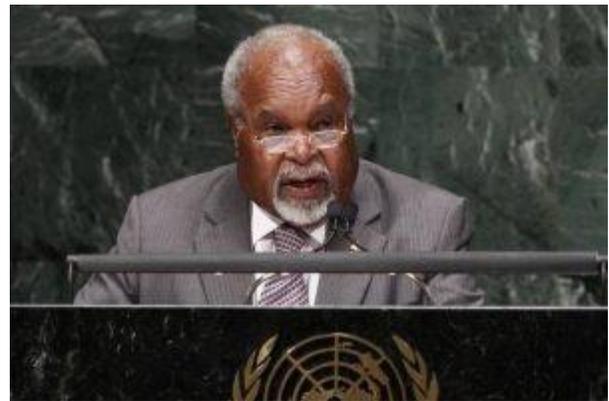


- Renowned Malayalam poet, the priest and academician **Vishnu Narayanan**

Namboothiri, has passed away. He was honoured with the **Padma Shri in 2014**, for his contribution to the world of Malayalam literature for decades.

- He also won the **Kerala Sahitya Akademi Award, Kendra Sahitya Akademi Fellowship, Vallathol Award, Odakkuzhal Award and the Mathrubhumi Literary Award**, among others. He was also a noted scholar of language and the Vedas, as well as an orator.

Papua New Guinea’s first Prime Minister, Michael Somare, passes away



- The first prime minister of Papua New Guinea, **Michael Somare** has passed away. He was known as the **“father of the nation”** because he led the Pacific archipelago to independence from **Australia in 1975**.
- He had served as the prime minister of the country four times, between 1975 to 2011, and has been the longest-serving prime minister (17 years).

TOPIC 14: RANKS & REPORTS

PHDCCI Report: India to emerge as second most resilient economy in 2021

Top 10 Leading Economies	International Economic Resilience (IER) Rank	Real GDP growth rate	Household Expenditure Growth	Current Account Balance % of GDP	Global Govt. net lending / borrowing (% of GDP)	Gross Debt to GDP ratio	Aggregate of rank of each leading indicator
Germany	1	7	5	1	2	3	18
India	2	1	1	6	8	4	20
South Korea	3	8	10	2	1	1	22
China	4	2	8	5	9	2	26
Canada	5	6	2	9	6	6	29
France	5	3	7	7	5	7	29
Japan	5	8	4	3	4	10	29
U.S.A	5	4	3	8	6	8	29
Italy	6	9	6	4	3	9	31
UK	7	5	9	10	7	5	36

- **India** will emerge as the **second** most resilient economy in 2021, as per the **International Economic Resilience (IER) Rank**, released by industry body, **PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PHDCCI)**.
- The ranking has been topped by **Germany**, among the top-10 leading economies. **South Korea** is at the third position in the list.
- Apart from this, India's real GDP growth rate is projected to be the highest in the year 2021 among the top-10 leading economies in the world, at **11.5%**. It reflects India's strong **"economic resurgence"** to the global economic turmoil caused by the **COVID-19 pandemic**.

India ranks 53rd in EIU's Democracy Index



- **India's** position has slipped by two places to be placed at **53rd spot** in the **2020 Democracy Index**, from among **167 countries**.
- The overall score of India is 6.61 in the Index, on a scale of 0-10. India has been classified as a **'flawed democracy'**. Democracy Index is the global ranking released by **The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU)** that provides a snapshot of the current state of democracy worldwide.
- **Norway** has topped the Index.
- **Iceland, Sweden, New Zealand and Canada** are the top five countries on the list.
- From the 167 countries, the Democracy Index has classified 23 countries as full democracies, 52 as flawed democracies, 35 as hybrid regimes and 57 as authoritarian regimes.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- The Economist Intelligence Unit Headquarters: London, United Kingdom.
- The Economist Intelligence Unit Parent organization: Economist Group.
- The Economist Intelligence Unit Founded: 1946.

TOPIC 15: SCHEMES AND COMMITTEES

Arvind Kejriwal launches 'Switch Delhi' campaign to promote electric vehicles



- Delhi Chief Minister, **Arvind Kejriwal** has launched the **‘Switch Delhi’** campaign to promote electric vehicles and appealed to people to buy such vehicles to combat pollution in the city. Kejriwal said his government will hire only electric vehicles for various purposes in the next six weeks.
- In the **‘Switch Delhi’** campaign, awareness will be created about the benefits of electric vehicles and how it can contribute to making **Delhi clean and pollution-free**.
- Under its electric vehicle policy, the Delhi government has planned extensive subsidies on purchase of electric two-wheelers and four-wheelers, besides waiving road tax and registration charges.
- More than **6,000 electric vehicles** have been purchased since the policy launch in August 2020. The government has also issued tenders for setting up 100 charging stations across the city.
- The government has fixed an ambitious target of **25 per cent electric vehicles** among total vehicle registrations in **Delhi by 2024**.

Delhi Cabinet Approves ‘Mukhyamantri Vigyan Pratibha Pariksha’ Scheme



- The **Delhi cabinet** has approved **“Mukhyamantri Vigyan Pratibha Pariksha”** in which Rs **5,000** will be provided to **1,000** meritorious students of **Class 9** in schools of Delhi as a science scholarship. The scholarship will provide a boost to science education in secondary classes at the school level.
- Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal termed this as a crucial step for our government to promote excellent and talented students. Delhi government seeks to promote the pursuit of excellence and scientific temper among the children.
- According to the release, the students studying in Delhi schools who have secured more than 60 per cent in Class 8 are eligible for the examination. Students belonging to SC, ST, PH, or OBC category will be given a relaxation of up to 5 per cent of marks.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- Chief Minister of Delhi: Arvind Kejriwal;
Governor of Delhi: Anil Baijal.

Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs launches Pilot Pey Jal Survekshan



- The **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs** has launched the **Pilot Pey Jal Survekshan** under **Jal Jeevan Mission- Urban**. The Pilot Pey Jal Survekshan has been launched in 10 cities, which are **Agra, Badlapur, Bhubaneswar, Churu, Kochi, Madurai, Patiala, Rohtak, Surat and Tumkur**.

- The motive of the Jal Jeevan Mission Urban is to provide universal coverage of water supply to all households through functional taps in all 4,378 statutory towns in accordance with Sustainable Development Goal – 6.
- The Government has proposed a total outlay of **Rs 2.87 lakh crore** for JJM (U) in fiscal 2021-22, which includes **Rs. 10,000 crore** for continuing financial support to **AMRUT Mission**.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- Minister of State (IC) of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs: **Hardeep Singh Puri**.

TOPIC 16: SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Hubballi students “Maya” ready to assist you at banks



- **Engineering college students in Hubballi, Karnataka** have come up with **‘Maya’**, a robot that has been programmed to serve in banks and speaks in many regional languages.
- The students of the Automation and Robotics department of **KLE Technological University** have spent nearly eight months and spent **Rs 5 lakh** to develop the robot.
- It was developed keeping banking sectors in

mind and programmed with all banking activities such as advising the customers on opening accounts, sending them to designated counters for queries.

- With the help of **artificial intelligence**, it recognises customers’ faces and responds to them by using a **chatbot**. After the banking hours, it automatically goes to the docking yard and charges its batteries without the help of any human being.

HAL to develop world’s first high-altitude pseudo satellite



- The **Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL)** is developing a futuristic high altitude **pseudo satellite** with a start-up company, to strengthen the country’s military strike capabilities.
- It is a first of its kind project in the world, where a manned aircraft will operate within the boundary and the unmanned aircraft will enter the enemy zone and can carry out strikes deep inside the enemy territory.
- Capable of autonomous functions, these unmanned aerial vehicles will also have all the manoeuvring capabilities. “It can straightway hit the target at a distance of **700 kilometres** or can go to **350 kilometres** and come back. It carries ammunition, missiles if needed **CATS Alpha**.
- The technology has been named **Combined Air Teaming System (CATS)**. It will have a manned aircraft (will be known as mother ship), operating from far away, and four autonomous unmanned aerial vehicles known as CATS Warrior.
- The satellite will be solar energised and become a big asset flying unmanned around **70,000 ft** for **2-3 months** and taking information.



- The **National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)** has selected spaceflight company, **SpaceX** to launch its **SPHEREx Mission**.
- Through this mission, NASA aims to perform an all-sky survey to measure the near-infrared spectra of approximately **450 million** galaxies across the universe and **100 million stars** inside our **Milky Way galaxy**.
- The SPHEREx or the Spectro-Photometer for the History of the Universe, **Epoch of Reionization, and Ices Explorer (SPHEREx)** spacecraft.
- The small astrophysics spacecraft, SPHEREx, **weighs 329-lb. (178 kilograms)**.
- It will be launched to space aboard **SpaceX’s Falcon 9 rocket**, in June 2024, from Space Launch Complex 4E at Vandenberg Air Force Base in California.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- Acting Administrator of NASA: Steve Jurczyk.
- Headquarters of NASA: Washington D.C., United States.
- NASA Founded: 1 October 1958.

NASA Selects SpaceX to launch its SPHEREx Mission

Square Kilometre Array Observatory launched



- The newly constituted **Square Kilometre Array Observatory (SKAO) Council** has approved for the establishment of the **world’s largest radio telescope**. The telescope will enable astronomers to monitor the sky in unprecedented detail and survey the entire sky much faster than any system currently in existence.
- To look into some of the unexplored areas of the universe and seek answers about its history and evolution, study fundamental physics in extreme environments and know about galaxies over cosmic time.
- Radio telescopes, unlike optical telescopes, can detect invisible gas and can reveal areas of space that may be obscured by cosmic dust.

India’s 1st Thunderstorm Research Testbed to be established in Odisha



- The **India Meteorological Department**

(IMD) has announced to set up the first **‘Thunderstorm Research Testbed’** of the country at **Odisha’s Balasore district**. The main objective of the “Thunderstorm Research Testbed” is to minimise human fatalities and loss of property due to lightning strikes.

- The facility will be established in a collaboration between the Ministry of Earth Sciences, **IMD, Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** and **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)**.
- Besides this, the **IMD** has also planned to set up a first-of-its-kind monsoon testbed near Bhopal. Currently, both the projects are in the planning stage and detailed project reports are being made.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- **India Meteorological Department (IMD)**
Director-General: Mrutyunjay Mohapatra.
- **India Meteorological Department**
Founded: 1875.
- **India Meteorological Department**
Headquarters: Mausam Bhavan, Lodhi Road, New Delhi.

ISRO opens satellite testing centre for private sector



- **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** has opened its **UR Rao Satellite Centre** for testing

satellites developed by the private sector for the first time in its history.

- Two satellites, developed by the Indian startups **SpaceKidz India** and **Pixxel (incorporated as Sygyzy)** were tested at the **UR Rao Satellite Centre**.
- ISRO also helped these two companies in fixing problems with the solar panels on their respective satellites.
- So far in its history, the space agency has only taken help in manufacturing and fabrication of various parts of satellites and rockets from the Indian industry. Both these two companies will also test their engines at the **Sriharikota spaceport** and **Thiruvananthapuram rocket centre** in coming days.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

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

Indian astronomers detect huge optical flare in black hole 'BL Lacertae'



- **Indian astronomers** have reported one of the strongest flares from a feeding supermassive black hole or blazar called **BL Lacertae**, analysis of which can help trace the mass of the black hole and the source of this emission, the

Department of Science and Technology said.

- Blazars or feeding supermassive black holes in the heart of distant galaxies receive a lot of attention from the astronomical community because of their complicated emission mechanism.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- Minister of Science and Technology: Dr Harsh Vardhan.

IIT Madras-incubated Pi Beam launches PiMo e-bike



- An **IIT Madras**-Incubated start-up **Pi Beam Electric** has recently launched a sustainable electric two-wheeler, dubbed as **PiMo**. The utility e-bike has been developed for personal and commercial use. It does not require a licence or registration.
- The cost of the electric two-wheeler has been fixed at **Rs. 30, 000**.
- It eliminates fuel costs as it runs on battery. The electric vehicle offers '**Battery Swapping**', meaning that the drained battery can be exchanged for a fully charged one at designated locations.
- The battery can charge faster than a smartphone and comes with a range of **50 km**.
- Pi Beam aims to sell **10,000 vehicles** by the end of the financial year **2021-22**.

Hyundai Develops Ultimate Mobility Vehicle ‘TIGER X-1’



- **Hyundai Motor Company** has launched a Transformer-like robotar dubbed as **TIGER X-1**, that can travel over the most challenging terrains on the Earth as well as on other planets.
- **TIGER** stands for **Transforming Intelligent Ground Excursion Robot**, and the X-1 denotes its experimental status.
- The **Ultimate Mobility Vehicle (UMV) TIGER** is being developed by Hyundai in partnership with Autodesk and Sundberg-Ferar.
- Tiger is designed as a battery-electric vehicle, comprising of a small pod with four wheels on extendable legs. it will be able to operate as either a four-wheel-drive vehicle or four-legged walking robot.
- The vehicle is unscrewed, meaning that its, main use will be to carry payloads over remote and inaccessible locations, and not the people
- It will help in search and rescue, scientific research, military, or exploratory missions (even on new planets).

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- Hyundai Motor Company Founder: Chung Ju-Yung.
- Hyundai Motor Company Founded: 29

December 1967, Seoul, South Korea.

Perseverance rover has successfully landed on Mars



- The **NASA Perseverance rover safely** landed on Mars after its **292.5 million-mile** journey from Earth. The rover has been on a nearly 300 million-mile journey since it left Earth more than 6 months ago.
- Perseverance and her teams lived up to the namesake, overcoming the challenges of preparing for the journey’s final stages during a pandemic. The attitude control system is responsible for pointing the rover in the direction it needs to be and also helps figure out where the spacecraft is oriented in space.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- Acting Administrator of NASA: Steve Jurczyk.
- Headquarters of NASA: Washington D.C., United States.
- NASA Founded: 1 October 1958.

Spacecraft Named in Honor of Black Woman ‘hidden Figures’ Mathematician



- A space supply ship, **Cygnus NG-15 cargo** dubbed as ‘**S.S. Katherine Johnson** has been named in honour of Katherine Johnson, a **Black NASA mathematician**, who played a critical role in the success of the first U.S. crewed spaceflight, **Mercury-Atlas 6 Mission**.
- The S.S. Katherine Johnson arrived on February 22, 2021, and will be at the **International Space Station until May 2021**.

- Mrs Johnson was a pioneering mathematician known for her hand-written calculations. She helped astronaut John Glenn, to become the first American to orbit Earth, after personally verifying his Mercury missions’ orbital trajectory calculations. Her contributions were also featured in the Oscar-nominated film Hidden Figures.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- Acting Administrator of NASA: Steve Jurczyk.
- Headquarters of NASA: Washington D.C., United States.
- NASA Founded: 1 October 1958.

TOPIC 17: SPORTS

India top medals tally at first Asian Online Shooting Championship



- The **Indian shooting contingent** has topped the medals tally in the **first-ever Asian Online Shooting Championship**, organised by **Kuwait Shooting Federation**.
- The 24-member Indian shooting contingent won total **11 medals**, which included four gold

medals, two silver and five bronze medals. **274 shooters from 22 Asian countries took part in the competition.**

List of Medal Winners from India:

Gold

- Saurabh Chaudhary – men’s 10m air pistol
- Divyansh Singh Panwar- men’s 10m air rifle
- KynanChenai – men’s trap
- Rajeshwari Kumari – women’s trap

Silver

- Arjun Babuta – men’s 10m air rifle
- Shreyasi Singh – women’s trap

Bronze

- Manu Bhaker – women’s 10m air pistol
- Sarabjot Singh – men’s 10m air pistol
- Deepak Kumar – men’s 10m air rifle
- PrithvirajTondaiman – men’s trap
- Manish Keer – women’s trap

Tamil Nadu Beat Baroda to claim Syed Mushtaq Ali T20 Trophy



- **Tamil Nadu** beat **Baroda** in the final to win the **Syed Mushtaq Ali T20 Trophy 2020-21**. The tournament was the **twelfth edition of Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy** and was played at **Sardar Patel Stadium (Motera Stadium)**, Ahmedabad.
- The Player of the match title was won by **Manimaran Siddharth** (Tamil Nadu) who picked 4 wickets, conceding 20 runs. They needed 121 runs to win, which they achieved in 18 overs with 7 wickets.
- Tamil Nadu team was lead by **Dinesh Karthik (captain)**. This is the second Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy (SMAT) title for Tamil Nadu and their first title in 13 years. The team claimed their first SMAT title in 2006-07, that too under Karthik’s captaincy.

Former pacer Merv Hughes inducted into Australian Cricket Hall of Fame



- Former right-arm fast bowler **Merv Hughes** has been inducted into the **Australian Cricket Hall of Fame**.
- The 59-year-old played **53 Tests** and **33 ODIs** for Australia in a career spanning from 1985 to 1994, during which he captured 212 Test wickets and 38 ODI wickets.
- His career-best figures of 8-87 against the **West Indies at the WACA** in 1988 included the final wicket of a hat-trick spread across three separate overs, two innings and two different days. In 2005, Hughes became a selector for the Australian cricket team, a role he would hold through until 2010.

Ashok Dinda announces retirement from all forms of cricket



- Fast bowler **Ashok Dinda**, has announced his retirement from **all forms of cricket**. The 36-year-old right-handed pacer made his first-class debut for **Bengal in 2005** and played for **15**

years in Bengal cricket.

- He made his international debut in 2009, in a T20I against Sri Lanka, followed by making his ODI debut in Zimbabwe in 2010. He played 13 ODIs and 9 T20I matches for India. He played 116 first-class matches for Bengal, taking 420 wickets at a bowling average of 28.28.

Joe Root becomes first batsman to score 200 in 100th Test



- **Joe Root**, the England captain, sent India on a leather hunt, becoming the **first player** in history to **score a double century in his 100th Test match**.
- In the process, Root also surpassed former Pakistan captain **Inzamam-Ul-Haq** as the player with the highest individual score playing the 100th Test match of his career. Inzamam had hit **184** against India in a Test match in Bengaluru in 2005, which Pakistan had won by 168 runs.

Rishabh Pant wins inaugural ICC Player of the Month January 2021



- The Indian wicketkeeper-batsman **Rishabh Pant** has won the inaugural **ICC Player of the Month award 2021**. Pant has been honoured for his superlative performances in the two Tests against Australia in January 2021, wherein he scored a **97 at Sydney** and an unbeaten 89 at Brisbane, leading India to an incredible series win.
- Apart from this, **Shabnim Ismail** of **South Africa** has been named the **ICC Women's Player of the Month** following her performances across three ODIs and two T20Is in January 2021. A fast bowler, Ismail took seven wickets in ODI series against Pakistan to gain victory and five wickets in the second T20 International against the same opposition.

Ishant Sharma becomes third Indian pacer to take 300 Test wickets



- Indian fast bowler **Ishant Sharma** became the **sixth Indian and third pacer** from the

country to take **300 wickets** in Test cricket.

- The 32-year-old Ishant reached the milestone in **98 matches**, more than the other Indian bowlers in the club. Ishant reached the landmark when he trapped **Dan Lawrence** with a delivery that swung back sharply before hitting his pads in England's second innings on the fourth day of the opening Test.
- Besides **Anil Kumble (619)** and **Kapil Dev (434)**, **Ravichandran Ashwin (377)** before this game), **Harbhajan Singh (417)**, and **Zaheer Khan (311)** are the other bowlers from the country who have reached the landmark.



Assam government appoints Hima Das as DSP



- Star sprinter **Hima Das** has been appointed as a **Deputy Superintendent of Police** by the **Assam government**.
- The 21-year-old from Assam, known as **'Dhing Express'** referring to the town near her native village, is currently training at the **NIS-Patiala** and will be aiming to qualify for the Tokyo Olympics as the athletics calendar starts in a few days.
- The reigning world junior 400m champion, who won a silver in **women's 400m** in the 2018 Asian Games, was also part of the **gold-winning women's 400m** relay and mixed 400m relay quartets in the quadrennial event in Jakarta.

Naman Ojha announces retirement from all forms of cricket

- Former India wicketkeeper-batsman **Naman Ojha** has announced his retirement, from all formats of **cricket**. He made his first-class debut for **Madhya Pradesh in 2000-01**.
- The 37-year-old from Madhya Pradesh holds the record for the most dismissals by a wicketkeeper in the Ranji Trophy. He has also represented India in all three formats, featuring in one Test, one ODI and two T20 Internationals.

Chris Morris becomes IPL's most expensive player



- Former Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) superstar and South African all-rounder **Chris Morris** shattered all records at the **Indian Premier League (IPL) 2021 auction** in Chennai. Rajasthan Royals went all-out for the South African all-rounder Morris, buying him for a whopping **INR 16.25 crore**.
- Morris, who was declared surplus to requirement by the Virat Kohli-led side after the conclusion of the IPL 2020 last year, turned out

to be the most expensive player bought in the history of the cash-rich tournament.

South Africa’s Faf du Plessis retires from Test cricket



- Former captain of **South Africa, Faf du Plessis** has announced his retirement from Test cricket.
- The 36-year-old made his Test debut in November **2012** and played a total of 69 games in the longest format.
- He scored **4163 runs** in his Test career, at an average of **40.02**, with 10 centuries and 21 fifties.

Kings XI Punjab renamed as Punjab Kings ahead of IPL auction



- The IPL Franchise, **Kings XI Punjab** has formally been renamed as Punjab Kings ahead of the **Indian Premier League auction**. The new brand name and logo of the team was officially released by the management.
- The Punjab-based IPL franchise ‘Punjab Kings’ is co-owned by Bollywood actress PreityZinta,

along with businessman Ness Wadia, Mohit Burman and Karn Paul. The side is currently led by batsman **KL Rahul**, with former Indian captain **Anil Kumble** as its head coach.

Manika Batra Wins Singles Title at 82nd National Table Tennis Championship



- India’s top-ranked table tennis player **Manika Batra** beat **Reeth Rishya**, 4-2, in the women’s singles final, to win the **82nd Senior National Table Tennis Championship**, at the Tau Devi Lal Sports Complex in **Panchkula, Haryana**.
- It was Manika’s second Nationals title. She won her maiden national title in **2015 in Hyderabad**.

Sri Lanka pacer Dhammika Prasad quits international cricket



- **Sri Lanka** fast bowler **Dhammika Prasad** has announced his retirement from international cricket. He represented Sri Lanka in 25 Tests and 24 ODIs, bagging 75 and 32 wickets respectively.
- He also played alone T20 International against Australia in 2011. Prasad last played a Test

match in October 2015 against the West Indies.

Novak Djokovic and Naomi Osaka wins Australian Open 2021



- In tennis, Japan's **Naomi Osaka** won her **fourth Grand Slam title** on February 20, 2021, after she beat **American Jennifer Brady** in the women's singles game of the Australian Open final 2021.
- The four Grand Slam title for Osaka comes two Australian Open titles (2021 and 2019) and two US Open title (2018 and 2020). In Men's singles final, **Novak Djokovic** claimed his ninth Australian Open crown and the 18th Major Grand Slam overall, as he defeated Daniil Medvedev.

Winners of Australian Open 2021:

- Men's Singles: **Novak Djokovic** (Serbia) defeated Daniil Medvedev (Russia)
- Women's Singles: **Naomi Osaka** (Japan) defeated Jennifer Brady (US)
- Men's Doubles: **Ivan Dodig** of Croatia and **Filip Polášek** (Slovakia) defeated Rajeev Ram (US) and Joe Salisbury (UK)
- Women's Doubles: **Elise Mertens** (Belgium) and **Aryna Sabalenka** (Belarus) defeated Barbora Krejčíková (Czech Republic) and Kateřina Siniaková (Czech Republic)
- Mixed Doubles: **Barbora Krejčíková** (Czech

Republic) and **Rajeev Ram** of the US defeated the Australian pair of Samantha Stosur and Matthew Ebden.

Karnataka to Host 2nd Khelo India University Games 2021



- The **second edition** of the **Khelo India University Games (KIUG) 2021**, is scheduled to be held in **Karnataka**. This announcement was made by the Karnataka Chief Minister, Shri **BS Yediyurappa** and Union Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports, **Kiren Rijiju**.
- The KIUG-2021 will be hosted by **JAIN (Deemed-to-be University)**, Bengaluru, in partnership with the **Association of Indian Universities (AIU)**.
- In 2021, Yogasana and Mallakhamb have been added to the University Games, in an effort to preserve and promote the century-old sporting disciplines of the country.

World's biggest cricket stadium set for first match



- President **Ram Nath Kovind** has inaugurated the newly revamped **Motera cricket stadium** in Ahmedabad, which has been renamed the **Narendra Modi Stadium**.
- The biggest cricket stadium in the world will hold its first international match, with the newly renovated **Sardar Patel Stadium** to host the third Test between **India and England**. Both India and England had a forgettable outing in their last **pink-ball outings**.
- The stadium was first opened in the early **1980s** but has recently been rebuilt and now has a seating capacity of **110,000**.
- Motera currently is the biggest cricket stadium in the world in terms of capacity.
- The last time when India played a cricket match at Motera was way back in **2014**.

Dushyant Chautala re-elected as President of TTFI



- **Dushyant Chautala** has been re-elected as the **President of Table Tennis Federation of India (TTFI)** for a period of four years. He was elected unanimously during the **84th** annual meeting of the TTFI, on February 24, 2021.
- He is also the current Deputy Chief Minister of Haryana. The 32-year-old was first elected as President of the TTFI in January 2017, becoming the youngest President in the history of TTFI.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- Headquarters Table Tennis Federation of India: New Delhi.
- Table Tennis Federation of India Founded: 1926.

R. Vinay Kumar announces retirement from all forms of cricket



- Former India international and Karnataka captain, **R Vinay Kumar** has announced retirement **from all forms of cricket**. The **“Davangere Express”** after running for 25 years and passing so many stations of cricketing life, has finally arrived at the station called retirement.
- Vinay, a medium-pacer, represented India in one Test, 31 ODIs and 9 T20Is between 2010 and 2013. Vinay retires as a domestic giant of Indian cricket having taken 504 first-class wickets in 139 matches that included 26 five-wicket hauls and five 10-wicket hauls in a match. With the bat, he scored **3311 runs** including two centuries and 17 half-centuries.
- In 141 List A matches, the 37-year-old took 225 wickets at 24.39 and scored 1198 runs including four half-centuries.

Yusuf Pathan announces retirement from all forms of cricket



- Former India all-rounder, **Yusuf Pathan** has announced his retirement from all formats of cricket. He played 57 ODIs and 22 T20Is for India since making his international debut in

2007. He was part of the Indian team that won the **ICC T20 World Cup 2007** and **ICC Cricket World Cup 2011**.

- He scored 810 ODI runs and 236 T20I runs for India. He also picked up 46 wickets in limited-overs international cricket. Yusuf played 100 first-class matches, scoring 4825 runs and picking up 201 wickets.
- In List A cricket, the right-handed batsman accumulated 4797 runs and got 124 wickets from 199 matches. He last played for India in an ODI against South Africa at Johannesburg in March 2012.

TOPIC 18: STATE

Uttarakhand sets up Botanical Garden to conserve species of Shivalik range



- In **Nainital** district of **Uttarakhand**, a first of its kind botanical garden named '**Shivalik Arboretum**' has been inaugurated, for conserving over **210 species of trees** found in the **Shivalik range of Himalayas**.
- Shivalik Arboretum aims to spread nature education among people so that they are able to feel an emotional connect with the trees, and make them more active towards conservation.
- The facility will showcase information like scientific information about particular species, cultural significance, medicinal use, country of origin, type of habitat in which it is found and all possible uses including as **timber, dyes or any**

other peculiar use.

- Some of the trees preserved include Kafal (*Myrica esculenta*), Buransh, (*Rhododendron arboretum*), Tejpat (*Cinnamomum Tamala*) and Sanjeevani (*Sellaginellabryopteris*).

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

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

Punjab CM launches 'Har GharPani, Har GharSafai' mission



- Punjab Chief Minister **Captain Amarinder Singh** has virtually launched the **‘Har GharPani, Har GharSafai’** mission as part of the government’s campaign to accomplish the goal of 100 per cent potable piped water supply in all rural households.
- The scheme is being funded by the **World Bank, Jal Jeevan Mission of GoI, NABARD, and State Budget.**
- The scheme will benefit more than 1.6 lakh residents from 155 villages in **Amritsar, Tarn Taran, and Gurdaspur districts** by helping replace groundwater with surface water supply for drinking, besides resolving the problem of arsenic affected habitations.
- The Chief Minister also inaugurated one **Mega Surface Water Supply Scheme** covering 85 villages in the Moga district, 144 new water supply schemes for 172 villages, 121 Arsenic, and Iron removal plants.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- Punjab CM: Captain Amarinder Singh.
- Punjab Governor: V.P.SinghBadnore.

Kerala to Open its First Human Milk Bank



- **Kerala** will open its **first Human Milk Bank (HMB)** on February 5, 2021. This is a state-of-the-art facility, and Kerala Health Minister KK Shailaja will open at **Ernakulam General Hospital**. A milk bank was established with the support of the **Rotary Club of Cochin Global**.
- After the State Health Department signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Rotary Club of Cochin Global in 2020, its cost was 3.5 million rupees. The Association of Pediatricians (IAP) will provide trained nursing staff to operate the milk bank.
- The breast milk bank will ensure that newborn babies who are not ill or deceased or who are not breastfed due to insufficient breast milk production can obtain breast milk.
- Approximately 3,600 babies are born in general hospitals every year. Among them, 600 to 1,000 sick babies enter the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU).

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

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

PM Modi launches Asom Mala in Assam’s Sonitpur district



- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** has launched the **‘Asom Mala’** programme in Dhekiajuli of **Sonitpur district, Assam**.
- As per the PMO, this initiative will boost the state’s road infrastructure and contribute to Assam’s economic progress and improve connectivity.
- The programme is unique for its emphasis on effective maintenance through continuous field data collection and its linkage with the Road Asset Management System.
- PM Modi also laid the foundation stones of **medical colleges and hospitals in Biswanath and Charaideo** with an aim to boost Assam’s health infrastructure.
- The two medical colleges and hospitals are being set up at Biswanath and Charaideo at a total estimated project cost of over Rs 1,100 crores. Each hospital will have a 500-bed capacity and 100 MBBS seat capacity.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- Assam CM: SarbanandaSonowal.
- Assam Governor: Jagdish Mukhi.

Uttarakhand Chamoli glacier burst



- The glacier burst took place at the **Rishiganga power project** after a portion of **Nanda Devi** glacier broke off in **Tapovan** area of **Joshimath in Uttarakhand’s Chamoli district** on 7th February morning and damaged the **Rishiganga dam on Alaknanda river**.
- National Thermal Power Corporation’s (NTPC) **TapovanVishnugad project on Dhauliganga river** and **Rishi Ganga Power Corporation Ltd’s** project, with a planned capacity of **520 MW** and **13.2 MW**, respectively, have been nearly washed away.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

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

Madhya Pradesh launches ‘SAANS’ campaign to reduce infant mortality



- The health department in **Madhya Pradesh** has launched the **Social Awareness and Action to**

Neutralise Pneumonia Successfully ('SAANS') campaign.

- The main purpose of the campaign is to reduce the death rate due to pneumonia among infants a strategy is being chalked out under the Social awareness campaign in which medical staff is being trained.
- Training will be imparted at the community and primary health centres.
- Around **4,000 Health and Wellness Centres** have been set up in Madhya Pradesh for this purpose.
- The State government has also developed training modules in partnership with **PGIMER, Chandigarh, and UNICEF**, which will be used to enhance the skills of health workers, including doctors and paramedical staff.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

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

UP Government announces unique 16-digit Unicode to identify landholdings



- **Uttar Pradesh government** has introduced a system of issuing a unique **16-digit Unicode** to mark all kinds of landholdings in the state.
- The main purpose of the system is to check the cases of land disputes, put an end to fake registries of the disputed land and save people from falling into the trap of fraudsters.

- Every piece of land in the state will have its own unique identity. The Unicode would be issued by the state revenue department for marking all kinds of agricultural, residential and commercial land.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

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

Tamil Nadu set to create state's 5th tiger reserve



- The **Central government** has given its approval for the creation of a **fifth tiger reserve** in **Tamil Nadu** that will encompass the **Meghamalai and Srivilliputhur Grizzled Squirrel Wildlife Sanctuaries**. It will be the **51st Tiger Sanctuary of India**.
- The SrivilliputhurMegamalai Tiger Reserve will span the forests of Megamalai wildlife sanctuary and Srivilliputhur grizzled squirrel wildlife sanctuary spread across the districts of Theni, Virudhunagar and Madurai.
- The **100,000-hectare** area is home to a range of mammals and bird species and more than a dozen tigers. Forest officials have noticed 14 tigers regularly in both the wildlife sanctuaries.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- Tamil Nadu Capital: Chennai.
- Tamil Nadu Chief Minister: Edappadi K.

Palaniswami.

- Tamil Nadu Governor: Banwarilal Purohit.
- Tamil Nadu State Dance: Bharathanatyam.

Vijayanagara officially declared as 31st District of Karnataka



- The **Karnataka government** issued an official gazette notification to declare **Vijayanagara** as the **31st district of the state**. The new district has been carved out of **Ballari** and named after the Vijayanagara empire that ruled from this region.
- The Vijayanagara district will have six taluks and its headquarter will be at Hosapete. The other taluks in the new district are **Kudligi, HagaribommanaHalli, Kotturu, HoovinaHadagali, and Harapanahalli**.
- The iconic cluster of monuments at Hampi or Hampe, a UNESCO world heritage site, will be part of the Vijayanagara.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

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

Meghalaya police inks MoU with SBI for e-Challan



- A **memorandum of understanding (MoU)** was signed between the **Meghalaya police** and the **State Bank of India** for implementation of the e-Challan within the jurisdiction of the **Shillong Traffic Police (STP)**.
- The e-Challan system which will be launched in the days to come is a digital traffic enforcement solution whereby, imposing penalties on violators of traffic rules and generating of challan will be done digitally.
- The system has been integrated with **VAHAN & SARATHI applications** and this will enable the Traffic Officials to fetch the details of the traffic violator such as vehicle and driver’s details through these applications, thereby, reducing the time taken to issue challan.
- The payment for traffic violations can be transacted on the spot through cash payment or through instant card payments by swiping at **Point of Sale (POS) machine** available with the Traffic Officials; options are also available for the traffic violator to make payments at the Traffic Branches by producing the issued e-Challan at the respective Traffic Units.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

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

World Bank Signs \$100 million Project with

Chhattisgarh



THE WORLD BANK

- **Indian Govt** and **Chhattisgarh Govt** has signed a **\$100 million** for **CHIRAAG (Chhattisgarh Inclusive Rural and Accelerated Agriculture Growth)** project with the **World bank**.
- The main purpose is to develop sustainable production systems that allow tribal households in remote areas of Chhattisgarh to practice round-the-year production of diversified and nutritious food.
- The project will be implemented in the southern tribal-majority region of the state where a large population is undernourished and poor. Over **180,000 households** from about **1,000** villages in eight districts of Chhattisgarh, will be benefited from this project.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- World Bank Headquarters: Washington DC, United States.
- World Bank President: David Malpass.
- World Bank Founded: July 1944.
- Chief Minister of Chhattisgarh: Bhupesh Baghel; Governor: AnusuiyaUikey.

Rajnath Singh inaugurates ‘Jalabhishekam’ campaign in Madhya Pradesh



- The state government of **Madhya Pradesh** has launched a water conservation campaign called **‘Jalabhishekam’**, under which more than **57,000 water structures** has been constructed. The campaign was inaugurated by the Union Defence Minister **Rajnath Singh** virtually.
- Water conservation work is being undertaken with public participation and will be helpful in achieving the goal of building self-reliant Madhya Pradesh.
- The Campaign will also fulfil the intention of **‘water for every farm and work for every hand’**.
- The water structures were created during **COVID era** by linking the work with the **MNREGA scheme**.
- These water structures cost over **Rs. 2,000 crore** and will irrigate **2.50 lakh hectares** of land without submerging an inch of land.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

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

Odisha To Construct ‘COVID Warrior Memorial’ in Bhubaneswar



- In order to recognize the sacrifice and services rendered by the **Covid warriors** who lost their lives fighting the pandemic, the government has decided to construct a **Covid Warrior Memorial in Odisha**. The **Biju Patnaik Park** in Bhubaneswar has been selected for this purpose.
- **Odisha Health and Family Welfare Department** to the Works Department it was also said that the Works Department has been declared as the Nodal Department for construction of the **Covid Warrior Memorial**.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

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

Famous Mandu Festival Begins in Madhya Pradesh



- The three-day famous **“Mandu Festival”** began

at the historic town of **Mandu** in **Dhar district of Madhya Pradesh** on February 13, 2021. The festival will culminate on February 15, 2021. The festival is organised by the state government of Madhya Pradesh to showcase each and every aspect of the **ancient Mandu city, ranging from food, music, history & heritage, art & craft etc.**

- During the festival, the state culture and tourism minister **Usha Thakur** inaugurated the newly constructed **Dino Adventure Park** and **Fossils Museum** in Mandu and construction of Astro Park building at a cost of **Rs 59 lakh**. The Dinosaur Park is the first modern fossil park in India which has **24 eggs** and other fossils of dinosaurs on display.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

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

Maharashtra govt signs MoU with Flipkart to promote wooden toys



- **Maharashtra government** has signed an MoU with **Flipkart** to promote wooden toys, local artefacts, handicrafts. **Maharashtra Small Industries Development Corporation and Maharashtra State Khadi & Village Industries Board** have signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Flipkart.

- This MoU will enable artisans, weavers, craftsmen & MSMEs from Maharashtra to showcase their products to millions of customers in India. Flipkart will provide free training for packaging and branding to all these manufacturers. Also, product photography will also be done by the company.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- Maharashtra Governor: Bhagat Singh Koshyari.
- Maharashtra Capital: Mumbai.
- Maharashtra CM: Uddhav Thackeray.

Mamata Banerjee launches ‘Maa’ scheme to provide meals at Rs 5



- **West Bengal** government launched “**Maa**” canteens for providing subsidised cooked meals for the poor and the destitute at a nominal cost of ₹5. The govt will give a subsidy of ₹15 and people have to pay ₹5.
- The kitchen will run by **Self-Help Groups (SHG)**. The government allocated ₹ 100 crores for this project.
- The canteens will be open from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. every day. People will get a plate of rice, dal, a vegetable and egg curry.
- This new initiative is for common people. Though we give free rations there is still a huge demand for cooked food. Therefore, we are starting these community kitchens.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

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

‘Snakepedia’ mobile app launched in Kerala



- A team of scientists, doctors and photographers in **Kerala** have launched a mobile application named “**Snakepedia**”, that will present all relevant information on snakes, to help the public as well as doctors in treating snake bites.
- The main aim of the app is to help the public identify snakes, avail proper treatment on time for snakebites, bust myths about snakes, and protect snakes as well as snakebite victims.
- The android mobile application documents information on snakes with the help of pictures, infographics and podcasts and analyses its first aid, treatment, myths and superstitions.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

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

Odisha Govt announced Development Package for Maa Samaleswari Shrine



- The state government of **Odisha**, under Chief Minister **Naveen Patnaik**, has launched the development work for the **SAMALEI Project (Samaleswari Temple Area Management and Local Economy Initiatives)**, to offer the divine experience to tourists & devotees.
- The project involves the development of **108 acres** of land in & around the **16th-century** shrine of **Maa Samaleswari**, the presiding deity of western Odisha.
- Odisha Government has announced a package of **Rs 200-crore** for 2021-22 fiscal for the implementation of the project. The project will be implemented under **MoSarkar5T** and will focus on the beautification of the temple & economic development of local people.
- It will include the development of amenities for devotees inside the **12-acre temple** premises and development of four tall heritage welcome gates.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

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

Kerala Government sanctions Rs. 9 crore to build 48 'Smart' Anganwadis



- The state government of **Kerala** has sanctioned **Rs. 9 crores** to build '**smart anganwadis**', by converting the conventional anganwadis into "**smart**" structures with better amenities. The state **Department of Women and Child Development** has given permission for **48 anganwadis** in the state to construct new buildings under the Smart Anganwadi scheme.
- These smart anganwadis are being designed and constructed as part of the **Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS)**.
- These '**smart anganwadis**' will provide early childhood care by making the facility more child-friendly to nurture the mental and physical development of children.
- It is expected to have various amenities, ranging from study hall, kitchen, dining area, storeroom, creative zone, garden to swimming pool and outdoor play area as per the availability of land.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

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

Assam CM lays foundation of first skill university of eastern India



- The Chief Minister of Assam, Sarbananda Sonowal has laid the foundation of the **first skill university of eastern India** in Darrang district in Assam. The state-of-the-art skill university would be built with a financial outlay of **Rs 1,000 crore**.
- It will impart training to over **10,000** students in 12 disciplines. The university is expected to be completed by **2026**. It will have “understandings” with countries like **Germany, Taiwan, South Korea, Israel, Japan, England**.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- Assam CM: Sarbananda Sonowal.
- Assam Governor: Jagdish Mukhi.

PM Modi inaugurates Oil & Gas projects in Assam



- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** has dedicated to the nation **INDMAX Unit** at Indian Oil’s Bongaigaon Refinery, Oil India Limited’s Secondary Tank Farm at Madhuban, Dibrugarh, and a Gas Compressor Station at Hebeda Village, Makum, Tinsukia remotely from

Dhemaji in Assam.

- He also inaugurated the **Dhemaji Engineering College** and laid the foundation stone for Sualkuchi Engineering College in Assam.
- **INDMAX Unit** at Indian Oil’s Bongaigaon Refinery
- Oil India Limited’s Secondary Tank Farm at Madhuban, Dibrugarh – **Rs 490 crore**
- Gas Compressor Station at Hebeda Village, Makum, Tinsukia – **Rs 132 Crore**
- Dhemaji Engineering College – **Rs 45 Crore**
- Laid the foundation stone for Sualkuchi Engineering College – **Rs 55 crore**.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- Assam CM: Sarbananda Sonowal.
- Assam Governor: Jagdish Mukhi.

47th Khajuraho Dance Festival 2021 begins



- The **47th Khajuraho Dance Festival** began in **Khajuraho, Madhya Pradesh** which is based on the Indian classical dance tradition. Khajuraho Temples come alive with splendour, beams, and the hustle-bustle of art lovers at the Festival.
- The first-day event is dedicated to **Bharatanatyam performance** by **Geeta Chandran** and her troupe and **Kathak**

performance by Deepak Maharaj.

- The festival is being organized by the Culture Department through **UstadAlauddin Khan Music and Arts Academy Bhopal.**
- This year festival will give the audience a chance to watch the performance of the dancers amid the aura of the temple as the event is being held once again in the temple complex of the **Western Temple Group of Khajuraho** after a gap of **44 years.**
- The festival was hosted each year at the magnificent city of Khajuraho located in the district of **Chhatarpur**, the artists perform in the backdrop of historical monuments.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

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

CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan Renames Hoshangabad as Narmadapuram



- **Hoshangabad city** in the state of **Madhya Pradesh** will be renamed **Narmadapuram.** This was announced by Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister **Shivraj Singh Chouhan** during the **Narmada Jayanti programme** held in Hoshangabad. Hoshangabad was earlier named after an attacker **Hoshang Shah**, the first ruler of **Malwa.**
- However, the city will now be called Narmadapuram, after the river Narmada, the lifeline of the state. The state government will

now send a proposal to the Centre to change the name of Hoshangabad to Narmadapuram. The city is famous for its beautiful ghats along the banks of the Narmada river.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

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

Karnataka to set up a Flower Processing Centre



- The **Karnataka State Horticulture Department** is setting up a **“Flower Processing Centre”**, in collaboration with the **International Flower Auction Bangalore (IFAB)**, to convert unsold flowers into various useful products.
- The facility will provide support to the flower farmers who suffer huge losses whenever there is a glut or market disruption. Growers can learn the art of flower processing from the centre.
- The incubation centre will process flowers and convert them to value-added products such as natural dyes, floral papers, incense sticks, flower petal powder for cosmetic usage, floral embedded works, floral arts, and silica-stored flowers.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

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

Kerala Governor Inaugurates India’s First Digital University



- Governor of Kerala, **Arif Mohammed Khan** has inaugurated India's **first Digital University** named **Kerala University of Digital Sciences, Innovation and Technology**. A Digital University has been set up in Kerala's Technocity, **Mangalapuram**.
- Kerala University is established by upgrading the two-decade-old state government's **Indian Institute of Information Technology and Management Kerala (IIITM-K)**.
- India's first Digital University will focus on postgraduate programmes and research along with building strong industry-academic and academic-academic linkages with leading institutions in India and abroad.
- Developed on a 10-acre campus in Technocity, the university will provide education to 12,000 residential scholars on the campus and many technology-linked learners outside. The university seeks to lead the Digital Transformation Initiatives announced by the Kerala Government in the Budget 2021.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

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

Punjab Cabinet approves mission 'Lal Laker' in all villages

- The **Punjab Cabinet** has approved the implementation of the mission '**Lal Laker**' aimed at facilitating villagers to monetise property rights and availing benefits provided by government departments, institutions and banks in all villages across the state.
- As no record of rights is available for such properties within the 'Lal Laker', the same cannot currently be monetised as per the real value of the property and no mortgages can be created on such properties.
- The right of record of properties within 'Lal Laker' in the villages of the state will be prepared with the cooperation of the government of India under the **SVAMITVA (Survey of Villages and Mapping with Improved Technology in Village Areas) scheme**.
- This will enable mapping the land, households, habitation and all other areas falling within 'Lal Laker'. It will go a long way in improving the living standard of villagers and boosting their self-esteem.
- There are households within the 'Lal Laker', which do not own property other than the areas within the 'Lal Laker', and are thus at a disadvantage when it comes to monetising or realising the real value of the property, according to a government statement.
- 'Lal Laker' refers to land that is part of the village '**abaadi**' (**habitation**) and is used for non-

agriculture purposes only.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- Punjab CM: Captain Amarinder Singh.
- Punjab Governor: V.P.SinghBadnore.

TOPIC 19: SUMMITS AND CONFERENCES

Chiefs of Air Staff (CAS) Conclave Organised at Bengaluru



- Raksha Mantri, **Rajnath Singh** has inaugurated the '**Chiefs of Air Staff (CAS) Conclave**' at Air Force Station Yelahanka in **Bengaluru, Karnataka**. The two-day conclave has been organised by Indian Air Force, from 3 to 04 February 2021, in a Hybrid Form with extensive use of digital media.
- The Chiefs of Air Staff from about **75 countries** would come together on a single platform to exchange their thoughts on current issues related to aerospace power strategy and technological developments.
- The Conclave is a perfect example of **India's Defence Cooperation** with other countries working as a diplomatic instrument, giving an opportunity for building bridges of friendship, mutual trust and capacities on a global basis.
- Promoting transparency in defence cooperation and building areas of common interests in military aviation will be focus areas of the CAS Conclave.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- Air Chief Marshal: Rakesh Kumar Singh Bhadauria.

- Indian Airforce founded: 8 October 1932.
- Indian Airforce Headquarters: New Delhi.

India hosts Indian Ocean Region Defence Ministers' Conclave



- **India** hosted **Indian Ocean Region (IOR) Defence Ministers' Conclave** on the sidelines of **Aero India 2021**. The conclave is an initiative to promote dialogue in an institutional, economic and cooperative environment that can foster the development of peace, stability and prosperity in the Indian Ocean region.
- The broad theme of the conclave is '**Enhanced Peace, Security and Cooperation in the Indian Ocean**'. The conclave is also taking place at a time Indian and Chinese troops are locked in a bitter standoff in eastern Ladakh for the last eight months.

India, EU hold high-level dialogue



- The **first India-European Union High-Level Dialogue** was co-chaired by the Minister of Commerce and Industry, **Piyush Goyal** from India side and the European Union Executive Vice-President & Trade Commissioner Mr **Valdis Dombrovskis**, from the EU side.
- This Dialogue was organised in line with the commitment made at the **15th India-EU Leader’s Summit held in July 2020**.
- Ministers agreed for further deepening of bilateral trade and investment relationship through a series of regular engagements, aiming at quick deliverable for the businesses in these tough times.
- They also agreed to meet within the next three months, to reach consensus on a host of bilateral trade & investment cooperation issues like bilateral Regulatory Dialogue; an India-EU Multilateral Dialogue to explore further possibilities of cooperation.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- European Union (EU) Headquarters location: Brussels, Belgium.
- European Union (EU) Founded: 1 November 1993.
- European Parliament President: David-Maria Sassoli.

PM Modi inaugurates World Sustainable Development Summit 2021



- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** has inaugurated the **World Sustainable Development Summit 2021** through video conferencing.
- The theme of the Summit is **‘Redefining our common future: Safe and secure environment for all’**.
- 2021 WSD Summit is the 20th edition of the flagship event organised by **‘The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI)’**.
- The Summit will bring together a wide number of governments, business leaders, academicians, climate scientists, youth, and the civil society in the fight against climate change. The Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, Ministry of New and Renewable Energy and Ministry of Earth Sciences are key partners of the Summit.

Dharmendra Pradhan Participates in 11th IEA, IEF, OPEC Symposium



- The **11th IEA-IEF-OPEC Symposium on Energy Outlooks** was held virtually on February 17, 2021, under the patronage of the Minister of

Energy of Saudi Arabia HRH Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman Al Saud.

- From India, the Union Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas & Steel, **Dharmendra Pradhan**, participated in the symposium.
- The trilateral symposium discussed the long-term outlooks of key producer and consumer countries, apart from the comparative analysis of short, medium, and long-term energy outlooks that OPEC and the IEA published in 2020.

India-Australia circular Economy Hackathon (I-ACE)



- The Prime Minister, Shri **Narendra Modi** addressed the valedictory function of the **India Australia Circular Economy Hackathon (I-ACE)** via videoconferencing.
- A circular economy implies reusing waste back into the production cycle to make new products instead of wasting such materials with embedded resources.
- The I-ACE was jointly organized by Atal Innovation Mission, NITI Aayog, Government of India and Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO), Australia. More than 200 participants in 39 teams from India and 33 teams from Australia took part.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- Prime Minister of Australia: Scott Morrison.

- The currency of Australia: Australian dollar.
- Capital of Australia: Canberra.

PM Narendra Modi To Inaugurate 2nd Edition of 'Maritime India Summit'



'Exploring the Potential Business Opportunities in Indian Maritime Sector & Making AatmaNirbhar India'

- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** will inaugurate the virtual **Maritime India Summit (MIS) 2021**, from March 2 to 4, 2021. The 'Maritime India Summit 2021' is the flagship initiative of the **Union Ministry of State for Ports, Shipping & Waterways (MoPSW)**, Government of India. **FICCI** is the industry partner for the summit.
- The theme of the event is **"Exploring the potential business opportunities in the Indian Maritime sector and making Aatmanirbhar Bharat"**.
- The objective of the Summit is to promote both domestic and international investment in the Indian Ports and Maritime sector.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- Minister of State (Independent Charge) of the Ministry of Shipping: Mansukh L. Mandaviya.

Gajendra Singh Shekhawat inaugurates ICOLD Symposium



- Union Minister of Jal Shakti, **Gajendra Singh Shekhawat** has inaugurated the **International Commission on Large Dams (ICOLD) Symposium** in New Delhi.
- The theme of the symposium is **“Sustainable Development of Dams & River Basins”**. More than 300 delegates from across the country and abroad will participate in the Symposium.
- The symposium has been organised by the International Commission on Large Dams (ICOLD), at New Delhi in Hybrid format from 24 to 27 February 2021, in collaboration with **Central Water Commission (CWC)**, **Dam Rehabilitation Improvement Project (DRIP)** and **National Hydrology Project (NHP)**.

Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- International Commission on Large Dams President: Michael Rogers.
- International Commission on Large Dams Founded: 1928.
- International Commission on Large Dams Headquarters location: Paris, France.

India, Australia and France hold trilateral dialogue with focus on Indo-Pacific

- A trilateral dialogue was held among **India, France, and Australia** on February 24, 2021, at the senior officials’ level, with a focus on further enhancing cooperation in the **Indo-Pacific**. The aim of this trilateral dialogue is to build strong bilateral relation among the three countries and synergies their respective strength to ensure a peaceful, secure, prosperous and rules-based Indo-Pacific region.
- It must be remembered that the first India-France-Australia Trilateral Dialogue was held virtually on **September 9, 2020**, at Foreign Secretary-level, for better coordination in the region.
- At the senior official level, the Indian side was led by Joint Secretary (Europe West) in MEA, **Sandeep Chakravorty**, while the French side was led by **Bertrand Lortholary**, Director (Asia and Oceania), and the Australian side was led by Mr **Gary Cowan**, First Assistant Secretary (North and South Asia Division) and Mr John Geering, First Assistant Secretary (Europe and Latin America Division).

Piyush Goyal addresses 6th International Conference on Pharmaceutical & Medical Devices



- The **6th edition** of the **International Conference on Pharmaceutical & Medical Device sector** was inaugurated by Union Minister of Railways, Commerce & Industry, and Consumer Affairs and Food & Public Distribution **Piyush Goyal**.

- To encourage and bring forward the best technology solutions and manufacturing, for the overall growth of the Pharma & Medical Device sector.
- The theme of India Pharma 2021: **‘Indian Pharma Industry: “Future is Now”**.
- The theme of India Medical Device 2021 is **“India MedTech Future: Innovate & Make in India through Global Alliance”**.
- The conference is organised every year by the Department of Pharmaceuticals, Ministry of Chemicals & Fertilizers, Government of India, along with the **Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI)**.

SECTION 2

Detailed Analysis of Important Events

TOPIC 1: ECONOMICS

Why are Petrol, Diesel prices rising?

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

Note4Students

From UPSC perspective, the following things are important :

Prelims level : Impact of fuel prices on inflation

Mains level : Global oil price dynamics



CHANGE IN PRICES: INDIA AND THE REST

Country	Jan 2020 (in USD/litre)	Jan 2021 (in USD/litre)	Change
India	1.03	1.17	13.6%
China	0.72	0.71	- 1.4%
USA	0.67	0.62	- 7.5%
Brazil	1.07	0.85	- 20.6%
UK	1.66	1.63	- 1.8%
Crude per barrel	63.65	54.77	- 14.0%

Source: PPAC, Trading Economics, Statista



Diesel and petrol prices have hit record highs across the country.

Govt explanation

- The government reasons that global crude oil prices have risen by more than 50 per cent to over \$63.3 per barrel since October, forcing oil retailers to increase pump prices.

- That, however, is only partly true.
- Indian consumers are already paying much higher than what they were paying last January, even though crude prices are yet to reach levels of early last year.

Note: Petrol and diesel do not come under the purview of goods and services tax (GST).

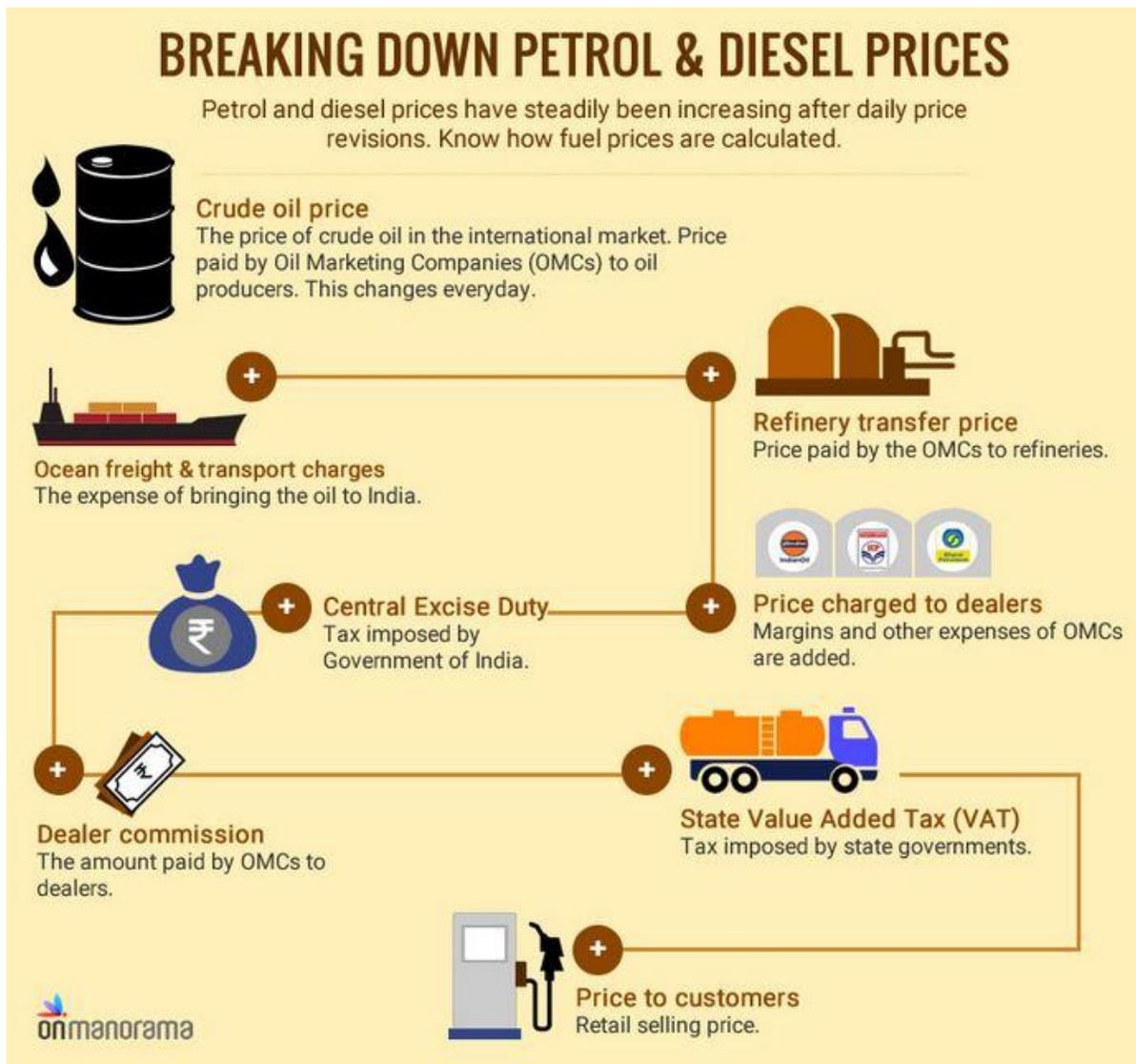
Fuel price dynamics in India

- Retail petrol and diesel prices are in theory decontrolled — or linked to global crude oil prices.
- It means that if crude prices fall retail prices should come down too, and vice versa.
- But this does not happen in practice, largely because oil price decontrol is a one-way street in India.
- When global crude oil prices fall and prices slide, the government slaps fresh taxes and levies to ensure that it rakes in extra revenues.
- The consumer should have ideally benefited by way of lower pump prices, is forced to either shell out what she's already paying or spend even more for every litre of fuel.
- The main beneficiary in this subversion of price decontrol is the government.

Why crude oil prices are rising now?

- Prices collapsed in April 2020 after the pandemic spread around the world, and demand fell away.
- But as economies have reduced travel restrictions and factory output has picked up, global demand has improved, and prices have been recovering.
- The controlled production of crude amid rising demand has been another key factor in boosting oil prices, with Saudi Arabia voluntarily cutting its daily output.

What is the impact of taxes on retail prices of auto fuels?



- The central government hiked the central excise duty on petrol to Rs 32.98 per litre during the course of last year from Rs 19.98 per litre at the beginning of 2020.
- It increased the excise duty on diesel to Rs 31.83 per litre from Rs 15.83 over the same period to boost revenues as economic activity fell due to the pandemic.
- A number of states have also hiked sales tax on petrol and diesel to shore up their revenues.

How much tax do we pay now?

Currently, state and central taxes amount to around 180 per cent of the base price of petrol and 141 per cent of the base price of diesel in Delhi.

How will these hikes impact inflation?

- Experts note that the impact of rising fuel inflation has been counterbalanced by declining food inflation, but that consumers with greater expenditure on travel are feeling the pinch of higher prices.
- Rising fuel inflation may pinch consumers who have to travel further for work and have access to affordable cereals etc.
- The urban population would be more impacted by rising fuel prices than the rural population — however, a weak monsoon may lead to rural India being hit as farmers are forced to rely more on diesel-powered irrigation.

TOPIC 2: ENVIRONMENT & BIODIVERSITY

India and Australia were evolutionary neighbours

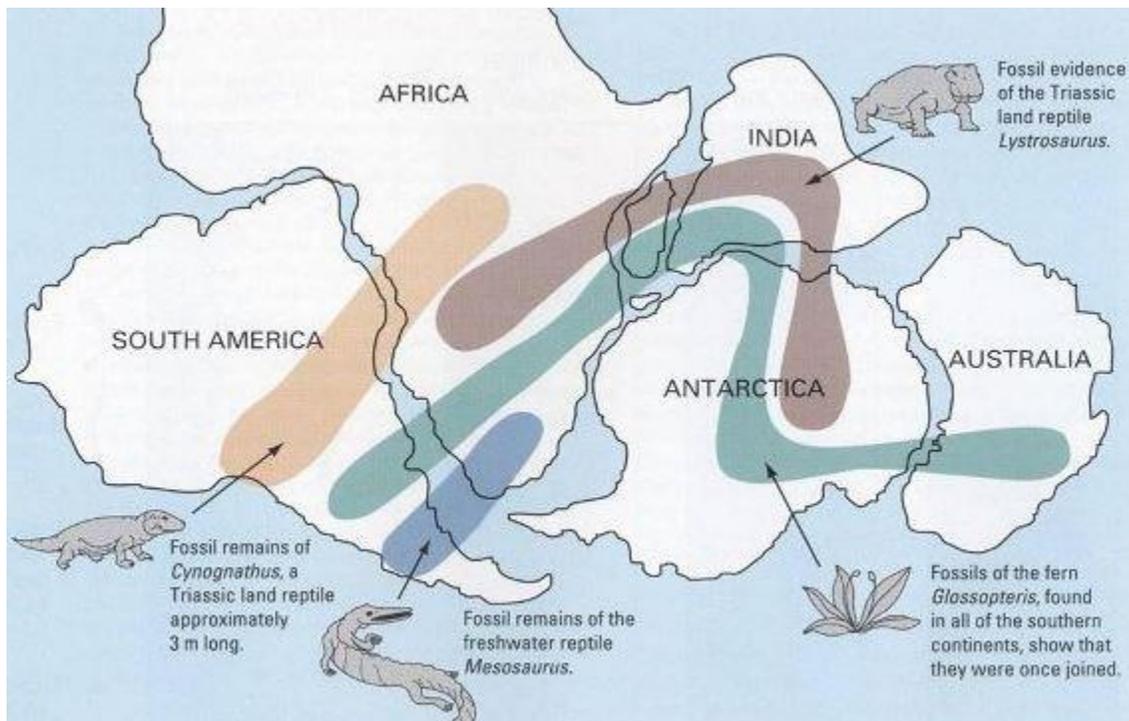
Mains Paper 1: Geographical Features & Their Location

Note4Students

From UPSC perspective, the following things are important :

Prelims level : Dickinsonia, Bhimbetka

Mains level : Geological time scale



Bhimbetka, which has yielded a fossil of Dickinsonia dating back about 550 million years, is the first time the particular fossilized organism has been recorded in India.

Why does this fossil matter?

- It dates back to an era regarded as the precursor to the explosion of life on earth during the Cambrian period.
- Thus it puts India firmly on the map for studies of the Ediacaran era along with Australia and Russia.

Here’s what makes the discovery a global milestone:

(a) Ediacaran Period

- The finding gives lead about the earliest living species during a period of the earth’s history known as the Ediacaran, named after the Ediacara Hills in South Australia.
- This is the period in Earth’s history when Dickinsonia and several multicellular organisms existed.
- It was approximately 635 million years ago (Ma) and 541 Ma, with the living creatures of the era, called vendobionts.

Now take this opportunity to revise the Geological time scale from your NCERTs. Try differentiating between different era, periods and epoch.

(b) India's Proximity to Australia

- Studies of the rock characteristics in and around Bhimbetka show that they share several characteristics with rocks in Australia.
- Dickinsonia fossils from India were found by the scientists to be identical to the Rawnsley Quartzite in South Australia.
- This provides evidence of their age and the proximity of the two landmasses in Gondwanaland in that era.
- The evidence however did not support reconstructions adjusted for the polar wander phenomenon [which involves motion of continents over geologic time and its impacts].

Use of Zircon dating

- The age of fossil rock is determined using Zircon isotopes.
- Zircon dating of the youngest Maihar sandstone in Madhya Pradesh puts its age at 548 Ma.
- The lower Bhandar group in the Son and Chambal valleys yielded an isotope-derived age for limestones ranging from 978 Ma to 1073 Ma, situating it in the older Tonian period.
- The Ediacaran period was the precursor to the Cambrian (about 541 Ma to 485.4 Ma) when the earth witnessed an explosion of life forms and much of which makes up modern animal life today.

Mawsynram: Wettest place on Earth sees a decreasing trend in rainfall

Mains Paper 1: Geographical Features & Their Location

Note4Students

From UPSC perspective, the following things are important :

Prelims level : Mawsynram

Mains level : Not Much

A recent study that looked at the rainfall pattern in the past 119 years found a decreasing trend at Cherrapunji and nearby areas.

Try this PYQ:

Q. "Climate is extreme, rainfall is scanty and the people used to be nomadic herders." The above statement best describes which of the following regions?

(a) African Savannah

(b) Central Asian Steppe

(c) North American Prairie

(d) Siberian Tundra

Mawsynram

- Mawsynram is a town in the East Khasi Hills district of Meghalaya state in northeastern India, 60.9 kilometres from Shillong.
- Mawsynram receives the highest rainfall in India.
- It is reportedly the wettest place on Earth, with an average annual rainfall of 11,872mm but that claim is disputed.
- According to the Guinness Book of World Records, Mawsynram received 26,000 millimetres (1,000 in) of rainfall in 1985.

Why it rain highest in Mawsynram?

- Because of the uneven relief of India due to the presence of a number of hill ranges, the monsoon is not able to shed its moisture evenly over India.
- Windward sides receive more rainfall and leeward sides receive less rainfall.
- Mawsynram lies in the funnel-shaped depression caused by the Khasi range in Meghalaya.
- The Bay of Bengal branch of monsoons is trapped in it and causes heavy rainfall.

Decreasing rainfall trends

- The research analysed daily rain gauge measurements during 1901–2019 and noted that the changes in the Indian Ocean temperature have a huge effect on the rainfall in the region.
- There was a reduction in the vegetation area in northeast India in the past two decades, implying that human influence also plays an important role in the changing rainfall patterns.
- The traditional way of cultivation known as Jhum cultivation or shifting cultivation is now decreased and being replaced by other methods.
- Also, previous studies have noted there is sizable deforestation in the region.

Carbon Watch: India's first app to assess one's carbon footprint

Mains Paper 1: Climatic Change

Note4Students

From UPSC perspective, the following things are important :

Prelims level : Carbon footprints, Ecological footprints

Mains level : Not Much

Chandigarh became the first state or UT in India to launch Carbon Watch, a mobile application to assess the carbon footprint of an individual.

Carbon Footprint

- A carbon footprint is the total greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions caused by an individual, event, organization, service, or product, expressed as carbon dioxide equivalent.
- It corresponds to the whole amount of greenhouse gases (GHG) produced to, directly and indirectly; support a person's lifestyle and activities.
- Carbon footprints are usually measured in equivalent tons of CO₂, during the period of a year, and they can be associated with an individual, an organization, a product or an event, among others.
- The GHGs whose sum results in a carbon footprint can come from the production and consumption of fossil fuels, food, manufactured goods, materials, roads or transportation.

Note: An ecological footprint, as explained earlier compares the total resources people consume with the land and water area that is needed to replace those resources. A carbon footprint also deals with resource usage but focuses strictly on the greenhouse gases released due to burning of fossil fuels.

How does the app Carbon Watch work?

- As a person downloads the application, they will need to fill details in four parts — Water, Energy, Waste Generation and Transport (Vehicular movement).
- In the category of Water, the person will be required to inform about the consumption of water.
- In the Energy category, the details regarding the electricity units consumed every month at the house, monthly bill etc and usage of solar energy will have to be furnished.
- In the Waste category, the individual will need to inform about the waste generated on their part and their family.
- In the transport section, the individual will have to inform about the mode of transport used by four-wheeler, two-wheeler or bicycle.

Try this PYQ:

As a result of their annual survey, the National Geographic Society and an international polling firm GlobeScan gave India top rank in Greendex 2009 score. What is this score?

- (a) It is a measure of efforts made by different countries in adopting technologies for reducing the carbon footprint
- (b) It is a measure of environmentally sustainable consumer behavior in different countries
- (c) It is an assessment of programs/schemes undertaken by different countries for improving the conservation of natural resources
- (d) It is an index showing the volume of carbon credits sold by different countries

TOPIC 3: GOVERNANCE

FSSAI caps trans fats in foods

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 FSSAI has amended its rules to put a cap on trans fatty acids (TFAs) in food products just weeks after it tightened the norms for oils and fats.

What are the new rules?

- Food products in which edible oils and fats are used as an ingredient shall not contain industrial Trans fatty acids more than 2% by mass of the total oils/fats present in the product, on and from 1st January 2022.
- In December, the FSSAI had capped TFAs in oils and fats to 3% by 2021, and 2% by 2022 from the current levels of 5%.
- The 2% cap is considered to be the elimination of trans fatty acids, which is to be achieved by 2022.

What are Trans Fats?

- Trans fatty acids are created in an industrial process that adds hydrogen to liquid vegetable oils to make them more solid, increase the shelf life of food items and for use as an adulterant as they are cheap.

- They are present in baked, fried and processed foods as well as adulterated ghee which becomes solid at room temperature.
- They are the most harmful form of fats as they clog arteries and cause hypertension, heart attacks and other cardiovascular diseases.

Why need such regulation?

- As per the World Health Organisation (WHO), approximately 5.4 lakh deaths take place each year globally because of intake of industrially-produced trans-fatty acids.
- The WHO has called for the elimination of industrially-produced trans-fatty acids from the global food supply by 2023.
- The latest FSSAI rules signal the completion of the process of regulating trans fats in India.
- The move will make a big difference in the health harm caused by this unwanted ingredient.
- This allows FSSAI and the State-level food safety machinery to focus on implementation and enforcement of the WHO recommendations.

What are Non-Alcoholic Fatty Liver Diseases (NAFLD)?

Mains Paper 2: Health & Education

Note4Students

From UPSC perspective, the following things are important :

Prelims level : NAFLD

Mains level : Health threats posed by Fats

The Union Govt has integrated the Non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD) in the National Programme for Prevention and Control of Cancer, Diabetes, Cardiovascular Diseases and Stroke.

Try this MCQ:

Q.A Company marketing food products advertises that its items do not contain trans-fats. What does this campaign signify to the customers?

1. *The food products are not made out of hydrogenated oils.*
2. *The food products are not made out of animal fats/oils.*
3. *The oils used are not likely to damage the cardiovascular health of the consumers.*

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) Only 1

(b) 2 and 3 only

(c) 1 and 3 only

(d) 1, 2 and 3

NAFLD

- NAFLD is the abnormal accumulation of fat in the liver in the absence of secondary causes of fatty liver, such as harmful alcohol use, viral hepatitis, or medications.
- According to doctors, it is a serious health concern as it encompasses a spectrum of liver abnormalities.
- It can cause non-alcoholic fatty liver (NAFL, simple fatty liver disease) to more advanced ones like non-alcoholic steatohepatitis (NASH), cirrhosis and even liver cancer.

Why such a move?

- NAFLD is emerging as an important cause of liver disease in India.
- Epidemiological studies suggest the prevalence of NAFLD is around 9% to 32% of the general population in India with a higher prevalence in those with overweight or obesity and those with diabetes or prediabetes.
- Researchers have found NAFLD in 40% to 80 % of people who have type 2 diabetes and in 30% to 90% of people who are obese.
- Studies also suggest that people with NAFLD have a greater chance of developing cardiovascular disease.
- Cardiovascular disease is the most common cause of death in NAFLD.

Intensified Mission Indradhanush (IMI) 3.0

Mains Paper 2: Health & Education

Note4Students

From UPSC perspective, the following things are important :

Prelims level : Mission Indradhanush

Mains level : Universal immunization programme

States and UTs have started the implementation of the Intensified Mission Indradhanush 3.0, a campaign aimed to reach those children and pregnant women who have been missed out or been left out of the routine immunisation.

*Do not get confused with the **Mission Indradhanush for Public Sector Banks** launched in 2015. It*

aims at revamping the functioning of the Public Sector Banks to enable them to compete with the Private Sector Banks.

Intensified Mission Indradhanush (IMI) 3.0

- IMI 3.0 is aimed to accelerate the full immunization of children and pregnant women through a mission mode intervention.
- The campaign is scheduled to have two rounds of immunisation lasting 15 days (excluding routine immunisation and holidays).
- It is being conducted in pre-identified 250 districts/urban areas across 29 States/UTs in the country.
- Beneficiaries from migration areas and hard to reach areas will be targeted as they may have missed their vaccine doses during the pandemic.

About the Mission Indradhanush

- Mission Indradhanush seeks to drive towards 90% full immunisation coverage of India and sustain the same by the year 2020. It was launched in December 2014.

Aims and objectives

- It aims to immunize all children under the age of 2 years, as well as all pregnant women, against eight vaccine-preventable diseases.
- The diseases being targeted are diphtheria, whooping cough, tetanus, poliomyelitis, tuberculosis, measles, meningitis and Hepatitis B.
- In 2016, four new additions have been made namely Rubella, Japanese Encephalitis, Injectable Polio Vaccine Bivalent and Rotavirus.
- In 2017, Pneumonia was added to the Mission by incorporating the Pneumococcal conjugate vaccine under Universal Immunisation Programme

Try this question from CSP 2016:

Q. 'Mission Indradhanush' launched by the Government of India pertains to:

- (a) Immunization of children and pregnant women*
- (b) Construction of smart cities across the country*
- (c) India's own search for the Earth-like planets in outer space*
- (d) New Educational Policy*

Intensified Mission Indradhanush (IMI) 3.0

Mains Paper 2: Health & Education

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E-Daakhil portal for consumer grievance redressal

Mains Paper 2: Governance, Transparency & Accountability, Citizens Charters

Note4Students

From UPSC perspective, the following things are important :

Prelims level : E-Daakhil

Mains level : Consumer greivances redressal mechanisms

The Union Government has informed that the 'E-Daakhil' portal for consumer grievance redressal is now operational in 15 states and Union Territories (UTs).

Try this question from our AWE initiative:

What are the objectives sought to be achieved through The Consumer Protection (E-Commerce) Rules, 2020 to regulate commercial transactions? What are the issues with the rules? 10 marks

E-Daakhil

- The Consumer Protection Act, 2019, which came into force on July 20, 2020, has a provision for e-filing of consumer complaints in the consumer commissions and online payment of the fees for filing a complaint.
- A web application for e-filing of consumer complaints named 'edaakhil.nic.in' has been developed by NIC for the purpose.
- E-filing was launched by the National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (NCDRC) on September 7, 2020.
- Delhi was the first state to implement it on September 8, 2020.

Features of the portal

- The E-Daakhil portal empowers the consumer and their advocates to file the consumer complaints along with payment of requisite fees online from anywhere for the redressal of their complaints.
- It facilitates the consumer commissions to scrutinise the complaints online to accept, reject or forward the complaint to the concerned commission for further processing.

- The digital software for filing consumer complaints has many features like e-notice, case document download link and virtual hearing link, filing written response by the opposite party, filing rejoinder by complainant and alerts via SMS/e-mail.
- To facilitate the rural consumers for e-filing, it has been decided to integrate the common service centres (CSC) with the E-Daakhil portal.

TOPIC 4: HISTORY

[pib] Swami Dayanand Saraswati

Mains Paper 1: Modern Indian History

Note4Students

From UPSC perspective, the following things are important :

Prelims level : Dayanand Saraswati

Mains level : Not Much



Information and Broadcasting Minister paid his tributes to Swami Dayanand Saraswati on his birth anniversary.

Dayanand Saraswati (1824-1883)

- Swami Dayanand Saraswati was a philosopher, social leader and founder of the Arya Samaj, a reform movement of the Vedic dharma.
- He was the first to give the call for Swaraj as “India for Indians” in 1876, a call later taken up by Lokmanya Tilak.
- Denouncing the idolatry and ritualistic worship, he worked towards reviving Vedic

ideologies.

- Subsequently, the philosopher and then President, S. Radhakrishnan called him one of the “makers of Modern India”, as did Sri Aurobindo.

Try this PYQ:

Q. Which among the following event happened earliest?

(a) Swami Dayanand established Arya Samaj

(b) Dinabandhu Mitra wrote Neeldarpan

(c) Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay wrote Anandmath

(d) Satyendranath Tagore became the first India to succeed in the Indian Civil Services Examination

His influence

- Those who were influenced by and followed him included Madam Cama, Shyamji Krishna Varma, Kishan Singh, Bhagat Singh, VD Savarkar, Bhai Parmanand, Lala Hardayal, Madan Lal Dhingra, Ram Prasad Bismil, MG Ranade, Ashfaq Ullah Khan, , Lala Lajpat Rai etc.

Philosophy

- He was ascetic from boyhood and a scholar.
- He believed in the infallible authority of the Vedas.
- He advocated the doctrine of Karma and Reincarnation.
- He emphasized the Vedic ideals of Brahmacharya, including celibacy and devotion to God.

His contribution

- Among Dayananda’s contributions were his promoting of the equal rights for women, such as the right to education and reading of Indian scriptures.
- He wrote his commentary on the Vedas from Vedic Sanskrit in Sanskrit as well as in Hindi.

[pib] Who was Mannathu Padmanabhan (1878-1970)?

Mains Paper 1: Modern Indian History

Note4Students

From UPSC perspective, the following things are important :

Prelims level : Mannathu Padmanabhan

Mains level : Not Much



The Prime Minister has tweeted tributes to Sri Mannathu Padmanabhan on his death anniversary.

UPSC is digging deeper in the regional freedom movements to get such questions beyond our knowledge base. Try this question from CSP 2020

Q.The Vital Vidhvansak, the first monthly journal to have the untouchable people as its target audience was published by:

- (a) Gopal Babu Walangkar
- (b) Jyotiba Phule
- (c) Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi
- (d) Bhimarao Ramji Ambedkar

Here, we know something about options b, c and d. So it is less dicey to pull the odd man out.

Mannathu Padmanabhan

- Padmanabhan was an Indian social reformer and freedom fighter from the south-western state of Kerala.
- He is recognised as the founder of the Nair Service Society (NSS), which claims to represent the Nair community that constitutes 12.10% (From KMS 2011) of the population of the state.
- He fought for social equality, the first phase being the Vaikom Satyagraha, demanding the

public roads near the temple at Vaikom be opened to low caste Hindus.

- He took part in the Vaikom (1924) and Guruvayoor (1931) temple-entry Satyagrahas; the anti-untouchability agitations. He opened his family temple for everyone, irrespective of caste distinction.
- He became a member of the Indian National Congress in 1946 and took part in the agitation against Sir C. P. Ramaswamy Iyer's administration in Travancore.
- As the first president of the Travancore Devaswom Board, he revitalised many temples which had almost ceased to function.

TOPIC 5: POLITY

Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act

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 : Not Much

Mains level : Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act

Police have booked several under The Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971, for the alleged insult of the National Flag in farmers protest on Republic Day.

Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act

- The law, enacted on December 23, 1971, penalizes the desecration of or insult to Indian national symbols, such as the National Flag, the Constitution, the National Anthem, and the Indian map, as well as contempt of the Constitution of India.
- Section 2 of the Act deals with insults to Indian National Flag and Constitution of India.

Do you know?

Article 51 'A' contained in Part IV A i.e. Fundamental Duties asks:

To abide by the constitution and respect its ideals and institutions, the National Flag and the National Anthem in clause (a).

Other provisions

- Section 3.22 of The Flag Code of India, 2002 deals with laws, practices and conventions that apply to the display of the national flag.
- Section 3.58 says: On occasions of State/Military/Central Paramilitary Forces funerals, the flag shall be draped over the bier or coffin with the saffron towards the head of the bier or coffin.
- The Flag shall not be lowered into the grave or burnt in the pyre.

Try this PYQ:

Q.The national motto of India, ‘Satyameva Jayate’ inscribed below the Emblem of India is taken from:

- (a) Katha Upanishad
- (b) Chandogya Upanishad
- (c) Aitareya Upanishad
- (d) Mundaka Upanishad

Use of flag in funerals

- The flag can only be used during a funeral if it is accorded the status of a state funeral.
- Apart from police and armed forces, state funerals are held when people who are holding or have held the office of President, Vice-President, PM, Cabinet Minister, or state CM pass away.
- The status of a state funeral can be accorded in case of death of people not belonging to the armed forces, police or the above-mentioned categories by the state government.
- Then too, the national flag can be used.

TOPIC 6: SCIENCE, TECH & CULTURE

Hope: UAE’s first mission to 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 : Hope Mission

Mains level : Mars mission worldwide and their success

The first Arab interplanetary mission is expected to reach Mars' orbit on February 9 in what is considered the most critical part of the journey to unravel the secrets of weather on the Red Planet.

Try this question from CSP 2014:

Q. Which of the following pair is/are correctly matched?

Spacecraft

Purpose

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| 1. Cassini-Huygens | Orbiting the Venus and transmitting data to the Earth |
| 2. Messenger | Mapping and investigating the Mercury |
| 3. Voyager 1 and 2 | Exploring the outer solar system |

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

Hope Mission

- The Emirates Mars Mission called “Hope” was announced in 2015 with the aim of creating mankind's first integrated model of the Red planet's atmosphere.
- Hope weighs over 1500 kg and will carry scientific instruments mounted on one side of the spacecraft, including the Emirates exploration Imager (EXI), which is a high-resolution camera among others.
- The spacecraft will orbit Mars to study the Martian atmosphere and its interaction with outer space and solar winds.
- Hope will collect data on Martian climate dynamics, which should help scientists understand why Mars' atmosphere is decaying into space.

Objectives of the mission

- Once it launches, Hope will orbit Mars for around 200 days, after which it will enter the Red planet's orbit by 2021, coinciding with the 50th anniversary of the founding of UAE.
- The mission is being executed by the Mohammed bin Rashid Space Centre, UAE's space

agency.

- It will help answer key questions about the global Martian atmosphere and the loss of hydrogen and oxygen gases into space over the span of one Martian year.

Einsteinium: the mysterious element named after Albert Einstein

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 : Einsteinium

Mains level : Not Much

The University of California has reported some of the properties of element 99 in the periodic table called "Einsteinium", named after Albert Einstein.

Try this PYQ:

Q. The known forces of nature can be divided into four classes, viz, gravity, electromagnetism, weak nuclear force and strong nuclear force.

With reference to them, which one of the following statements is not correct? (CSP 2012)

- (a) Gravity is the strongest of the four*
- (b) Electromagnetism act only on particles with an electric charge*
- (c) Weak nuclear force causes radioactivity*
- (d) Strong nuclear force holds protons and neutrons inside the nuclear of an atom.*

Einsteinium

- It was discovered in 1952 in the debris of the first hydrogen bomb (the detonation of a thermonuclear device called "Ivy Mike" in the Pacific Ocean).
- Since its discovery, scientists have not been able to perform a lot of experiments with it because it is difficult to create and is highly radioactive.
- Therefore, very little is known about this element.
- With this new study published in the journal Nature last week, for the first time researchers have been able to characterize some of the properties of the element.

The discovery of the element

- Ivy Mike was detonated on November 1, 1952, as part of a test at a remote island location called Elugelab on the Eniwetok Atoll in the South Pacific.
- The blast produced an explosion that was about 500 times more destructive than the explosion that occurred at Nagasaki.

- Subsequently, the fallout material from this explosion was sent to Berkeley in California for analysis which identified over 200 atoms of the new element.

Properties of the element

- Einsteinium has a half-life of 20 days.
- Because of its high radioactivity and short half-life of all einsteinium isotopes, even if the element was present on Earth during its formation, it has most certainly decayed.
- This is the reason that it cannot be found in nature and needs to be manufactured using very precise and intense processes.
- Therefore, so far, the element has been produced in very small quantities and its usage is limited except for the purposes of scientific research.
- The element is also not visible to the naked eye and after it was discovered, it took over nine years to manufacture enough of it so that it could be seen with the naked eye.

Dickinsonia fossil discovered in Bhimbetka

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 : Dickensonia, Bhimbetka

Mains level : Stone age paintings in India



Researchers have found the first-ever fossil in India of a Dickinsonia —the Earth’s ‘oldest animal’, dating back 570 million years — on the roof of what’s called the ‘Auditorium Cave’ at Bhimbetka.

Dickinsonia

- Dickinsonia is an extinct genus of basal animal that lived during the late Ediacaran period in what is now Australia, Russia and Ukraine.
- The individual Dickinsonia typically resembles a bilaterally symmetrical ribbed oval.
- Its affinities are presently unknown; its mode of growth is consistent with a stem-group bilaterian affinity, though some have suggested that it belongs to the fungi or even an “extinct kingdom”.
- The discovery of cholesterol molecules in fossils of Dickinsonia lends support to the idea that Dickinsonia was an animal.

What are the new findings?

Like the awe-inspiring rock shelters themselves, this fossil was discovered by chance.

- Dickinsonia fossils have shown that they could exceed four feet in length but the one found in Bhimbetka is 17 inches long.
- Eleven feet above the ground, almost blending with the rock and easily mistaken by laymen for prehistoric rock art, they found imprints of the Dickinsonia.
- It is believed to be one of the key links between the early, simple organisms and the explosion of life in the Cambrian Period, about 541 million years ago.

Cambrian Explosion and Dickinsonia

- The 'Cambrian Explosion' is the term given to the period of time in history when complex animals and other macroscopic organisms such as molluscs, worms, arthropods and sponges began to dominate the fossil record.
- Researchers from Australia found the Dickinsonia fossil since its tissue contained molecules of cholesterol a type of fat that is the hallmark of animal life.

Do you know?

Cosmogenic nuclide dating is deployed to determine time of earliest human culture. India's oldest stone-age tools, up to 1.5 million years old, are at a prehistoric site near Chennai.

About Bhimbetka

- The Bhimbetka rock shelters are an archaeological site in central India that spans the prehistoric Paleolithic and Mesolithic periods, as well as the historic period.
- It exhibits the earliest traces of human life in India and evidence of Stone Age starting at the site in Acheulian times.
- It is located in the Raisen District in Madhya Pradesh about 45 kilometres (28 mi) south-east of Bhopal.
- It is a UNESCO World Heritage Site that consists of seven hills and over 750 rock shelters

distributed over 10 km (6.2 mi).

- At least some of the shelters were inhabited more than 100,000 years ago.
- Some of the Bhimbetka rock shelters feature prehistoric cave paintings and the earliest are about 10,000 years old (c. 8,000 BCE), corresponding to the Indian Mesolithic.
- These cave paintings show themes such as animals, early evidence of dance and hunting.
- The Bhimbetka rock shelters were found by V S Wakankar 64 years ago. Since then, thousands of researchers have visited the site, but this rare fossil went undetected.

Art in news: Tholpavakkoothu

Mains Paper 1: Arts & Culture

Note4Students

From UPSC perspective, the following things are important :

Prelims level : Tholpavakkoothu

Mains level : India's puppetry



A shadow leather puppet in Kerala's famous temple art Tholpavakkoothu is being animated by a robot in Palakkad.

Tholpavakkoothu

- Tholpavakkoothu or shadow puppetry is a temple art form which is prevalent in the Bhagavathy temples (mother Goddess) in Palakkad district and nearby regions in Kerala.

- Tholppava (Thol means leather, Pava means puppet) are moved with the help of strings, and their shadows are depicted on a screen with the help of a row of oil lamps in the background.
- The story of Tholpavakkoothu performance is from the Indian epic, Ramayana.
- In the olden days, it was performed elaborately over a period of forty-one days.
- The narrative used for the performance is a mixture of prose and poetry called Adalpattu.

Try this PYQ:

Q. With reference to Manipuri Sankirtana, consider the following statements:

1. It is a song and dance performance.
2. Cymbals are the only musical instruments used in the performance.
3. It is performed to narrate the life and deeds of Lord Krishna.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1, 2 and 3.

(b) 1 and 3 only

(c) 2 and 3 only

(d) 1 only

Setup of the art

- Tholppavas are made of the skin of deer and the puppet forms are made by making small holes in the leather that is then attached vertically to a bamboo stick.
- Accompanying instruments include Ezhupara, Chenda and Maddalam.
- The artists have to undergo several years of rigorous training to master this art form.
- The puppetry is staged on a special structure in temple premises called Koothumadam.

Novel Open Reading Frames (NORF)

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 : nORF

Mains level : Not Much

A team from the University of Cambridge set out to find whether new genes emerge in the genome of living organisms and if they do, how they do so. They have now catalogued 1,94,000 novel regions.

Genes/Genomes/DNA/RNA is all-time favourite of UPSC. You can easily find 1-2 questions every year since 2017 in Prelims.

Novel genomic regions

- The 'novel' genomic regions cannot be defined by our current 'definition' of a gene.
- Hence, researchers call these novel regions – novel Open Reading Frames or as nORFs.
- Researchers found that the mutations in nORFs do have physiological consequences and a majority of mutations that are often annotated as benign have to be re-interpreted.

What novel did the researchers find?

- nORF regions were uniquely present in the cancer tissues and not present in the control tissue.
- They found that some nORF disruptions strongly correlated with the survival of patients.
- nORFs proteins can form structures, can undergo biochemical regulation like known proteins and be targeted by drugs in case they are disrupted in diseases.
- The researchers also identified these nORFs in Plasmodium falciparum, the parasite which causes the deadliest form of malaria.

Connected to disease

- The research found that these regions are also broadly involved in diseases.
- The nORFs were seen as dysregulated in 22 cancer types.
- Dysregulated is a term which means that they could either be mutated, upregulated, or downregulated, or they could be uniquely present.

Mechanophotonics: Manipulating light through crystals

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 : Mechanophotonics, Atomic Force Microscopy (AFM)

Mains level : Not Much

Crystals are normally rigid, stiff structures, but researchers from the University of Hyderabad have shown how crystals can be sliced and even bent using atomic force microscopy. They have named this technique as “mechanophotonics”.

The newscard discusses an out of the box technology which if brought to reality in practical use, can create immense disruptions in the technology market.

Manipulating light through crystals

- Manipulating them with precision and control comes in very useful in the field of nanophotonics, a qualitative, emerging field.
- The aim is to go beyond electronics and build-up circuits driven entirely by photons (light).

If the technique can be successfully developed, this can achieve an unprecedented level of miniaturisation and pave the way to all-optical-technology such as pliable, wearable devices operated by light entirely.

What Indian researchers have achieved?

: Bending light path

- Light, when left to itself moves along straight paths, so it is crucial to develop materials and technology that can cause its path to bend along what is required in the circuits.
- This is like using fibre optics, but at the nanoscale level using organic crystals.
- The Hyderabad group has demonstrated how such crystals can be lifted, bent moved, transferred and sliced using atomic force microscopy.

: How?

- Researchers add a crucial piece to the jigsaw puzzle of building an “organic photonic integrated circuit” or OPIC.
- Generally, millimetre- to centimetre-long crystals were bent using hand-held tweezers.
- This method lacks precision and control. Also, the crystals used were larger than what was required for miniaturisation.
- The atomic force microscopy (AFM) cantilever tip could be used to lift a crystal, as crystals tend to stick to the tip due to tip–crystal attractive forces.
- Thus they demonstrated the real waveguiding character of the crystal lifted with a

cantilever tip.

In 2014, for the first time, the group led by Rajadurai Chandrasekar of the Functional Molecular Nano/Micro Solids Laboratory in University of Hyderabad demonstrated that tiny crystals could be lifted and moved with precision and control using atomic force microscopy.

What is Atomic Force Microscopy (AFM)?

- AFMs are a type of electron microscope used for the observation at an atomic level.
- It is commonly used in nanotechnology.
- The AFM works by employing an ultra-fine needle attached to a beam.
- The tip of the needle runs over the ridges and valleys in the material being imaged, “feeling” the surface.

ISRO collaborates to build alternative to Google Maps

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 : MapmyIndia, Various tools of ISRO

Mains level : Geospatial data and its utilization

The ISRO has joined hands with MapmyIndia to combine their geospatial expertise and build holistic solutions by leveraging their geoportals.

Note various geo-spatial solutions of ISRO mentioned in the newscard.

What is the Project?

- It combines the power of MapmyIndia’s digital maps and technologies with ISRO’s catalogue of satellite imagery and earth observation data.
- Indian users would not be dependent on foreign organisations for maps, navigation and geospatial services, and leverage made-in-India solutions instead.

Various components

The collaboration will enable them to jointly identify and build holistic geospatial solutions

utilising the ISRO's earth observation datasets such as-

- **IRNSS** (Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System) called NavIC (Navigation with Indian Constellation, is India's own navigation system, developed by ISRO.
- **Bhuvan** is the national geo-portal developed and hosted by ISRO comprising geospatial data, services and tools for analysis.
- **VEDAS** (Visualization of Earth observation Data and Archival System) is an online geo-processing platform using an optical, microwave, thermal and hyperspectral EO data covering applications particularly meant for academia, research and problem solving, according to ISRO.
- **MOSDAC** (Meteorological and Oceanographic Satellite Data Archival Centre) is a data repository for all the meteorological missions of ISRO and deals with weather-related information, oceanography and tropical water cycles.

About MapmyIndia

- MapmyIndia is an Indian technology company that builds digital map data, telematics services, location-based SaaS (Software as a service) and GIS AI services.
- The company was founded in 1992 and is headquartered at New Delhi with regional offices in Mumbai and Bengaluru and smaller offices across India.
- Its map covers all 7.5 lakh villages, 7500+ cities at street and building-level, connected by all 63 lakh kilometres of road network pan India and within cities, in total providing maps for an unparalleled 3+ crore places across India.

Life deep beneath Antarctica's ice shelves

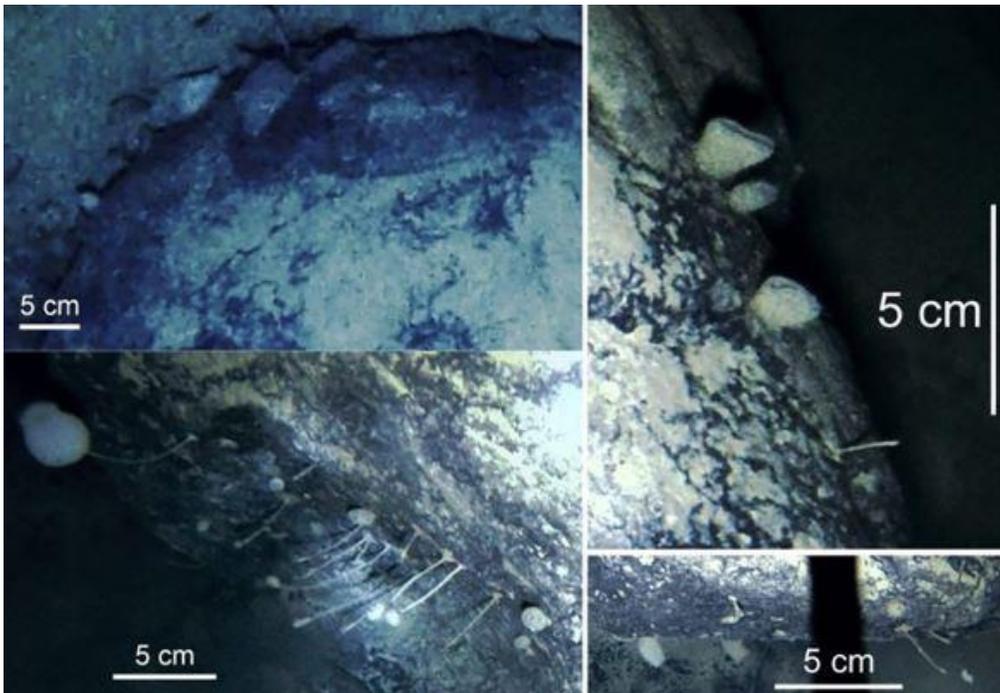
Mains Paper 3: Awareness In The Fields Of It, Space, Computers, Robotics, Nano-Technology, Bio-Technology, Pharma Sector & Health Science

Note4Students

From UPSC perspective, the following things are important :

Prelims level : Life under Antarctic

Mains level : Not Much



Researchers have accidentally discovered living under the ice shelves of the Antarctic — in extremely cold and harsh conditions.

Life beneath the Antarctic

- Scientists have discovered sessile sponges — a pore bearing multicellular organism and other alien species — attached to the sides of rock beneath the ice sheets.
- The unidentified species are estimated to be related to sponges, ascidians (sea squirts), hydroids, barnacles, cnidarian or polychaete. All of these look like bristle worms.
- Scientists are yet to discover how these organisms access food.
- They would use Environment Deoxyribonucleic acid (e-DNA) technology in future to identify the organisms.

Organisms discovered

Sponges

- Sponges are the members of the phylum Porifera.
- They are multicellular organisms that have bodies full of pores and channels allowing water to circulate through them, consisting of jelly-like mesohyl sandwiched between two thin layers of cells.

Ascidians

- Ascidians, or sea squirts, are invertebrate chordates that belong to the earliest branch in the chordate phylum.
- Ascidians are found all over the world, usually in shallow water with salinities over 2.5%.

Hydroids

- Hydroids are a life stage for most animals of the class Hydrozoa, small predators related to jellyfish.
- Some hydroids such as the freshwater Hydra are solitary, with the polyp attached directly to the substrate.

Barnacles

- Barnacles are a highly specialized group of crustaceans.
- A barnacle is a type of arthropod related to crabs and lobsters.

Cnidarians

- Cnidarians, also called coelenterate, any member of the phylum Cnidaria (Coelenterata), a group made up of more than 9,000 living species.
- Mostly marine animals, the cnidarians include the corals, hydras, jellyfish, Portuguese men-of-war, sea anemones, sea pens, sea whips, and sea fans.

Now take this chance to revise your biology basics on various phyla. It will be beneficial for state PSC exams. UPSC has also begun puzzling us on core biology questions.

Defying old theories

- The discovery has left many of them baffled for it contradicts earlier theories of non-survival of life in such extreme conditions.
- Until now, scientists believed that sea life decreased with an increase in the depth of the Antarctic ice floor.

[pib] Who was Sant Ravidas?

Mains Paper 1: Arts & Culture

Note4Students

From UPSC perspective, the following things are important :

Prelims level : Sant Ravidas

Mains level : Bhakti Saints and their contribution

The President of India recently addressed the 'Shri Guru RavidasVishvaMahapeethRashtriya Adhiveshan-2021' in New Delhi.

Try this PYQ from CSP 2019:

Q.Consider the following statements:

- 1.Saint Nimbarka was a contemporary of Akbar.
- 2.Saint Kabir was greatly influenced by Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Who was Sant Ravidas?

- Ravidas was an Indian mystic poet-saint of the Bhakti movement and founder of the Ravidassia religion during the 15th to 16th century CE.
- Venerated as a guru (teacher) in the region of Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and mainly Punjab and Haryana. He was a poet-saint, social reformer and spiritual figure.
- The life details of Ravidas are uncertain and contested. Scholars believe he was born in 1450 CE, in the cobbler caste.
- Ravidas's devotional Verses were included in the Sikh scriptures known as Guru Granth Sahib.
- The Panch Vani text of the Dadupanthi tradition within Hinduism also includes numerous poems of Ravidas.
- He taught the removal of social divisions of caste and gender and promoted unity in the pursuit of personal spiritual freedoms.

Why his preaching is important?

- Philosophy and values of Sant Ravidas like social justice, equality and fraternity have been imbued in our constitutional values.
- He had envisaged a society that is based on equality and free from any kind of discrimination.
- He gave it the name 'Be-gampura' (a city near Lahore) where there is no place for any kind of grief or fear.
- Such an ideal city would be bereft of fear, vulnerability or scarcity. Rule of law based on the right ideas like equality and welfare of all would be the principle for governance.

[pib] Sun's Rotation over the Century

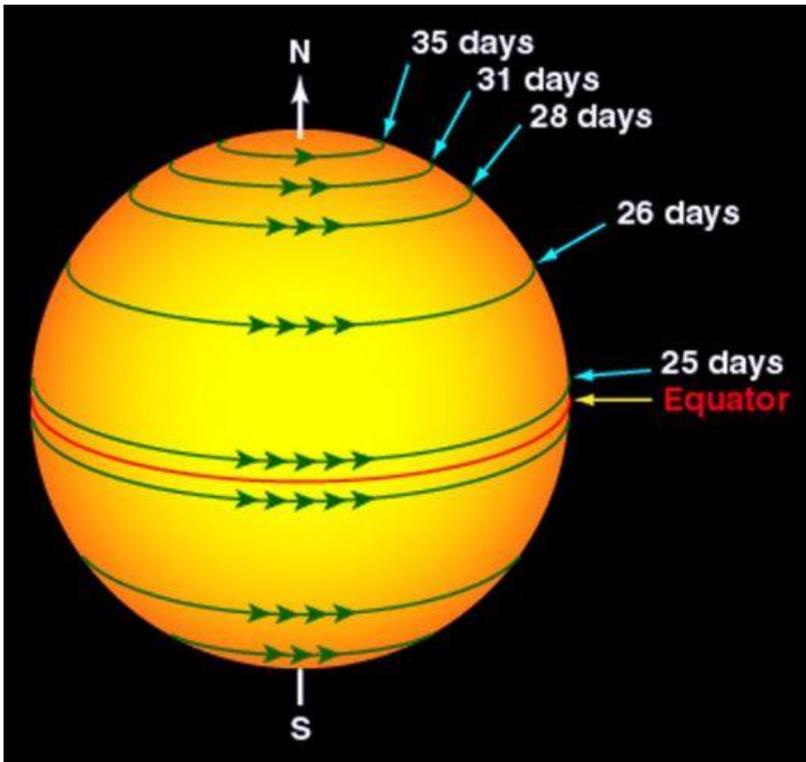
Mains Paper 3: Awareness In The Fields Of It, Space, Computers, Robotics, Nano-Technology, Bio-Technology, Pharma Sector & Health Science

Note4Students

From UPSC perspective, the following things are important :

Prelims level : Sun's Rotation

Mains level : Not Much



Scientists at Kodaikanal Solar Observatory have estimated how the Sun has rotated over a century from data extracted from old films and photographs that have been digitized.

Try this PYQ:

Q. Consider the following phenomena:

1. Size of the sun at dusk
2. Colour of the sun at dawn
3. Moon being visible at dawn
4. Twinkle of stars in the sky
5. Polestar being visible in the sky

Which of the above are optical illusions?

- (a) 1, 2 and 3
- (b) 3, 4 and 5
- (c) 1, 2 and 4
- (d) 2, 3 and 5

Sun's Rotation

- The Sun rotates around an axis that is roughly perpendicular to the plane of the ecliptic; the

Sun's rotational axis is tilted by 7.25° from perpendicular to the ecliptic.

- It rotates in the counterclockwise direction (when viewed from the north), the same direction that the planets rotate (and orbit around the Sun).
- The Sun's rotation period varies with latitude on the Sun since it is made of gas.
- Equatorial regions rotate faster than Polar Regions.
- The equatorial regions (latitude = 0 degrees) rotate in about 25.6 days. The regions at 60 degrees latitude rotate in about 30.9 days. Polar Regions rotate in about 36 days.

Key observations of the study

- The Sun rotates more quickly at its equator than at its poles.
- Over time, the Sun's differential rotation rates cause its magnetic field to become twisted and tangled.
- The tangles in the magnetic field lines can produce strong localized magnetic fields.
- When the Sun's magnetic field gets twisted, there are lots of sunspots.
- The sunspots which form at the surface with an 11-year periodicity are the only route to probe the solar dynamo or solar magnetism inside the Sun and hence measure the variation in solar rotation.

Benefits offered

- This estimation would help study the magnetic field generated in the interior of the Sun, which causes sunspots and results in extreme situations like the historical mini-ice age on Earth (absence of sunspots).
- It could also help predict solar cycles and their variations in the future.

TOPIC 7: SECURITY ISSUES

What is NetWire Malware?

Mains Paper 3: Cyber Security

Note4Students

From UPSC perspective, the following things are important :

Prelims level : Malwares

Mains level : Cyber attacks and the treats posed to national security

This newscard is an excerpt from the original article published in The Hindu.

Try this question from CSP 2018:

Q. The terms 'WannaCry, Petya, Eternal Blue' sometimes mentioned news recently are related to

- (a) Exoplanets
- (b) Crypto currency
- (c) Cyber attacks
- (d) Mini satellites

What is NetWire?

- NetWire, which first surfaced in 2012, is a well-known malware.
- It is also one of the most active ones around.
- It is a remote access Trojan, or RAT, which gives control of the infected system to an attacker. Such malware can log keystrokes and compromise passwords.

Threats posed

- This malware essentially does two things:
 1. One is data exfiltration, which means stealing data. Most anti-virus software is equipped to prevent this.
 2. The other involves infiltrating a system, and this has proven to be far more challenging for anti-virus software.
- NetWire is described as an off-the-shelf malware, while something like Pegasus, which used a bug in WhatsApp to infiltrate users' phones in 2019, is custom-made and sold to nations.

Back2Basics: Classification of malicious softwares

Viruses

- A computer virus is a type of malware that propagates by inserting a copy of itself into and becoming part of another program.
- It spreads from one computer to another, leaving infections as it travels.
- Viruses can range in severity from causing mildly annoying effects to damaging data or software and causing denial-of-service (DoS) conditions.
- Almost all viruses are attached to an executable file, which means the virus may exist on a system but will not be active or able to spread until a user runs or opens the malicious host file or program.
- When the host code (alternative word for a computer program) is executed, the viral code is executed as well.

Ransomware

- Ransomware is a type of malicious software that threatens to publish the victim's data or perpetually block access to it unless a ransom is paid.

- While some simple ransomware may lock the system in a way that is not difficult for a knowledgeable person to reverse, more advanced malware uses a technique called cryptoviral extortion.
- This encrypts the victim's files, making them inaccessible, and demands a ransom payment to decrypt them.

Worms

- Computer worms are similar to viruses in that they replicate functional copies of themselves and can cause the same type of damage.
- In contrast to viruses, which require the spreading of an infected host file, worms are standalone software and do not require a host program or human help to propagate.
- To spread, worms either exploit the vulnerability on the target system or use some kind of social engineering to trick users into executing them.
- A worm enters a computer through a vulnerability in the system and takes advantage of file-transport or information-transport features on the system, allowing it to travel unaided.
- More advanced worms leverage encryption, wipers, and ransomware technologies to harm their targets.

Trojans

- A Trojan is a harmful piece of software that looks legitimate.
- After it is activated, it can achieve any number of attacks on the host, from irritating the user (popping up windows or changing desktops) to damaging the host (deleting files, stealing data, or activating and spreading other malware, such as viruses).
- Trojans are also known to create backdoors to give malicious users access to the system.
- Unlike viruses and worms, Trojans do not reproduce by infecting other files nor do they self-replicate.
- Trojans must spread through user interaction such as opening an email attachment or downloading and running a file from the Internet.

Bots

- "Bot" is derived from the word "robot" and is an automated process that interacts with other network services.
- Bots often automate tasks and provide information or services that would otherwise be conducted by a human being.
- A typical use of bots is to gather information, such as web crawlers, or interact automatically with Instant Messaging (IM), Internet Relay Chat (IRC), or other web interfaces.
- They may also be used to interact dynamically with websites.

Sandes: the government's new Instant Messaging Platform

Mains Paper 3: Cyber Security

Note4Students

From UPSC perspective, the following things are important :

Prelims level : Sandes

Mains level : Secured instant messaging



The National Informatics Centre (NIC) has launched an instant messaging platform called Sandes on the lines of WhatsApp. Open initially only to government officers, it has now been released for the common public as well.

Features of Sandes Platform

- The instant messaging app, called Sandes, has an interface similar to many other apps currently available in the market.
- Like WhatsApp, the new NIC platform can be used for all kinds of communications by anyone with a mobile number or email id.
- Although there is no option to transfer the chat history between two platforms, the chats on government instant messaging systems or GIMS can be backed up to a users' email.
- It also offers features such as group making, broadcast message, message forwarding and emojis.
- Further, as an additional safety feature, it allows a user to mark a message as confidential, which will allow the recipient to be made aware the message should not be shared with others.

Why need such instant messaging platform?

- Following the nationwide lockdown, the government felt the need to build a platform to ensure secure communication between its employees as they worked from home.
- The idea for a secure communication network dedicated exclusively to government

employees has been in the works for the past four years.

- In August 2020, the NIC released the first version of the app, which said that the app could be used by both central and state government officials for intra and inter-organisation communication.
- The app was initially launched for Android users and then the service was extended to iOS users.

Limitations of the app

- The limitation, however, is that the app does not allow the user to change their email id or registered phone number.
- The user will have to re-register as a new user in case they wish to change their registered email id or phone number on the app.

Arjun: Main Battle Tank MK-1A

Mains Paper 3: Various Security Forces, Agencies & Their Mandates

Note4Students

From UPSC perspective, the following things are important :

Prelims level : MBT Arjun

Mains level : India's artillery capability

PM has recently handed over the indigenously developed Arjun Main Battle Tank (MK-1A) to the Indian Army.

Q. Discuss India's preparedness for high-altitude warfare.

Arjun Main Battle Tank

- The Arjun Main Battle Tank project was initiated by DRDO in 1972 with the Combat Vehicles Research and Development Establishment (CVRDE) as its lead laboratory.
- The objective was to create a “state-of-the-art tank with superior firepower, high mobility, and excellent protection”.
- During the development, the CVRDE achieved breakthroughs in the engine, transmission, hydro-pneumatic suspension, hull and turret as well as the gun control system.
- Mass production began in 1996 at the Indian Ordnance Factory's production facility in Avadi, Tamil Nadu.

Features of the Arjun tank

- The Arjun tanks stand out for their 'Fin Stabilised Armour Piercing Discarding Sabot (FSAPDS)' ammunition and 120-mm calibre rifled gun.
- It also has a computer-controlled integrated fire control system with a stabilised sighting that works in all lighting conditions.
- The secondary weapons include a co-axial 7.62-mm machine gun for anti-personnel and a 12.7-mm machine gun for anti-aircraft and ground targets.

How is Mk-1A different?

- The Mk-1A version has 14 major upgrades on the earlier version.
- It is also supposed to have missile firing capability as per the design, but this feature will be added later as final testing of the capability is still on.
- However, the biggest achievement with the latest version is 54.3 per cent indigenous content against the 41 per cent in the earlier model.

SECTION 3

Practice Questions with Answers

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1) Indian Coast Guard Day is observed on which of the following date?

- A) February 3
- B) February 5
- C) February 1
- D) February 7
- E) February 9

2) Which of the following state has decided to set up a Shivalik arboretum?

- A) Karnataka
- B) Kerala
- C) Assam
- D) Uttarakhand
- E) Haryana

3) Vietnam ruling Communist Party chief Trong has been re-elected for the _____ term recently.

- A) 6
- B) 5
- C) 2
- D) 4
- E) 3

4) Who among the following will inaugurate the National Tribal Festival 'Aadi Mahotsav'?

- A) Ram Nath Kovind
- B) Amit Shah

C) Venkiah Naidu

D) Narendra Modi

E) Prahlad Patel

5) Who among the following has inaugurated the India International Silk Fair?

A) Nirmala Sitharaman

B) Prahlad Patel

C) Narendra Modi

D) Smriti Irani

E) Amit Shah

6) Which of the following country has recently applied to join the Asia-Pacific free trade pact?

A) Switzerland

B) Germany

C) France

D) Sweden

E) UK

7) The UK has opened the visa scheme to the residents of _____ to become citizens.

A) Brunei

B) Malaysia

C) Hong Kong

D) Singapore

E) Vietnam

8) Which country has decided to award hydropower project 679 mega watt Lower Arun Hydropower

Project to India's Satluj Jal Vidyut Nigam (SJVN)?

- A) Madagascar
- B) Maldives
- C) Sri Lanka
- D) Nepal
- E) Bhutan

9) Military has seized power in which of the following country and has announced a 1 year emergency?

- A) Vietnam
- B) Myanmar
- C) Brunei
- D) Thailand
- E) Singapore

10) Insurance stocks advance after FM has proposed a higher FDI limit to _____ per cent recently.

- A) 37
- B) 49
- C) 51
- D) 26
- E) 74

11) World Cancer Day is observed on which of the following date?

- A) February 1
- B) February 3
- C) February 4
- D) February 5

E) February 8

12) Who among the following has inaugurated the ChauriChaura centenary celebrations?

- A) Venkiah Naidu
- B) Amit Shah
- C) Anurag Thakur
- D) Narendra Modi
- E) Prahlad Patel

13) India's First Amputee Clinic has been Launched in which city?

- A) Gujarat
- B) Delhi
- C) Pune
- D) Surat
- E) Chandigarh

14) Which of the following word has been named as Oxford Hindi word of 2020?

- A) Samvidhaan
- B) Atmanirbharta
- C) Swadesh
- D) Aadhar
- E) Shakti

15) Budget 2021-22 has proposed the setting up of _____ new Sainik Schools in the country.

- A) 175
- B) 200
- C) 125

D) 100

E) 150

16) Which of the following UT has become the first Union Territory to be corona free?

A) Delhi

B) Chandigarh

C) Andaman and Nicobar Islands

D) Puducherry

E) Daman & Diu

17) International Day of Human Fraternity is being Observed On which of the following date?

A) February 1

B) February 2

C) February 4

D) February 6

E) February 4

18) Which edition of Aero India is being organized recently?

A) 9th

B) 10th

C) 13th

D) 12th

E) 11th

19) The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) has started organising _____ a National level hackathon in the month of August, 2020 to promote innovation in agriculture and allied sectors in the country.

A) Agrim

B) Vishwas

C) Swadhar

D) Kritagya

E) Kutumbh

20) NBCFDC has signed anMoU with which company to provide providing COVID Vaccine Administration training?

A) Nippon

B) Apollo

C) Religare

D) MedSpa

E) Medic Health

21) International Day of Zero Tolerance to Female Genital Mutilation is observed on which of the following date?

A) February 1

B) February 3

C) February 6

D) February 15

E) February 11

22) Which of the following country will build the world's first energy island in the North Sea?

A) Israel

B) France

C) Germany

D) Sweden

E) Denmark

23) Which of the following company will launch a fighter jet?

A) BEML

B) HAL

C) BEL

D) BDL

E) DRDO

24) Which of the following state will get its first human milk bank?

A) Bihar

B) Haryana

C) Gujarat

D) Kerala

E) Madhya Pradesh

25) The Chief minister of which state will inaugurate the first heliport in Majuli?

A) Mizoram

B) Nagaland

C) Assam

D) Kerala

E) Tripura

26) What is the current MSF as per the latest RBI Monetary Policy?

A) 3.25%

B) 3%

C) 3.35%

D) 4%

E) 4.25%

27) India held its first meeting of the Joint Working Group meeting in the field of Renewable Energy with which country?

A) Israel

B) Bahrain

C) Qatar

D) Oman

E) South Korea

28) RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das has projected the GDP growth at ____ percent in FY22.

A) 8.5

B) 9

C) 9.5

D) 10

E) 10.5

29) Which company will shut its domestic payment services in India from April 1?

A) Mobikwik

B) Cashfree

C) Freecharge

D) Paypal

E) Razorpay

30) How many MoUs have been Signed in Aero India 2021?

A) 205

B) 204

C) 201

D) 202

E) 203

31) Which edition of the Kolkata International Book Fair will be held in July 2021?

A) 25th

B) 20th

C) 45th

D) 43rd

E) 42nd

32) PM will inaugurate World Sustainable Development Summit 2021 on which date?

A) February 11

B) February 12

C) February 14

D) February 10

E) February 15

33) A major glacier burst recently occurred in which of the following state, damaging the Rishiganga dam?

A) Kerala

B) Madhya Pradesh

C) Himachal Pradesh

D) Haryana

E) Uttarakhand

34) India-US joint military exercise 'YudhAbhyas 20' has recently commenced in which state?

A) Karnataka

B) Chhattisgarh

C) Kerala

D) Rajasthan

E) Gujarat

35) PM has dedicated to the nation projects worth _____ crore at Haldia in West Bengal.

A) 4500

B) 5000

C) 4700

D) 5700

E) 5200

36) Budget 2021: What is the Agricultural credit target set at Rs. _____ lakh crore for FY22.

A) 11.5

B) 16.5

C) 12.5

D) 14.5

E) 13.5

37) India's first geothermal power project will be established at Puga village of which UT?

A) Chandigarh

B) Puducherry

C) Daman & Diu

D) Ladakh

E) Delhi

38) Who among the following will lay the foundation

stone of various development projects in Assam?

- A) Nirmala Sitharaman
- B) Anurag Thakur
- C) Narendra Modi
- D) Amit Shah
- E) Narendra Tomar

39) Which of the following has become the first State to implement e-cabinet?

- A) Uttar Pradesh
- B) Haryana
- C) Punjab
- D) Rajasthan
- E) Himachal Pradesh

40) Which state government has decided to set up Indian Institute of Skills?

- A) Nagaland
- B) Assam
- C) Gujarat
- D) Haryana
- E) Kerala

41) World Pulses Day is observed on which of the following date?

- A) February 11
- B) February 13
- C) February 10
- D) February 15

E) February 19

42) FSSAI has notified regulations to limit trans-fat in food items to ____ per cent from 2022.

- A) 3
- B) 1.5
- C) 1
- D) 2
- E) 2.5

43) National Horticulture Fair 2021 has begun in which of the following cities recently?

- A) Chandigarh
- B) Delhi
- C) Pune
- D) Surat
- E) Bengaluru

44) Which state is set to create state's 5th tiger reserve?

- A) Kerala
- B) Tamil Nadu
- C) Haryana
- D) Bihar
- E) Gujarat

45) The government has introduced a bill to replace ordinance facilitating regularisation of unauthorised colonies in which city?

- A) Raipur
- B) Chandigarh

C) Pune

D) Delhi

E) Surat

46) Who among the following will launch the website – India Toy Fair- 2021?

A) Venkiah Naidu

B) NS Tomar

C) Smriti Irani

D) Prahlad Patel

E) Narendra Modi

47) Which of the following city has become Karnataka’s 31st district?

A) Chikballapur

B) Bidar

C) Bagalkot

D) Ballari

E) Vijayanagara

48) The US has freezed _____ billiondollar in funds of Myanmar government recently.

A) 3

B) 2.5

C) 1

D) 1.5

E) 2

49) National Inventors’ Day is Observed on which of the following date?

A) February 13

B) February 15

C) February 16

D) February 11

E) February 17

50) Which country has received USD 200 million from the World Bank?

A) France

B) Germany

C) Bangladesh

D) Japan

E) Sweden

51) India’s first ever CNG Tractor will be launched on which of the following date?

A) February 11

B) February 10

C) February 12

D) February 8

E) February 9

52) Which of the following armed forces has launched the Centre for Land Warfare Studies organises National Seminar-cum-Webinar, named Divya-Drishti 2021?

A) BSF

B) CRPF

C) ITBP

D) Navy

E) Army

53) Who among the following has inaugurated the 1st

India Toy Fair?

- A) Piyush Goyal
- B) Nitin Gadkari
- C) Prahlad Patel
- D) Smriti Irani
- E) NS Tomar

54) 'Hope' probe of which of the following country has successfully entered Mars orbit?

- A) France
- B) UAE
- C) Saudi Arabia
- D) Qatar
- E) China

55) US President Joe Biden has revoked national emergency – fund to border wall project of which country?

- A) China
- B) Iran
- C) Mexico
- D) Canada
- E) North Korea

56) Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has which of the following campaign recently to construct over 57,000 water structures?

- A) Naivedyam
- B) Sanskaram
- C) Pavitram

D) JalaAbhishekam

E) Neelkamal

57) Which of the following country recently celebrated Lunar New Year?

- A) Thailand
- B) Germany
- C) Philippines
- D) Myanmar
- E) China

58) Which state government has signed MoU with Flipkart to promote wooden toys, local artifacts, handicrafts?

- A) Bihar
- B) Chhattisgarh
- C) Maharashtra
- D) Madhya Pradesh
- E) Haryana

59) Goa has become the _____ State to successfully undertake ULB reforms.

- A) 2nd
- B) 3rd
- C) 4th
- D) 6th
- E) 5th

60) Who among the following has inaugurated the General Bus Stand cum Shopping complex Cum Multi Level Parking in Jammu?

- A) Narendra Modi

B) Manoj Sinha

A) 22nd

C) Amit Shah

B) 23rd

D) Anurag Thakur

C) 24th

E) Prahlad Patel

D) 26th

61) National Productivity Day 2021 is observed on which of the following date?

E) 25th

A) February 11

65) India will fund USD _____ million for restoration of 3 cultural heritage projects in Nepal.

B) February 13

A) 35

C) February 12

B) 50

D) February 4

C) 55

E) February 5

D) 40

62) The government of which state will construct the 'COVID Warrior Memorial' at BijuPatnaik Park?

E) 45

A) Haryana

66) Which of the following state will organize the RashtriyaSanskritiMahotsav from 14th to 28th Feb?

B) Bihar

A) Chhattisgarh

C) Chhattisgarh

B) Punjab

D) Odisha

C) West Bengal

E) Delhi

D) Haryana

63) Who among the following will lay the foundation stone of Maharaja Suheldev Memorial?

E) Bihar

A) Ram Nath Kovind

67) The Lok Sabha has passed the Arbitration & Conciliation (Amendment) Bill, 2021 and will amend the Arbitration and Conciliation Act of which year?

B) Venkiah Naidu

A) 1990

C) Anurag Thakur

B) 1992

D) Prahlad Patel

C) 1993

E) Narendra Modi

D) 1996

64) The Minority Affairs Ministry has organized the _____ HunarHaat in New Delhi.

E) 1995

68) Which country has extended the New START nuclear treaty with Russia for 5 years?

- A) Sweden
- B) Germany
- C) Iran
- D) France
- E) US

69) Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla is on a 2-day visit to which of the following country?

- A) Japan
- B) Germany
- C) Russia
- D) France
- E) US

70) The Annual Convention of Association of Domestic Tour Operators of India has recently been concluded in which state?

- A) Chhattisgarh
- B) Gujarat
- C) Haryana
- D) Delhi
- E) Bihar

71) What is the theme of the Taj Mahotsav being observed from 18 February to 27 February?

- A) The rich heritage of Taj
- B) Enjoying the dance and music
- C) The best of memories

- D) Together in the diverse culture
- E) Promoting rich arts and crafts

72) As per the World Bank comprehensive report, India Accounts for _____ % of Global death in Road Accidents.

- A) 12.5
- B) 10
- C) 11
- D) 10.5
- E) 9.5

73) The government has increased the budget of the Department of Science and Technology and the Ministry of Earth Sciences by _____ per cent.

- A) 45
- B) 25
- C) 40
- D) 30
- E) 35

74) Who among the following has inaugurated Rashtrapati Bhavan Krida Sthal in the President's Estate?

- A) Anurag Thakur
- B) Narendra Modi
- C) Ram Nath Kovind
- D) Venkiah Naidu
- E) Amit Shah

75) PM Modi has unveiled several development projects in which state?

- A) Uttar Pradesh
- B) Assam
- C) Gujarat
- D) Madhya Pradesh
- E) Haryana

76) Which of the following Ministry has unveiled the Pilot Pey Jal Survekshan?

- A) Ministry of Education
- B) Ministry of Agriculture
- C) Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs
- D) Ministry of Jal Shakti
- E) Ministry of Agriculture

77) Which of the following Minister has launched the e-Chhawani portal?

- A) Prahlad Patel
- B) NS Tomar
- C) Narendra Tomar
- D) Rajnath Singh
- E) Amit Shah

78) Which of the following country has overtaken the US and become the European Union's biggest trading partner?

- A) Israel
- B) France
- C) Germany
- D) Japan
- E) China

79) The Deputy PM of which country has recently arrived in New Delhi?

- A) Sweden
- B) Netherlands
- C) France
- D) Ethiopia
- E) Germany

80) PM Narendra Modi has laid the foundation stone for Maharaja Suheldev Memorial in which state?

- A) Punjab
- B) Bihar
- C) Uttar Pradesh
- D) Madhya Pradesh
- E) Haryana

81) PM Narendra Modi will launch Mahabahu-Brahmaputra initiative in which state?

- A) Mizoram
- B) Tripura
- C) Assam
- D) West Bengal
- E) Nagaland

82) Labour Minister Santosh Gangwar has launched applications for _____ pan-India surveys.

- A) 8
- B) 7
- C) 6
- D) 5

E) 4

83) PM Modi has recently inaugurated the oil and gas sector projects in which state?

A) Haryana

B) Kerala

C) Nagaland

D) Assam

E) Tamil Nadu

84) Which country has recently joined Russia-Iran's two-day naval exercise?

A) China

B) India

C) US

D) France

E) Germany

85) Indian Government has launched _____, a Whatsapp Like Instant Messaging App For Government Employs.

A) Indie-Message

B) Live India

C) Live Sandes

D) Sandes

E) Message India

86) The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization and the Arbor Day Foundation have recognized which city as a 2020 Tree City of World, for its commitment to growing and maintaining urban forests?

A) Chennai

B) Bengaluru

C) Pune

D) Hyderabad

E) Delhi

87) 'Pariksha Pe Charcha' programme with who among the following will be held online?

A) Nirmala Sitharaman

B) Narendra Modi

C) Prahlad Patel

D) Ramesh Pokhriyal

E) Anurag Thakur

88) Which of the following country has Passed an Anti-radicalism Bill ?

A) China

B) France

C) Germany

D) Sweden

E) US

89) Foreign Ministers of which countries have demanded promoting freedom of navigation in Indo-Pacific region?

A) G20

B) G7

C) Quad

D) Asean

E) Saarc

90) AI based translation software 'Amar Vasha' has been launched by the Supreme Court of which country?

- A) US
- B) Sweden
- C) Germany
- D) Bangladesh
- E) France

91) World Thinking Day is observed on which of the following date?

- A) February 1
- B) February 4
- C) February 22
- D) February 5
- E) February 6

92) India and Maldives have signed _____ pacts to boost infrastructure projects.

- A) 8
- B) 7
- C) 6
- D) 5
- E) 4

93) Who among the following will inaugurate the Incredible India Mega Homestay Development?

- A) Narendra Modi
- B) Amit Shah
- C) NS Tomar

- D) Anurag Thakur
- E) Prahlad Patel

94) National Toy Fair will be organized from which date?

- A) February 21
- B) February 22
- C) February 23
- D) February 27
- E) February 25

95) Several projects have been launched by PM Modi in which two states?

- A) Kerala and Assam
- B) Punjab and Assam
- C) Assam and West Bengal
- D) Haryana and Assam
- E) Haryana and Punjab

96) World Day of Social Justice 2021 is being Observed On which date?

- A) February 9
- B) February 20
- C) February 11
- D) February 2
- E) February 23

97) Prakash Javadekar has inaugurated the Atal Paryavaran Bhavan in which state/UT?

- A) Punjab
- B) Chandigarh

- C) Lakshadweep
- D) Puducherry
- E) Delhi

98) World Pangolin Day 2021 is observed on which of the following date?

- A) February 2
- B) February 3
- C) February 4
- D) February 20
- E) February 8

99) The chief minister of which state has laid the foundation of the first skill university of eastern India?

- A) Mizoram
- B) Manipur
- C) Tripura
- D) Nagaland
- E) Assam

100) PM Modi will address the _____ annual convocation of IIT Kharagpur.

- A) 57th
- B) 66th
- C) 56th
- D) 67th
- E) 58th

ANSWERS

1) Answer: C

The Indian Coast Guard (ICG) will celebrate its 45th Raising Day on Feb 01.

The ICG is an armed force of India that protects maritime interests and enforces maritime law.

The ICG is headed by a Director-General, Vice-Admiral rank of the Indian Navy.

With just seven surface platforms in 1978, the ICG has grown into the fourth largest coast guard with 156 ships and 62 aircraft in its inventory.

The ICG has targeted force levels of 200 surface platforms and 80 aircraft by 2025.

Since its inception in 1977, the ICG has saved over 10,000 lives and apprehended around 14,000

miscreants, the agency said.

Director General, Indian Coast Guard K Natarajan

2) Answer: D

An arboretum showcasing the floral diversity of the Shivalik hills was inaugurated at Jeolikot in Nainital district, Uttarakhand.

It is Mainly for conserving over 210 species of trees found in the Shivalik range of Himalayas.

One of the unique features of the “Shivalik Arboretum” inaugurated by noted environmental activist Ajay Rawat is that the trees standing there introduce themselves to visitors.

Shivalik Arboretum aims to spread nature education among people so that they are able to feel an emotional

connection with the trees, and make them more active towards conservation.

The facility will showcase information like scientific information about particular species, cultural significance, medicinal use, country of origin, type of habitat in which it is found and all possible uses including timber, dyes or any other peculiar use.

The tree species include Kaphal (myrica esculenta), Toon (toonaciliata), Tejpat (cinamomumtamala), Banj oak (quercusleucotrichophora) and Buransh (rhododendron arboreum).

Some exotic tree species like Queensland Kauri Pine (agathisrobusta), Atlas Cedar (cedrusatlantica) and Montezuma Cypress also stand at the arboretum. PTI ALM HDA

3) Answer: E

Vietnam's ruling Communist Party chief Nguyen Phu Trong, 76, has been re-elected for a rare third five-year term.

Mr Trong was granted an exception to party rules that say people over the age of 65 should retire, cementing his position as one of the country's strongest and longest-serving leaders for decades.

It aims to bolster Vietnam's ongoing economic success, and the legitimacy of the party's rule.

Vietnam's Communist Party governs the nation of nearly 100 million people and has ruled for more than 45 years since reunification.

Leadership of the one-party state is split among three positions: the party chief, a president who serves as head of state and a prime minister who runs the government. Since 2018, Mr. Trong has served as both party leader and president.

A new study by the independent Lowy Institute in Australia ranked Vietnam second in the world behind

New Zealand in handling the pandemic's first nine months.

4) Answer: C

Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu will inaugurate Aadi Mahotsav, a National Tribal Festival at DilliHaat in INA in the National Capital.

It will continue till 15th Feb.

The Tribal Affairs Ministry said, the Aadi Mahotsav – A Celebration of the Spirit of Tribal Culture, Crafts, Cuisine and Commerce is a successful annual initiative that was commenced in 2017.

The festival was an attempt to familiarise the people with the rich and diverse craft, culture of the tribal communities across the country, in one place.

5) Answer: D

Textiles Minister Smriti Irani inaugurated the 8th India International Silk Fair on Virtual Portal.

India has long history of silk production and is the 2nd largest producer of Silk.

India is the only country in the world which produces all the four major varieties of silk – Mulberry, Eri, Tassar, and Muga.

The fair is considered to be India's biggest silk fair, being held under one roof on Indian Silk Export Promotion Council's virtual platform.

The five days event is being held virtually due to COVID-19 pandemic.

Mrs Irani said that more than 200 overseas buyers have already registered and equal number of their representatives in India will be interacting with more than 100 renowned and big Indian companies manufacturing and trading silk and silk blended products.

She called upon the exhibitors and overseas buyers to take part in this initiative to celebrate the beauty and vibrancy of Indian silk.

6) Answer: E

The UK is applying to join a free trade area made up of 11 Asia and Pacific nations, under its post-Brexit plans.

The Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP).

The trade agreement formed in 2018 which includes Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore and Vietnam.

In total, it covers a market of around 500 million people, generating more than 13% of the world's income.

International Trade Secretary Liz Truss will make the request with negotiations expected in the spring.

7) Answer: C

A visa scheme to allow Hong Kong residents to come to the UK opened, with some THREE LAKH people expected to apply.

The visa, which is open to holders of a British National (Overseas) passport and their immediate dependents, will offer a fast track to UK citizenship.

But the Chinese foreign ministry said it would no longer recognize the BNO passport as a travel document.

The UK launched the new visa after China imposed a new security law.

Beijing has previously warned the UK not to meddle in domestic issues.

8) Answer: D

Nepal has decided to award the contract for construction of 679 mega watt Lower Arun Hydropower Project to India's Satluj Jal Vidyut Nigam (SJVN).

This was decided at a meeting of the Investment Board Nepal (IBN), chaired by Nepal Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli.

The project was awarded to the SJVN under the Build, Own, Operate and Transfer (BOOT) delivery method.

Arun III hydel project, which will provide 21 per cent free power to Nepal during the concession period.

9) Answer: B

The Myanmar Military Tatmadaw has announced a one year state of emergency in the country.

The Vice President Myint Swe has been made the acting President and all powers have been transferred to the Commander in Chief Min Aung Hlaing.

The development follows early morning detention of the State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi, President Win Myint and other senior leaders from the ruling party National League for Democracy (NLD) by the military.

10) Answer: E

In the Union Budget, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman proposed to amend Insurance Act, 1938 to increase FDI limit from 49% to 74% in insurance companies, and allow foreign ownership and control with safeguards.

Shares of six insurance companies added 3% to 5% after the central government proposed to amend Insurance Act to allow higher foreign direct investment (FDI) in insurance companies.

ICICI Prudential Life Insurance Company (up 5.86%), General Insurance Corporation of India (up 5.41%), The New India Assurance Company (up 5.16%), HDFC Life Insurance Company (up 4.46%), ICICI Lombard General Insurance Company (up 3.68%), SBI Life Insurance Company (up 3.49%) advanced.

11) Answer: C

World Cancer Day 2021 Annually observed on February 4.

World Cancer Day seeks to raise awareness and reduce the stigma surrounding the disease that is the second leading cause of deaths globally.

This international day is a 'global uniting initiative' led by the Union of International Cancer Control (UICC) and is meant to encourage the prevention, detection, diagnosis and treatment of cancer as early as possible.

History of the day :

World Cancer Day was first established at the World Cancer Summit Against Cancer for the New Millennium held in Paris, on February 4, 2000.

This day celebrates the anniversary of the signing of the 'Charter of Paris Against Cancer' by the General Director of UNESCO, Kōichirō Matsuura and the French President Jacques Chirac.

In 2019, the theme 'I Am and I Will' was introduced and was to be carried on till 2021

12) Answer: D

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the ChauriChaura centenary celebrations at ChauriChaura in Uttar Pradesh on February 4 via video conferencing.

Mr Modi will also release a postal stamp dedicated to the ChauriChaura incident.

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath will also be present on the occasion.

February 4 marks the centenary of a landmark event in the freedom struggle that took place at ChauriChaura village in Gorakhpur district of Uttar Pradesh, known as United Province in British India, when a large group of protesters participating in Mahatma Gandhi's non-cooperation movement clashed with the police, who opened fire.

13) Answer: E

An 'amputee clinic', the first of its kind in India, with the aim of improving amputation patient care by providing a collection of services under one roof with significant coordination was launched in Chandigarh.

The clinic was formally inaugurated by the Post Graduate Institute of Medical Education and Research (PGIMER) Director Prof Jagat Ram.

The basic intent of this initiative is to bring an Amputee as a near-normal functional human being in society.

This initiative will attempt to provide appropriate management to amputees to guide them in their path to rehabilitation in society and will support patients with counseling and medical facilities during their treatment and recovery.

14) Answer: B

Prime Minister Narendra Modi pushed for 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' (self-reliant India) an Oxford panel has now chosen 'Atmanirbharta' in Hindi word of 2020.

The advisory panel of language experts Kritika Agrawal, Poonam Nigam Sahay and Imogen Foxell stated that "it validated the day-to-day achievements of the countless Indians who dealt with and survived the perils of a pandemic".

The Oxford Hindi word of the year is a word or expression that is chosen to reflect the ethos, mood, or preoccupations of the passing year, and have lasting potential as a term of cultural significance.

The usage of the word 'Aatmanirbharta' after Prime Minister Modi's address has increased significantly.

There was a massive increase in the usage of aatmanirbharta following the prime minister's address, highlighting its increased prominence as a phrase and concept in the public lexicon of India

Previous Hindi words of the year are Aadhar (2017),

Nari Shakti (2018) and Samvidhaan (2019).

15) Answer: D

Union Budget for Financial Year 2021-22 has proposed to set up 100 new Sainik Schools in the country, in partnership with NGOs, private schools and State-owned schools.

The endeavor is to provide schooling opportunities in 'CBSE Plus' type of educational environment by involving desirous government, private schools and NGOs to partner in establishing their system with Sainik Schools' ethos, value system and national pride.

The aim of establishing Sainik Schools is to prepare children academically, physically and mentally for entry into the National Defence Academy and to develop qualities of body, mind and character which will enable the young boys to become good and useful citizens.

From the academic session 2021-22, girl candidates are also eligible for admission to Class 6th in all 33 Sainik Schools.

16) Answer: C

Andaman and Nicobar Islands has become the first state or Union territory in the country to become Covid-19 free with active cases falling to zero in the islands.

Health ministry's website reported that the last four infected persons in Andaman and Nicobar Islands have been declared cured.

The UT had reported a total of 4,932 cases and 62 deaths from the virus.

The share of Kerala in India's daily cases crossed 50 percent for the first time

There were 11,024 fresh cases in the country out of which Kerala alone reported 5,716, 51.8 percent of the total.

The state also has the highest count of active cases at

69,157, out of around 1 lakh 61 thousand in the country.

17) Answer: E

In December, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution to declare 4 February as International Day of Human Fraternity.

International Day of Human Fraternity aims to underline the importance of raising awareness about different cultures and religions, or beliefs, and the promotion of tolerance.

It also aims to educate people that tolerance, pluralistic tradition, mutual respect, and the diversity of religions and beliefs promote human fraternity.

Theme of 2021 is A Pathway to the future

18) Answer: C

In a first, the 13th edition will see an Indian Ocean Region (IOR) defence minister's conclave as India seeks a bigger role in this volatile hub of global geopolitical rivalry.

It can be seen that the conclave is an initiative that promotes dialogue in an institutional, economic and cooperative environment that can foster development of peace and stability.

It can be seen that Bengaluru has hosted all 13 editions of the show.

Since 1996, Aero India has come a long way to become Asia's largest defence and aerospace air show over the years.

In its 25th year, the government is using it to further geopolitical goals with strategic events.

19) Answer: D

The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) has started organising KRITAGYA- a National level

hackathon in the month of August, 2020 to promote innovation in agriculture and allied sectors in the country.

Agri-Hackathon is to give opportunity to the students along with faculties, innovators for showcasing their innovative approaches & technologies in agriculture and allied sectors.

Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) has put in place an Institutional mechanism through Research Institutes, KrishiVigyanKendras (KVKs) and Agriculture Universities (AUs) to address the problems being faced by the farming sector.

20) Answer: B

The National Backward Classes Finance and Development Corporation (NBCFDC) has signed an MoU with Apollo Medskills Private Ltd for providing COVID Vaccination Administration training to Nurses, Medical and Nursing students and Pharmacists.

The programme has been sanctioned with the aim of Up-Skilling the competency level of the health care workers as well contributing to the national programme of vaccination under progress.

The Corporation has sanctioned training programmes for 1,000 trainees in the State of Bihar, Delhi, Telangana, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh.

21) Answer: C

Every Year on Feb 06, International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation is Observed.

It was first held in 2003.

Theme of 2021 is No time for global inaction: unite, fund and act to end FGM/C

It is a United Nations-sponsored annual awareness day to eradicate female genital mutilation (FGM).

22) Answer: E

The Denmark to build world's first energy island in the North Sea

The €28 billion construction project is the biggest of its kind in Danish history. The government will hold a 51% stake in the island, with the remainder held by the private sector.

In that Initial phase will be the size of 18 football fields, will be linked to hundreds of offshore wind turbines and will supply both power to households and green hydrogen for use in shipping, aviation, industry and heavy transport.

It will cost around 210 billion Danish crowns (\$33.9 billion) to build, and is an important part of Denmark's legally binding target to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 70% by 2030 from 1990 levels, one of the world's most ambitious.

The move came as the European Union unveiled plans to transform its electricity system to rely mostly on renewable energy within a decade and increase its offshore wind energy capacity 25-fold by 2050.

The island, to be located 80 kilometres off Denmark's west coast, and its surrounding wind turbines will have an initial capacity of 3 gigawatt and be operational around 2033.

Denmark also has plans for an energy island in the Baltic Sea. The state will hold a controlling stake in both islands.

23) Answer: B

Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) unveiled a leap in technology of teaming up unmanned aircraft and vehicles with manned jets similar to the US project of skyborg.

It will enhance Indian military strike capabilities

The technology named Combined Air Teaming System

(CATS) will have a mother ship, operating from faraway, and four autonomous unmanned aerial vehicles known as CATS Warrior.

HAL is also developing a high-altitude satellite system. It will be solar energised.

This asset will be flying unmanned around 70,000 feet height for around two to three months and will be taking all the information.

HAL is also developing a high altitude asset with long endurance. It will be flying 50,000 feet for 24 hours and it is also part of CATS programme.

24) Answer: D

The southern state of Kerala will get its first human milk bank. The state-of-the-art facility will be inaugurated by health minister K K Shailaja at state-owned Ernakulam general hospital in Kochi.

It is being set up in partnership with Rotary Club of Cochin Global.

The facility will provide breast milk to newborn babies who are deprived of it because of various issues, including the sickness of their mothers.

According to the state government, 3,600 babies are born in the general hospital a year and out of those, 600 to 1,000 sick babies are admitted into the Neonatal intensive care unit (NICU).

A similar milk bank – the Northeast’s first – opened at Guwahati’s Satribari Christian Hospital in December last year.

It was the 15th milk bank in the entire country.

25) Answer: C

Assam Chief Minister SarbanandaSonowal inaugurated the first heliport of the state in Majuli district.

The heliport having facility for simultaneous landing of

three helicopters was constructed at an expenditure of Rs 50 lakh.

The heliport was built with an aim to boost tourism in Majuli, which has a distinct identity as the world’s largest river island.

The state government has also undertaken several projects to strengthen road infrastructure in the river island, and steps are being taken for construction of the bridge connecting Majuli with Jorhat.

The Assam government made dedicated efforts to put Majuli as an important tourist destination of the world.

The new heliport would significantly facilitate tourist flow to Majuli.

The chief minister also laid the foundation for the infrastructure improvement project of Sankarjyoti High School with a financial outlay of Rs 25 lakh.

26) Answer: E

The Reserve Bank of India’s (RBI) Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) kept its repo rate unchanged at 4 percent while maintaining an ‘accommodative stance’ as long as necessary at least through the current financial year to the next year.

Reverse Repo Rate- 3.35%

Marginal Standing Facility Rate- 4.25%

Bank Rate- 4.25%

CRR- 3%

SLR- 18.00%.

This is the first MPC meeting after the presentation of the Union Budget 2021-22. The six-member MPC headed by RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das meets every two months to analyze the state of the Indian economy and inflation and address the monetary issues in the country.

This month, it began the 3-day bi-monthly meeting on Wednesday, February 3.

The CPI projection is revised to 5.2 percent for Q4 FY21 and CPI inflation is pegged at 5-5.2 per cent in H1 FY22.

Shaktikanta Das announced an integrated ombudsman scheme for customer grievance redressal, which will be rolled out by June 2021.

27) Answer: B

The 1st meeting of the Joint Working Group in the field of Renewable Energy between India and the Kingdom of Bahrain held On Feb 04, 2021 in virtual format.

H.E. Dr. Abdul Hussain bin Ali Mirza, President of Sustainable Energy Authority led the Bahraini delegation.

The Indian delegation was led by H.E. Mr. Dinesh Dayanand Jagdale, Joint Secretary, Ministry of New & Renewable Energy. H.E. Sh. Piyush Srivastava, Ambassador of India to the Kingdom of Bahrain also participated in the meeting.

A Memorandum of Understanding between India and Bahrain was signed in July 2018 for promoting bilateral cooperation in the field of Renewable Energy.

About the Meeting :

It was a very productive meeting, in which both sides underscored the importance of renewable energy to meet climate change goals, and presented the initiatives taken, progress made and future targets set by their respective governments as well as opportunities available in this sector.

Both sides agreed to forging deeper engagement in capacity building and focused cooperation between concerned agencies as well as the private sector of the two countries in this sector, particularly in the field of solar, wind and clean hydrogen.

The meeting took place in a cordial and friendly

atmosphere. It was agreed to hold the next round of JWG meetings at mutually convenient dates, which will be decided through diplomatic channels.

28) Answer: E

The Union Budget 2021, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) projected a GDP growth rate of 10.5 percent for the financial year beginning 1 April.

RBI projects GDP at 10.5% in FY22.

The growth outlook has improved significantly and the vaccination drive will help the economic rebound.

RBI's estimate is in line with the pre-Budget Economic Survey that predicted a 'V-shaped' recovery that said that the Indian economy will rebound with 11 per cent growth in the next financial year.

The apex bank expects the Indian economy to grow in the range of 8.3 percent to 26.2 percent in the first half of FY22, Followed by 6 percent growth in Q3FY22.

29) Answer: D

The California-based global digital payment platform PayPal has announced that the company has decided to wind down its domestic payment services in India with effect from April 01, 2021.

The US-based company will instead focus on enabling more international sales for Indian businesses.

Moreover, the global customer will be able to pay Indian merchants using Paypal.

Paypal was one of the payment options on platforms like ticketing services BookMyShow, MakeMyTrip, and food delivery platform Swiggy.

Earlier in December 2020, Financial solutions provider Razorpay had partnered with global digital payments platform PayPal to facilitate international payments for small businesses and freelancers.

30) Answer: C

A total of 201 MoUs, product launches, and technology transfers were concluded at the Bandhan ceremony held on the last day of Aero India 2021 at Yehalanka, Bengaluru on February 05, 2021.

Over 600 exhibitors attended physically while 108 in virtual mode.

And then around 3,000 Business-2-Business meetings were conducted.

Conclave of Defence Ministers of Indian Ocean Region (IOR)

Theme: 'Enhanced Peace, Security and Cooperation in the Indian Ocean'.

The first ever IOR Defence Ministers' Conclave was attended by ministers and delegates from 26 IOR countries.

A conclave of Chiefs of Air Staff was also organised to pursue the objectives of collaborative security for the region and beyond.

The 6th India-Russia Military Industrial Conference, iDEX 'Start-up Manthan' was also held.

Aero India 2021 would help in achieving the target set by the ministry to achieve a turnover of Rs 1,75,000 crore, including exports of Rs 35,000 crore in aerospace and defence goods & services by the year 2024.

31) Answer: C

The 45th Kolkata International Book Fair will be held in July this year at the Central Park Ground of Salt Lake.

The Publishers and Booksellers Guild announced that the decision has been taken in view of the Board exams and the ensuing Assembly Elections in West Bengal.

This year the focal theme country is Bangladesh to mark the country's Golden Jubilee Year of Independence and

the Centenary of Bangabondhu Sheikh MujiburRahman.

The 125th Birth year of NetajiSubhas Chandra Bose and Birth Centenary of Satyajit Ray will also be celebrated in the Book Fair. Earlier, the Kolkata International Book Fair was deferred due to the pandemic situation.

32) Answer: D

Prime Minister NarendraModi will inaugurate the World Sustainable Development Summit 2021 on 10th of February via video conferencing.

The theme of the summit is 'Redefining Our Common Future: Safe and Secure Environment for All'.

The 20th edition of The Energy and Resources Institute's (TERI) flagship event- the World Sustainable Development Summit, will be held online from 10th to 12th February.

The summit will bring together a wide number of governments, business leaders, academicians, climate scientists, youth and the civil society in the fight against climate change.

Energy and industry transition, adaptation and resilience, nature based solutions, climate finance, circular economy, clean oceans and air pollution, are amongst the range of topics to be discussed during the summit.

The Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy and Ministry of Earth Sciences are key partners of the summit.

33) Answer: E

A major accident occurred in Chamoli in Uttarakhand due to the breaking of the glacier

The glacier burst took place at the Rishiganga power project after a portion of Nanda Devi glacier broke off in Tapovan area of Joshimath in Uttarakhand's Chamoli district and damaged the Rishiganga dam on Alaknanda

river.

The 13.2 MW Rishiganga hydropower project near Jashimath was completely washed away; the 520 MW NTPC hydro project on the Dhauliganga river near Raini was partially damaged and at least five bridges were impacted by the surge of water that was unleashed, cutting access to a number of villages in the area.

A multi-agency rescue operation including — Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) and National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) — is in full swing to release people still stuck in the tunnels. The forces have cleared 90 meter stretch of debris in the big tunnel at Tapovan till now, with about 100 meters of clearing still left to do.

34) Answer: D

The India-US joint military exercise “YudhAbhyas 20” commenced in Mahajan Field Firing Range of Bikaner district in Rajasthan.

This is the 16th edition of annual bilateral joint exercise of both the armies.

It will continue till the 21st of this month.

The previous version of the joint exercise was held at Seattle in the United States.

About 250 US and 250 Indian army soldiers are participating in the exercise. Both the armies will share their war-related techniques, skills and experience with each other during this exercise.

The exercise is one of the largest military training and defense cooperation efforts between India and the United States.

This exercise is another step in the growing military cooperation between the two countries, which shows the growth in Indo-US relations.

It is also a sign that both India and the US understand the threat of terrorism and are standing shoulder to

shoulder in combating the same.

35) Answer: C

Prime Minister Narendra Modi dedicated to the nation four projects related to oil, gas and road sector worth rupees four thousand and seven hundred crores at Haldia in West Bengal.

The Prime Minister inaugurated three projects, Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited BPCL’s LPG Import Terminal at Haldia, GAIL’s Dobhi-Durgapur Natural Gas Pipeline and NHA’s four lane ROB cum flyover at Ranichak.

Union ministers Dharmendra Singh ,Debasree Chaudhary, Governor of West Bengal Jagdeep Dhankhar were also present on the occasion.

36) Answer: B

With the aim of doubling farmers’ income by 2022, Finance Minister NirmalaSitharaman announced that the agricultural credit target was set at Rs.16.5 lakh crore for FY22, during Union Budget 2021.

It is an increase of 10 percent over the previous year Rs 15 Lakh Crore

She also announced that the micro irrigation fund would be doubled by Rs.5,000crore. Operation green scheme will be expanded to include 22 perishable schemes.

Agriculture infra fund to be increased to Rs.40,000crore and this will be available to APMCs.

1,000 more mandis will be integrated with the electronic national market (e-NAM) to enhance the infrastructure of APMCs.

37) Answer: D

India’s first geothermal power project will be established at Puga village of eastern Ladakh. Puga has been identified as the hotspot of geothermal energy in

the country by the scientists.

In the first phase of the pilot project, one megawatt (MW) power generation capacity will be generated.

A tripartite Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for establishment and implementation of the first phase was signed.

India's first ever geothermal power project, known as Geothermal Field Development Project is planned to commission by the end of 2022. The tripartite MOU was signed between ONGC Energy, LAHDC, Leh and the Power Department of UT Ladakh.

In the first phase, the pilot project implemented by the ONGC-OEC will explore within the depth of 500 metres and it is planned to supply 24 hours free power to 10 neighbouring villages which are not connected with the northern grid for power supply.

The second Phase is proposed for deeper and lateral exploration of geothermal reservoirs by drilling optimal number of wells and setting up of a higher capacity demo plant in Ladakh. The second phase will be the Research and Development stage or demonstration of the project.

In the third phase, it is planned to promote joint ventures and commercial projects. Puga is a place where it is uncovered with a potential of more than 100 mw of geothermal energies.

38) Answer: C

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will lay the foundation stone of various development projects at Dhekiajuli in Sonitpur district in Assam.

The Prime Minister will launch 'Asom Mala', aimed at helping improve state highways and major district roads networks in the state.

The programme is unique for its emphasis on effective maintenance through continuous field data collection

and its linkage with the Road Asset Management System.

Asom Mala' will provide quality inter-linkage roads between the National Highways and the rural roads network as well as facilitate seamless multi-modal transportation.

In addition to that, the Prime Minister will also lay the foundation stone of two medical colleges and hospitals, which are being set up at Biswanath and Charaideo, at a total estimated project cost of over 1100 crore rupees.

39) Answer: E

Himachal Pradesh has become the first State in the country to make the end to end processing of the cabinet paperless by implementing e-cabinet application.

Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur inaugurated the first e-cabinet at Shimla.

The entire process from initiation of a cabinet memo, approval of the cabinet memo through concerned Secretary, Chief Secretary, concerned Minister and finally by Chief Minister to place in the cabinet has been made online.

It will also be possible to monitor the status of implementation of cabinet decisions more effectively through this application.

The e-cabinet provides for generation of automatic s through SMS on real time basis for various stages involved in processing cabinet issues like receipt of cabinet memo, finalization of cabinet meeting, advice received on cabinet memo for various levels like Secretaries and Ministers.

The e-cabinet application is also available as a Mobile App on android devices .

The new system will bring greater efficiency in the overall process of conducting a cabinet meeting by

removing dependencies which arise due to the physical movement of cabinet memos.

40) Answer: C

In Gujarat, the State Government has asked the Tata group to start the work on setting up Indian Institute of Skills- IIS.

This was conveyed during a meeting between the high powered team from Tata Group and senior officials of Gujarat Government held in Gandhinagar.

IIS is being set up by the Labour and Employment Department of Gujarat along with Tata Group at Nasmed village of Gandhinagar.

The State Government has allotted around 20 acres of land for Tatas to start Indian Institute of Skills.

The foundation stone for the proposed IIS at Nasmed was performed by Union Home Minister Amit Shah who is also Lok Sabha Member from Gandhinagar constituency in Gujarat. Proposed IIS at Nasmed is located in Gandhinagar Lok Sabha constituency.

The institute is being developed on a Not-for-profit Public Private Partnership mode by the Tata Group along with the state's Labour and Employment Department.

41) Answer: C

The World Pulses Day is observed every year on 10 February.

This day was established by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). · Theme of 2021 is Nutritious Seeds for a Sustainable Future.

It has been designated on February 10 of each year since 2019 by the General Assembly of the United Nations on December 20, 2018.

Objective: World Pulses Day is to disseminate information and organize activities related to pulses

throughout the world.

Importance : to recognize the importance of the legumes (beans, lentils, chickpeas, peas and lupines among others) as a global food.

42) Answer: D

Packaged food companies said the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India's (FSSAI) move to reduce trans-fat in food items which use edible oil as an ingredient to 2% from 2022.

An FSSAI notification dated February 2 said the latest amendment of the Food Safety and Standards (Prohibition and Restriction on Sales) Regulations, 2011 will come into effect from January 1, 2022. · It is consumer friendly and will not put burden on the industry as most companies are already working on reducing trans-fat in their products

The permissible limit for trans fats in food products in 2021 is 3 percent, cut down from the previous limit of 5 per cent.

Food products that incorporate edible oils and fats as ingredients, including edible refined oils, vanaspati/partially hydrogenated oils, margarine, vegetable fat spreads, mixed fat spreads, bakery shortenings, fall under the ambit of the newly issued Food Safety and Standards (Prohibition and Restrictions on Sales) Regulations, 2021.

The World Health Organization (WHO), which has launched a major campaign to eliminate industrially produced trans-fat from national food supplies by 2023, says trans-fat intake is responsible for approximately 500,000 premature deaths from coronary heart disease each year around the world.

43) Answer: E

The five-day National Horticulture Fair 2021 has started in Bengaluru on 8 February. · The fair is organized by the Indian Institute of Horticulture Research (IIHR) at

the Institute's Hessarghatta campus on the outskirts of Bengaluru city.

This is the first time when the Horticulture Fair is organized in both physical and virtual ways. Cutting edge technologies, crop varieties, pest and disease management practices, and processing methods will be demonstrated. · The theme of NHF 2021 is 'Horticulture for Start-Up and Stand-Up India'.

Virtual preparations have been made across the country to webcast the program in the premises of KVK, FPO, SSIAT centres of art of living foundation, agricultural training centres of respective state governments. · Interested farmers, entrepreneurs, and other stakeholders are requested to register in the NHF 2021 to participate through virtual mode.

44) Answer: B

With the Centre's approval, Tamil Nadu government passed an order for creating the fifth tiger reserve in the state and the 51st in the country.

The SrivilliputhurMegamalai Tiger Reserve will span the forests of Megamalai wildlife sanctuary and Srivilliputhur grizzled squirrel wildlife sanctuary spread across the districts of Theni, Virudhunagar and Madurai. · The 100,000-hectare area is home to a range of mammals and bird species and more than a dozen tigers · Fourteen tigers have so far been identified in Meghamalai and Srivilliputhur sanctuaries following scat analysis between 2017 and 2018.

Meghamalai is home to a large population of hoofed animals, spotted deers, Indian gaurs, etc. while Srivilliputhur has Nilgiritahrs, Sambars, elephants, and bird species among others.

The first tiger reserve in Tamil Nadu – KalakkadMundanthurai – was formed around 1988-89, which was followed by Anamalai and Mudumalai in 2008 and 2009. The fourth reserve – Sathyamangalam was created around 2013-14.

45) Answer: D

The government introduced a bill in the Rajya Sabha, which seeks to replace the National Capital Territory of Delhi Laws (Special Provisions) Second (Amendment) Ordinance, 2020.

The ordinance was promulgated by President Ram Nath Kovind on December 30, 2020. It amended the National Capital Territory of Delhi Laws (Special Provisions) Second Act, 2011.

The 2011 Act was valid till December 31, 2020. The Ordinance extended the deadline to December 31, 2023. · The 2011 Act provided for the regularisation of the unauthorised colonies that existed in the national capital as on March 31, 2002 and where construction took place till June 1, 2014.

Union Minister for Housing and Urban Affairs Hardeep Singh Puri introduced the National Capital Territory of Delhi Laws (Special Provisions) Second (Amendment) Bill, 2021

46) Answer: C

The government will launch the website of the India Toy Fair- 2021.

The website will be launched jointly by Minister of Textiles Smriti Irani, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal and Education Minister Ramesh PokhriyalNishank in New Delhi.

Govt. launches new Scheme – 'Formation and Promotion of 10,000 FPOs

The Ministry of Agriculture has said that the government has launched a new Central Sector Scheme titled 'Formation and Promotion of 10,000 Farmer Produce Organizations (FPOs)' and it has committed resources in this regard with a budgetary provision of Rs 6,865 crore.

The Ministry in a statement said that FPOs are to be

developed to produce clusters, wherein agricultural and horticultural products are grown for leveraging economies of scale and improving market access for members. · It said, under this Central Sector Scheme with funding from Government of India, formation and Promotion of FPOs are to be done through implementing agencies and at present, nine such agencies have been finalized

47) Answer: E

The Karnataka government issued an official notification announcing Vijayanagara as the state's 31st district, which was carved out of the ore-rich Ballari district.

Vijayanagara will have six taluks namely Hosapete, Kudligi, Hagaribommanahalli, Kotturu, HoovinaHadagaliandHarapanahalli.

Hosapete is the headquarters of the new Vijayanagara district.

The Yediyurappa government's plan to create Vijayanagara district had run into opposition, especially from within the ruling BJP.

Undivided Ballari was politically significant, comprising nine Assembly constituencies of which the Congress represents five and the BJP four.

Minister for Infrastructure Development, Haj and Wakf, Anand Singh, who is also the Ballari district in-charge, had anchored the efforts for the new district.

48) Answer: C

The military government in Myanmar has stepped up actions against leaders of the Aung San Suu Kyi led National League for Democracy (NLD).

A close aide to the ousted State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi, Kyaw Tint Swe was arrested by the army. · He had served as the minister for the office of the State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi, reports Reuters. · An official of the NLD has said that four other people linked

to the previous government were also picked up from their homes.

The United States has announced that it is going to freeze USD 1 billion in Burmese government funds held in the United States.

President Joe Biden has said that the US is announcing a series of actions to impose consequences on the leaders of the Myanmar coup.

He announced that he has signed a new executive order to sanction against the military leaders who directed the coup and their close family members.

49) Answer: D

National Inventors Day honors Thomas Edison and all inventors, recognizing the enormous impact inventions have on technology industry and society worldwide.

On February 11, the United States recognizes National Inventors' Day, a day to salute past and present great inventors.

First signed into declaration on February 11, 1983, President Ronald Reagan chose the date because it was Thomas Edison's birthday.

Just think about all the inventions, and the resulting new products, processes and procedures that we have seen in our lifetime.

It readily gives us an appreciation for the inventors that allowed these things to come into being. On National Inventors Day, spend a few minutes to appreciate inventors, whatever their field. · If you are lucky enough to know one, let them know just how much you appreciate them.

50) Answer: C

Bangladesh has received USD 200 million for Water Sanitation, Hygiene (WASH) project for rural areas from the World Bank.

The agreement was signed between the government of Bangladesh and the World Bank.

The project is planned to help 3.6 million to access hygienic sanitation facilities and about 6 lakh people to access clean water in rural areas.

The WB funding will provide microcredits to both households and entrepreneurs for water and sanitation facilities. · More than 3 lakh poorest households will receive fully subsidised toilets.

Apart from household water connections, the project will construct 3000 community piped water schemes. · The project will install about 312 public toilets and 2,514 hand-washing stations at crowded public places, such as markets and bus stations.

About 1,280 community clinics will have new or renovated facilities, said the press release issued by the World Bank.

51) Answer: C

Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari will formally launch India's first-ever diesel tractor converted into a CNG tractor on February 12.

This conversion is jointly done by Rawmatt Techno Solutions and Tomasetto Achille India.

The CNG tractor will help farmers to increase their income, by lowering costs and help to create job opportunities in rural India.

This will help them to improve their livelihood.

The farmers can save up to 50 per cent on the fuel cost as the current Diesel prices are around 77 rupees per litre whereas CNG is only 42 rupees per kilogram

The conversion from diesel to CNG will be beneficial as it is a clean fuel with lowest carbon and pollutant content. It is also economical as it has zero lead and is non-corrosive, non-dilutive and non-contaminating

which helps in increasing the life of the engine.

52) Answer: E

Indian Army National Seminar-cum-Webinar, named as Divya-Drishti 2021 on Multi-Domain Operations: Future of Conflicts was organised by Centre for Land Warfare Studies, CLAWS.

Divya-Drishti 2021, meaning divine or cognitive perception required for an informed vision, aimed to bring together national and international experts and practitioners to deliberate on the complex and emerging subject on multi-domain operations.

The webinar was attended virtually by Army Chief General MM Naravane, Vice Chief of Army Lieutenant General CP Mohanty, General Officer Commanding-in-Chief of the Army Training Command Lieutenant General Raj Shukla, along with other dignitaries from the Ministry of Defence, three Services, former Chiefs of the Army Staff and leading security Think Tanks in the country and members of the media.

53) Answer: D

The Government is organising the first ever India Toy Fair from 27th February to 2nd March.

Women and Child Development Minister Smriti Zubin Irani, Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank and Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal jointly inaugurated the website of The India Toy Fair-2021 in New Delhi.

Speaking on the occasion, Women and Child Development Minister Smriti Zubin Irani said, to achieve Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of AtmaNirbhar Bharat, to strengthen toy manufacturing industry in the country and to connect children with toys from a learning-perspective, Government had organized the 1st Toycathon last month.

54) Answer: B

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) made history as its first-ever interplanetary Hope Probe mission successfully entered orbit around Mars.

According to CNN, UAE's first mission to Mars arrived at the red planet and successfully entered orbit on its first attempt.

When the spacecraft arrived, the Hope Probe marked the UAE as only the fifth country in history to reach the red planet and the Arab nation's first interplanetary mission.

The Hope Mars Mission is considered as the biggest strategic and scientific national initiative announced by UAE's President His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan and His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum in 2014.

Prior to this, only the United States, Soviet Union, Europe and India have achieved this feat.

55) Answer: C

United States President Joe Biden has revoked the national emergency order used to fund former President Donald Trump's Mexico border wall project.

In a letter to Congress, Biden wrote that the order was unwarranted and said that no further tax dollars will be spent on the wall.

The announcement is the latest in a series of executive orders from President Biden that have rolled back key parts of the former president's agenda.

In 2019, President Trump had declared a state of emergency over the southern border, which had allowed him to bypass Congress and use military funds for its construction.

It is estimated that when Donald Trump left the Presidential office, about 25 billion dollars had been spent on the project.

56) Answer: D

Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh virtually inaugurated more than 57,000 water structures constructed in Madhya Pradesh under the 'JalaAbhishekam' campaign from New Delhi.

Union Minister Narendra Singh Tomar also attended the program virtually organised in the presence of Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chauhan at Bhopal.

Defence Minister MrRajnathsingh while inaugurating water structures virtually under 'JalaAbhishekam' campaign said that Water conservation work being done by the Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan with public participation will be helpful in achieving the goal of water conservation and building self-reliant Madhya Pradesh.

57) Answer: E

China is celebrating Lunar New Year as it ushered into the Year of the Ox.

It is one of the most important Chinese festivals, also known as the Chinese New Year or Spring Festival.

Though the occasion is meant to be spent with family and friends, the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic has made the celebrations little different.

China entered the year of Ox, people welcomed the spring, good luck and new beginnings by staying up late after feast on the New Year's Eve.

It's still very wintry, but the spring festival holiday marks the end of the coldest days.

58) Answer: C

To promote wooden toys, local artifacts, handicrafts Maharashtra Small Industries Development Corporation and Maharashtra State Khadi & Village Industries Board have signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Flipkart.

This MoU will enable artisans, weavers, craftsmen & MSMEs from Maharashtra to showcase their products to millions of customers in India.

Flipkart will provide free training for packaging and branding to all these manufacturers.

Also, product photography will also be done by the company.

59) Answer: D

Goa has become the 6th State in the country to successfully undertake Urban Local Bodies reforms stipulated by the Department of Expenditure.

Finance Ministry said, the state has now become eligible to mobilise additional financial resources of 223 crore rupees through Open Market Borrowings.

Goa has joined five other states – Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, Rajasthan and Telangana, who have completed Urban Local Bodies reforms.

60) Answer: B

In the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha inaugurated the state of the art General Bus Stand cum Shopping complex Cum Multi Level Parking constructed at the cost of Rs. 213 Crore in Jammu.

The LG urged the people of Jammu to take care of the assets in Jammu city and every single resident must shoulder responsibility of building safe & clean Jammu.

The LG also said that the multi-level parking cum shopping complex will help thousands of pilgrims who come for the journey of Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine and this will help address the problem of Jammu people and largely help them address the traffic congestion being faced by them.

The LG added that Jammu is the only place across the country where there is IIM, AIIMS and IIT.

61) Answer: C

The National Productivity Day is observed every year on February 12 by the National Productivity Council (NPC).

The main objective of the celebration is to encourage stakeholders in implementing productivity tools and techniques.

The National Productivity Council celebrates the National Productivity Week from 12 February to 18 February, 2020

62) Answer: D

Odisha government to construct 'COVID Warrior Memorial' at BijuPatnaik Park in Bhubaneswar in recognition of the sacrifice & services rendered by COVID19 warriors who have lost their lives fighting the pandemic.

More than 60 Covid warriors including health workers in Odisha have succumbed to coronavirus. 19.

The state government plans to inaugurate the memorial on August 15 2021.

Last year, Odisha chief minister Naveen Patnaik had announced that the martyr status would be accorded to all health personnel and other support services who succumbed to Covid19.

The state government also announced ₹50 lakh ex-gratia to all health personnel (private and public) and members of all other support services who died of Covid-19.

63) Answer: E

Prime Minister NarendraModi will lay the foundation stone of Maharaja Suheldev Memorial and development work of Chittaura Lake in Bahraich, Uttar Pradesh through video conferencing.

The event marks the birth anniversary of Maharaja

Suheldev.

UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath will also be present on the occasion.

The complete project will include installation of an equestrian statue of Maharaja Suheldev and development of various tourist amenities like cafeteria, guest house and a children's park

64) Answer: D

Minority Affairs Ministry is organising 26th HunarHaat of indigenous artisans and craftsmen from across the country at Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in New Delhi.

More than 600 artisans and craftsmen, including a large number of women artisans, from more than 31 States and Union Territories will participate in the event.

The HunarHaat will be organised with the theme of Vocal for Local from 20th February to 1st March this year.

Minority Affairs Minister Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi has said that the HunarHaat is a perfect platform to promote indigenous products of artisans and craftsmen from across the country.

He said, it has provided employment and employment opportunities to more than five lakh artisans, craftsmen and artists yet.

65) Answer: B

India will provide Nepalese Rupees(NR) 142 million to Nepal for the restoration and conservation of three cultural heritage sites in the Kathmandu Valley.

The three sites are part of cultural heritage projects being taken up by India for post-earthquake conservation and restoration under an MoU signed between the two countries.

The projects are being implemented under USD 50 million grant assistance committed by India for post-

earthquake reconstruction of the cultural heritage sites across eight districts of Nepal.

The agreements were signed by the Project Director of CLPIU (Building) of National Reconstruction Authority and Contractors for conservation and retrofitting of SetoMachindranath Temple (Total Cost – NRs 626 million), construction of Dharamshala at Budhaneelkantha (Total Cost NRs – 334 million) and conservation and development of Kumari Home in Lalitpur district (Total Cost NRs – 456 million), according to a press release issued by the Indian Embassy.

66) Answer: C

The 11th RashtriyaSanskritiMahotsav is being held between 14th to 28th February at Cooch Behar, Darjeeling and Murshidabad in West Bengal.

The inaugural programme is going to take place at Coochbehar.

Governor JagdeepDhankhar and Union Minister of State for Culture and Tourism Prahlad Singh Patel will be present in the inauguration.

All arrangements are in place for hosting the RashtriyaSanskritiMahotsav at Coochbehar Palace.

67) Answer: D

The Lok Sabha passed the Arbitration and Conciliation (Amendment) Bill, 2021 by voice vote.

The Bill was introduced in the Lok Sabha on February 4, 2021 by Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad.

It seeks to amend the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996 so as to (i) enable automatic stay on awards in certain cases and (ii) specify by regulations

68) Answer: E

The United States extended the nuclear arms control treaty known as the New START with Russia for the next

five years.

The United States took the first step toward making good on that pledge when it extended the New START (Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty) Treaty with the Russian Federation for five years

The new strategic arms reduction treaty, was formally signed on April 8, 2010 and after ratification, entered into force on 5 February 2011.

Blinken added that extending the New START Treaty ensures the US has verifiable limits on Russian ICBMs, SLBMs, and heavy bombers until February 5, 2026.

The agreement also included a five-year extension clause that allowed both nations to extend the pact with approval from both presidents.

69) Answer: C

Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla will pay a two-day visit to Moscow on 17th and 18th of February at the invitation of Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Igor Morgulov.

The Foreign Secretary will hold the next round of India-Russia Foreign Office Consultations with Deputy Foreign Minister Morgulov, during which the two sides will review the entire gamut of bilateral relations, including the forthcoming high-level exchanges.

During the visit, the Foreign Secretary will also meet Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Ryabkov for an exchange of views on topical issues of regional and international importance.

He will also deliver a speech on India-Russia relations at the prestigious Diplomatic Academy of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

70) Answer: B

The Annual Convention of Association of Domestic Tour Operators of India (ADTOI) concluded at Kevadia in

Gujarat.

The convention was jointly organized by the Ministry of Tourism and ADTOI with support from Gujarat Tourism.

It aimed at building public confidence to travel for the revival of domestic tourism in the country.

The conference was attended by around 400 delegates comprising ADTOI members from across India, hoteliers, airlines representatives, senior government officials, media-persons among other stakeholders of the tourism industry.

71) Answer: D

Taj Mahotsav has been celebrated successfully since 1992 in Agra in the month of February for ten days, from 18th February to 27th February in Shilpgram, Near Taj Mahal, Agra.

This festival invokes the memories of the old Mughal era and nawabi style prevalent in Uttar Pradesh in the 18th and 19th centuries.

Organized by: Department of Tourism, Government of India

2021 Theme: Together in the diverse culture

Celebrated to promote rich arts, crafts, culture, cuisine, dance and music of the state and country.

A procession taken out in the typical Mughal era style, food festival, performances by folk musicians and dancers, etc

72) Answer: C

The World Bank has released a comprehensive report titled 'Traffic Crash Injuries and Disabilities: The Burden on Indian Society' in association with the SaveLife Foundation.

About SaveLife Foundation :

It is an independent, non-profit, non-governmental

organization committed to improving road safety and emergency medical care across India.

On Feb 13, 2021 a report was released by Union transport minister, Nitin Gadkari.

As per report “India tops the world in road crash deaths and injuries. It has 1 percent of the world’s vehicles but accounts for 11 per cent of all road crash deaths, witnessing 53 road crashes every hour; killing 1 person every 4 minutes.

A recent study commissioned by the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) estimates the socio-economic costs of road crashes at Rs 1,47,114 crore in India, which is equivalent to 0.77 per cent of the country’s GDP.

70 percent of the fatalities are the age group of 18 to 45 years, impacting the country as a whole.

73) Answer: D

The Union Government has increased the budget of Department of Science and Technology and Ministry of Earth Sciences by 30 per cent as compared to the revised estimate of 2020-21.

An allocation of Rs 16,695 crore has been given for the two ministries which will add thrust to India’s remarkable, accelerated growth in the fields of Science and Technology.

Rs 50 thousand crore have been allocated for the National Research Foundation.

The Minister informed that the National Research Foundation (NRF) will be an independent society and it will build on existing national strengths in research and innovation. It will fill gaps in the current research and education ecosystem to augment India’s research and innovation achievements.

74) Answer: C

President Ram Nath Kovind inaugurated the Rashtrapati

Bhavan Krida Sthal in the President’s Estate which includes renovated Football Ground and Basketball Court.

On the occasion, an exhibition football match was played between the children of My Angels Academy, a trust working for the cause of underprivileged children.

These state-of-art sports facilities are developed with the aim to cater to the needs of the employees of Rashtrapati Bhavan and their families.

An inter-departmental football tournament with five teams namely – President’s Secretariat Heroes, Household Youngs, PBG Warriors, Army Guard Daredevils and Delhi Police Stalwarts starts to encourage the employees and their family members to take part in the sports activities

75) Answer: B

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will launch the Mahabahu-Brahmaputra initiative, lay the foundation stone of Dhubri-Phulbari Bridge and perform Bhoomi Poojan for construction of Majuli Bridge Assam through video conferencing.

Mr Modi said it is a landmark day for Assam’s development journey as the Mahabahu-Brahmaputra initiative will be launched.

Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari, Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways Mansukh Mandaviya, DoNER minister Dr. Jitendra Singh and Chief Minister of Assam SarbanandaSonowal, Chief Minister of Meghalaya Conrad K Sangma will be present on the occasion.

76) Answer: C

Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs has launched a Pilot Pey Jal Survekshan under Jal Jeevan Mission-Urban, JJM-U.

Secretary Housing and Urban Affairs Durga Shanker

Mishra informed that it will be conducted in cities to ascertain equitable distribution of water, reuse of wastewater and mapping of water bodies with respect to quantity and quality of water through a challenge process.

He said, as a first step, the Ministry has decided to launch the Survekshan in 10 cities- Agra, Badlapur, Bhubaneswar, Churu, Kochi, Madurai, Patiala, Rohtak, Surat and Tumkur.

77) Answer: D

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh launched e-Chhawani portal.

Launching the portal, Mr Singh said, residents of Cantonment areas can register their complaints regarding civic issues and resolve them while sitting at home.

The minister said, government is committed to refine the system and improve the Ease of Living for people.

Mr Singh said, e-Chhawani project aims to provide online municipal services to more than 20 lakh citizens across 62 Cantonment Boards through a multi-tenancy central platform.

Through this portal, online application for renewal of leases, online registration of births and deaths and online application for water and sewerage connection will be very simpler.

CDS General Bipin Rawat was also present at the event.

78) Answer: E

China last year overtook the United States as the EU's biggest trading partner, the EU statistics agency Eurostat

The European Union, was the third-largest trading partner for the bloc, behind China and the United States.

Eurostat said the trade volume with China reached 586 billion euros (\$711 billion) in 2020, compared to 555 billion euros (\$673 billion) for the US.

The agency said EU exports rose by 2.2 percent to 202.5 billion euros while at the same time, imports from the People's Republic of China increased by 5.6 percent to 383.5 billion euros.

79) Answer: D

Ethiopian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Demeke Mekonnen Hassen arrived in New Delhi on a four-day official visit to India.

Mr Hassen will inaugurate the new Chancery and Residence at Ethiopian Embassy in New Delhi along with External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar.

He is scheduled to meet Dr Jaishankar at Hyderabad House.

80) Answer: C

Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone of Maharaja Suheldev Memorial and Maharaja Suheldev Development project and dedicated it to the public Maharaja Suheldev State Medical College (Bahraich) in Uttar Pradesh via video conferencing.

The project includes the installation of a horse-riding statue of Maharaja Suheldev, separate tourist facilities such as a cafeteria, guest house, and children's park.

The Prime Minister will also address a webinar for consultation on the roadmap for effective implementation of Union Budget 2021-22 in the infrastructure sector.

81) Answer: C

Prime Minister Narendra Modi would launch the Mahabahu-Brahmaputra initiative and lay the foundation stones of one bridge and perform a ground-breaking ceremony (bhumipujan) of another in Assam

via video conferencing.

Aim : To improve connectivity in the eastern states, will be marked by the inauguration of the Ro-Pax vessel operations between Neamati-Majuli Island, North Guwahati-South Guwahati and Dhubri-Hatsingimari.

Foundation stone of Inland Water Transport Terminal at Jogighopa and various tourist jetties on Brahmaputra and launch of digital solutions for Ease-of-Doing-Business will also be a part of the initiative.

The PM will lay the foundation stone for a four lane bridge over the Brahmaputra between Dhubri (on North Bank) and Phulbari (on South Bank).

82) Answer: D

The importance of accurate data for policy making, Labour Minister Santosh Gangwar launched software applications for five pan-India surveys, including on migrant and domestic workers.

The minister also released instruction manuals with questionnaires for the five pan-India surveys being conducted by the Labour Bureau.

These five surveys being undertaken by the Labour Bureau are — All-India Survey on Migrant workers, All-India Survey on Domestic Workers, All-India Survey on Employment Generated by Professionals, All-India Survey on Employment Generated in Transport Sector, and All-India Quarterly Establishment based Employment Survey.

The objectives of the all-India survey on employment generated by professionals are essentially two-fold, firstly to estimate the total number of active professionals in the country and secondly to capture the employment generated by these professionals.

83) Answer: E

Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone for key oil and gas sector projects in Tamil Nadu

via video conferencing.

During his address, the Prime Minister said, Indian Oil's 143-km-long pipeline from Ramanathapuram to Thoothukudi will monetise the gas from ONG gas fields.

This is a part of a larger national gas pipeline project being developed at a cost of Rs.4,500 crore.

It will benefit Ennore, Thiruvallur, Bengaluru, Puducherry, Nagapattinam, Madurai and Thoothukudi.”

He will also lay the foundation stone of Cauvery Basin Refinery at Nagapattinam.

These projects will result in substantial socio-economic benefits and will boost the country's march towards UrjaAatmanirbharta.

84) Answer: B

India has joined Iran and Russia in a two-day navy exercise dubbed “Iran-Russia Maritime Security Belt 2021” in the northern part of the Indian Ocean.

About the drill :

The drill will cover an area of 17,000 square kilometres (6,500 square miles).

It will include shooting at sea and air targets and liberating hijacked ships, as well as search and rescue and anti-piracy operations, Al Jazeera reported.

85) Answer: D

The National Informatics Centre (NIC) of India has launched an instant messaging app just like WhatsApp for government employees called Sandes.

The government is currently asking employees to use the GIMS/Sandes app. There is still no word if this app will ever be available for all users in the future.

Just like WhatsApp, one can share images, videos, voice messages, create groups on the app. Users can also set

up their profile pictures and status.

Notably, this app is an upgrade to NIC's existing Government Instant Messaging System (GIMS) app.

While the Sandes app allows users to backup chat histories to a registered email, it does not allow users to change their mobile number or email address registered with the app

86) Answer: D

The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization and the Arbor Day Foundation have recognized Hyderabad as a 2020 Tree City of World, for its commitment to growing and maintaining urban forests.

Officials said the recognition was a testament to the city's sustained and institutional efforts to plant, nurture and celebrate trees, development of urban and peri-urban forestry actions, projects and strategic planning and commitment to building a healthy city.

Most of the other cities were from the United States, United Kingdom, Canada and Australia.

87) Answer: B

Pariksha Pe Charcha is an annual event where the Prime Minister responds to questions related to examination stress and related areas posed by students in his uniquely engaging style in a live programme.

Union Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank has announced that the fourth edition of Prime Minister's Interaction Programme with school students, teachers and parents – Pariksha Pe Charcha will be held next month.

Mr Nishank also said that the registration process for the forthcoming 'Pariksha Pe Charcha' programme has begun which will be open till 14th of March.

He informed me that this time the programme will be held virtually.

He said the participants of this programme will be selected through an online competition which will be organised on MyGov platform.

Mr Nishank also informed that the portal for online creative writing competition will remain open till 14th of March.

88) Answer: B

The French Parliament has approved an Anti-radicalism Bill in a bid to fight the Islamic radicalism.

The bill would strengthen oversight of mosques, schools and sports clubs to safeguard France from radical Islamists and ensure respect for French values, one of President Emmanuel Macron's landmark projects.

The vote in the lower house was the first critical hurdle for the legislation that has been long in the making after two weeks of intense debate. The bill passed 347 to 151 with 65 abstentions.

To adapt to the changes, the bill amends the French law of 1905 guaranteeing the separation of Church and State.

89) Answer: C

Foreign Ministers of Quad countries – India, Australia, Japan and US – discussed the necessity to promote freedom of navigation in the Indo-Pacific region.

External Affairs Minister Dr S. Jaishankar represented India at the Third Quad Ministerial Meeting.

The Foreign Ministers emphasized their commitment to upholding a rules-based international order, underpinned by respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty, rule of law, transparency, and freedom of navigation in the international seas and peaceful resolution of disputes.

It was noted that the Indo-Pacific concept had gathered growing international support, including in Europe.

90) Answer: D

The Bangladesh Supreme Court launched the Artificial Intelligence (AI) based translation software 'Amar Vasha' through a virtual event.

The software will translate orders and judgements of the Supreme Court from English to Bangla.

Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain, Law Minister AnisulHaq, Law Secretary Md. Golam Sarwar and High Commissioner of India to Bangladesh Vikram Doraiswami spoke during the virtual function.

The Software has been developed with 'EkStep' foundation of India.

It is based on their 'Anuvaad' translation software used in India to translate from English to Indian languages including Bangla.

Anuvaad was deployed by the Supreme Court of India as SUVAS (Supreme Court VidhikAnuvaad Software) from November 2019.

91) Answer: C

World Thinking Day is celebrated each year by the Girl Guides and Girl Scouts across the world on the 22nd February.

The aim of Thinking Day is to bring together young people from across the world; nearly 150 countries choose to take part in the celebrations to celebrate international fun and friendship, as well as to help raise money and focus on the year's global theme.

2021 Theme of World Thinking Day is: "Peacebuilding"

Importance Of The Day :

Thinking Day offers the Girl Guiding and Girl Scouting community the opportunity to think about others and focus on the wider issues impacting those within the

Guiding and Scouting movement.

History :

Thinking Day originated from a desire by the Girl Guides and Girl Scouts to dedicate a day to thinking about and appreciating the global spread of these movements.

The observance of Thinking Day has been celebrated every year since 1926, and began over 90 years ago.

92) Answer: D

India and its Southern neighbour Maldives signed five agreements that would boost infrastructure in the island nation.

The pacts that were signed during Foreign Minister S Jaishankar's visit.

India has offered a standalone Line of Credit of \$40 million for sports infrastructure in the Maldives.

Jaishankar, who arrived here on the first leg of his two-nation tour that will also take him to Mauritius, handed over 100,000 additional doses of COVID-19 vaccine to the Foreign Minister and Health Minister Kerafa Naseem.

Apart from this, five pacts were signed between India and Maldives to boost infrastructure in the island nation.

Amendatory Agreement to repurpose an older EXIM Bank of India Line of Credit of USD 25 million for Road Devt

Letter of Intent between EXIM Bank and local authorities for financing a housing project of 2000 units in Hulhumale.

MoU on grant funding USD 0.5 million for a fish processing plant in Kendhikulhudhoo in the northern Maldives.

MoU on capacity building and exchange of content and

expertise between Prasar Bharati and Public State Media, Maldives.

MoU on sustainable urban development between MoHUA and Ministry of national planning, housing and infrastructure, Maldives.

93) Answer: E

Culture and Tourism Minister Prahlad Singh Patel will inaugurate the three day Incredible India Mega Homestay Development and Training Workshop in Darjeeling.

The concept of Homestay is getting popular in Darjeeling and Kalimpong districts of Northern part of West Bengal.

The involvement of the local community is more than ever in this Homestay Tourism at one of the most favoured hill stations for domestic and inbound tourists.

The Tourism Ministry said, a total of 450 homestay owners will be trained in the workshop where IIAS School of Management will train them free of cost in different spheres of Hospitality.

The aim of this robust hospitality training workshop is to upgrade the hospitality skills of local community stakeholders by capacity building.

94) Answer: D

The first-ever National Toy Fair will be organized from 27th February to 2nd March through a virtual medium.

IIT Gandhinagar based Centre for Creative Learning (CCL) will showcase its unique 75 toy creations in the fair.

IIT Gandhinagar is the only IIT in the country which is running such a centre for creative learning.

The centre is inculcating scientific temperament among students and teachers by developing a range of

scientific and educational toys.

Founder of CCL, Manish Jain said education is supposed to ignite the brains of the children and for this to happen, it is important the children find education interesting

95) Answer: C

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit Assam and West Bengal.

In Assam, Mr Modi will dedicate important projects of the oil and gas sector to the nation at Silapathar in Dhemaji district.

The Prime Minister will dedicate to the nation the INDMAX Unit at Indian Oil's Bongaigaon Refinery, Oil India Limited's Secondary Tank Farm at Madhuban, Dibrugarh and a Gas Compressor Station at Hebeda Village, Makum, Tinsukia.

He will also inaugurate the Dhemaji Engineering College and lay the foundation stone for Sualkuchi Engineering College.

These projects will usher in an era of energy security and prosperity, and open bright avenues of opportunity for local youth.

They are in line with the Prime Minister's vision of Purvodaya to drive Eastern India's socio-economic growth.

96) Answer: B

World Day of Social Justice is observed on February 20 every year.

The main objective of celebrating World Day of Social Justice is to raise a voice against social injustice and to bring the various communities internationally together to eliminate poverty, gender, and physical discrimination, illiteracy, religious discrimination to make a socially integrated society.

The theme of World Day of Social Justice 2021: “A Call for Social Justice in the Digital Economy”.

History :

On 26 November 2007, the General Assembly declared that starting from the sixty-third session of the General Assembly, 20 February will be celebrated annually as the World Day of Social Justice.

The International Labour Organization unanimously adopted the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization on 10 June 2008. This is the third major statement of principles and policies adopted by the International Labour Conference since the ILO’s Constitution of 1919.

97) Answer: C

Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Prakash Javadekar, inaugurated the Atal Paryavaran Bhavan at Lakshadweep on Feb 19, 2021.

Prakash Javadekar is on a four day official visit to Lakshadweep from February 19 to 22, 2021.

The minister attended high level meetings with the Secretaries of various departments in UT’s administration.

The Minister is to attend programmes at Suheli, Kadmat and Bangaram islands and evaluate major innovative initiatives of the Forest and Environment Department of the Union Territory.

Suheli Par is an oval-shaped and 17 km long coral atoll in Lakshadweep, that is surrounded by a zone of rich marine fauna.

It is located in the South-West of Kavaratti and 76 km to the south of Agatti.

The Nine Degree channel in the Indian Ocean, is located between the Islands of Kalpeni and Suheli Par, and Maliku Atoll.

He will also evaluate the major innovative initiatives of the Union Territory’s Forest and Environment Department.

98) Answer: D

The World Pangolin Day is celebrated on the “Third Saturday of February” every year.

In 2021, the annual World Pangolin Day is being celebrated on 20 February 2020.

It marks the 10th edition of the event.

The day aims to raise awareness about these unique mammals and speed up conservation efforts.

Pangolin numbers are rapidly declining in Asia and Africa.

Across the world, there are eight species ranging from Vulnerable to Critically Endangered, so today is the day to start helping in raising awareness of these under-appreciated animals.

99) Answer: E

Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal laid the foundation of the first skill university of eastern India in Darrang district, aimed at imparting training to over 10,000 students in 12 disciplines.

The varsity would be built with a financial outlay of Rs.1,000 crore.

It is expected to be completed by 2026, and will have understandings with countries like Germany, Taiwan, South Korea, Israel, Japan, England.

Skill, Employment and Entrepreneurship Development Minister Chandra Mohan Patowary termed the day as historic, as the process has been initiated for setting up the third skill university in India.

100) Answer: B

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will address the 66th

annual convocation of IIT Kharagpur via video conferencing.

The institute is organizing its convocation in virtual mode, keeping in view the safety measures during the post pandemic situation.

Union Education Minister Ramesh PokhriyalNishank and Minister of State for Education Sanjay Dhotre will also attend the convocation.

As many as 75 students including nine Institute Gold medal winners and 66 Institute Silver medal winners have been invited to receive the awards in person.

More than 2,800 students will be awarded degrees in online mode.

The Institute will also confer DSc, IIT Kharagpur Life Fellow Award and distinguished Alumnus Award to 27 achievers for their contribution to academics and research, social service and public welfare.

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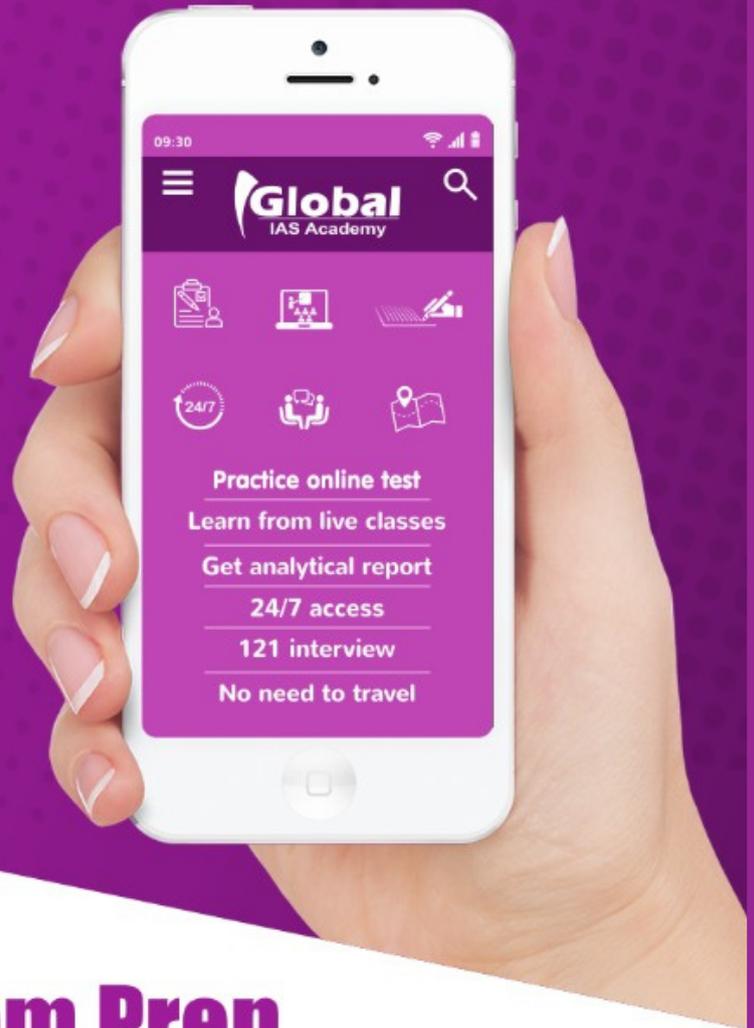
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