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# OUR ACHIEVER 2019-20



**Priyanka**  
HAS Rank-12 (BDO)



**Mayank Sharma**  
HAS Rank-2 (SDM)

I must honestly state that Jotka Sir's book on General Studies for HAS Mains helped me in completing the Himachal portion of General Studies quite exhaustively. Also, the inputs of the esteemed panel in the Mock Interview assisted in improving my performance in the actual interview. Cumulatively, these resources proved beneficial in helping me secure Rank 2 in the HAS exam.

*Mayank*  
MAYANK SHARMA  
Rank-2 HAS-2019



**Akshay Sharma**  
HAS Rank-9 (DEO)



**Vipin Kumar**  
District Manager

I admit with utmost honesty that Jotka Sir's books personal guidance and motivation have helped me a lot in clearing District Manager's exam. My engagement with academy as well as with Suresh Jotka Sir benefited me immensely to clear the exam.

*Vipin*  
VIPAN KUMAR  
District Manager  
(2021)



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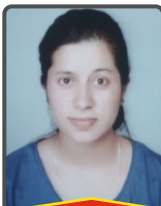
**Rajneesh Chauhan**  
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# JOKTA ACADEMY

## IAS/HAS

### Our Selection in Allied Services



**Priyanka**  
Ex Inspector

The crisp and concise content provided by JOKTA Academy faculty alongwith JOKTA's H.P. GK-book and compiled economic survey helped me a lot right before the exam. I would like to take this opportunity to thank JOKTA academy and JOKTA Sir in particular for helping me to crack the exam.

*Priyanka*  
PRIYANKA  
H.P. Subordinate  
Allied Services  
(ETI)-2019



**Poonam Verma**  
Election Kanungo  
(Deptt. of Election)

I am grateful to the whole team of JOKTA Academy for being good, in fact excellent in your teaching style and content. I have been part of Academy since first day of my preparation and the team have no stone unturned in building foundation of my preparation. The test series and constant guidance, motivation and support provided by JOKTA Sir is redefining the way of preparation.

Poonam Verma  
Election Kanungo  
(Deptt. of Election)



**Sunil Kumar**  
Ex Inspector

Every Success story is an outcome of so many factors, efforts of n no. of people and various institutions. And, I feel blessed to have JOKTA Academy for civil services as my mentor in this entire journey. Quality material, aspirant friendly environment and above all JOKTA Sir as guide are some of the prominent features of this Academy that helped me to clear H.P. Allied Services 2nd time in a row.



**Dharmender Kumar**  
Inspector Audit

I have followed JOKTA Academy materials for pre. + mains during my preparation, that help me a lot. I wish to thank JOKTA Sir from bottom of my heart for their content as well as optimism, brevity of response as well as ability to motivate students.

Deeply Grateful

*D.K.*  
Dharmender Kumar  
H.P.SAS-2019 Inspector Audit



**Shubham Bhardwaj**  
Inspector Audit

I would like to extend my gratitude towards JOKTA Sir for his valuable guidance and constant support throughout the journey. JOKTA academy's study materials, test series in particular has great role in my success. However, whatever, I get you had a big role played in it. So accept my humble gratitude and felicitation.

Shubham Bhardwaj  
Inspector Audit  
(H.P.SAS-2019)



**Aman Dhiman**  
Inspector Audit

The pedagogical efficacy and quality of relevant material provided by JOKTA academy has guided me throughout the journey as a HPAS aspirant. JOKTA Sir has motivated me in every step of the way which has made the process considerably less cumbersome and more optimistic. This makes me extremely grateful and proud to be a part of this institute.

Aman Dhiman  
HPAS-2019

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# Polity and Governance

## 1. The High Court and Supreme Court Judges Amendment Bill 2021

### Why in news?

Recently the Parliament had passed the “High Court and Supreme Court Judges (Salaries and Conditions of Service) Amendment Bill, 2021.

### Key provisions of the bill:

- The Bill seeks to amend the High Court Judges (Salaries and Conditions of Service) Act, 1954, and the Supreme Court Judges (Salaries and Conditions of Service) Act, 1958.
- These Acts regulate **the salaries and conditions of service of the judges of High Courts and the Supreme Court of India.**
- Both the Acts particularly provide that **every retired judge or his/ her family after his/ her death, shall be entitled to pension or family pension respectively.**
- The bill further proposes to **insert an explanation in sections 17B of the HC Judges Act and 16B of the Supreme Court Judges Act** to clarify the government’s objective.
- It addresses the anomalies in the disbursal of pension of retired Supreme Court and High Court judges.
- The amendments entitle them to an **additional quantum of pension** or family pension when they attain a certain age in accordance with a specified.

### Constitutional provisions related to the High Court & Supreme Court-

- **Articles 214-231** deals with the provisions of High Courts in India.
- It provides for separate high courts for separate states,
- As per **7th constitutional amendment** act the same high court can be the court for more than one state.
- The Chief Justice and Judges of the High Courts are to be appointed by the President under **clause (1) of Article 217** of the Constitution.
- **Article 124(1)** and Amendment act of 2008 states that there shall be a Supreme Court of India consisting of a Chief justice of India (CJI) and 34 judges including the CJI.
- Salaries of Judges of the Supreme Court are determined by **Parliament by law.**

## 2. Kala Sanskriti Vikas Yojna

### Why in news?

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

### About Kala Sanskriti Vikas Yojna (KSVY)-

- Kala Sanskriti Vikas Yojana (KSVM) is an **umbrella scheme under Ministry of Culture** for the promotion of art and culture in the country.

**It is an umbrella scheme consisting of a number of schemes such as:**

- Scheme of Financial Assistance for Promotion of Art and Culture.
- Scheme of Financial Assistance for Creation of Cultural Infrastructure.
- Scheme for Safeguarding the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

#### **Aim**

- To enable them avail benefits under the schemes even if they are not able to stage programs in the physical format as before.
- To ensure **continued financial assistance** to tide over the present COVID-19 crisis.

#### **Objective**

- **To promote and disseminate the art & culture of the country** by providing financial support to drama/theatre groups/dance groups/ music ensembles/ folk theatre & music and other genres of performing art activities.

**The sub-components for these schemes–**

#### **Scheme of Financial Assistance for Promotion of Art and Culture**

- **Repertory Grant scheme:** Its objective is to provide financial support for all genres of performing arts activities and imparting training of artists by their respective guru on regular basis in line with '**Guru Shishya Parampara**'.
- **Financial assistance to cultural organisations** with national presence
- **Cultural function and production grant (CFPG)** to provide financial support to NGOs/societies/trusts/universities.
- **Financial assistance** for the preservation and development of cultural heritage of the Himalayas through research, training and dissemination through audio visual programmes.
- **Financial assistance for the preservation and development of Buddhist/Tibetan organisations** including monasteries engaged in the propagation and scientific development of Buddhist/Tibetan cultural and tradition and research in related fields.

#### **Scheme of Financial Assistance for Creation of Cultural Infrastructure**

- **Financial assistance for building grants** including studio theatres by providing financial support to NGOs, trusts, societies, government sponsored bodies, universities, college, etc for creation of cultural infrastructure.
- **Financial assistance for allied cultural activities** by providing financial assistance to all eligible organisations for creation of assets for enhancing the audio-visual spectacle for allied cultural activities.
- **Financial assistance for Tagore cultural complexes (TCC)** by providing support for restoration, renovation, extension, alteration, upgradation, modernisation of existing cultural facilities (Rabindra Bhawans, Rangshalas, multipurpose cultural complexes), etc.

## Scheme for Safeguarding the Intangible Cultural Heritage

- The objective is to **reinvigorate and revitalize various institutions, groups, NGOs, etc**, so that they may engage in activities/projects for strengthening, protecting, preserving and promoting the rich intangible cultural heritage of India.

## 3. National Judicial Infrastructure Authority of India

### Why in news?

The Chief Justice of India recently proposed the establishment of the National Judicial Infrastructure Authority of India (NJIAI).

### About National Judicial Infrastructure Corporation (NJIC)

- The idea for such NJIC was first proposed by **CJI Ramana** in March this year, even before he took office.
- It mooted the idea of an **“umbrella national organization”** that would take care of the need for judicial infrastructure.
- Such a corporation would bring the uniformity and standardization required to revolutionize judicial infrastructure, said CJI.
- Soon after he was sworn in, the CJI commenced work on the NJIC and a survey of **6,000** trial courts in various states was undertaken as part of this exercise.

### CJI recommends the composition of NJIC

- The CJI has said that the Judiciary is least interested in retaining control of the council.
- The composition can be of the **Union Minister for Law and Justice, the Secretary, Finance, etc.**
- The States can also be represented.
- The benefit of having a **senior judge or Chief Justice** on it would be that they are in the know of things.

### Why need NJIC?

- **No central agency:** Presently, there is no agency to ensure use of funds allocated to augment judicial infrastructure
- **Infrastructure gap:** There is a substantial gap in infrastructure and availability of basic amenities in the lower judiciary.
- **Lack of basic amenities:** There is a lack of court halls, residential accommodation, and waiting room for litigants in trial courts, especially in smaller towns and rural areas.
- **Budgetary lapses:** Experience shows that budgetary allocation for state judiciary often lapses since there is no independent body to supervise and execute works.
- NJIC is expected to fill this vacuum and overcome problems related to infrastructure.

### Significance of NJIC

- The modernization of judicial infrastructure did not mean building more courts or filling up vacancies or **ploughing through vacancies**.
- An efficient “**judicial infrastructure**” means providing equal and free access to justice.
- This could be realized through a **barrier-free and citizen-friendly environment**.

## 4. Belagavi Border Dispute

### Why in news?

The decades-old boundary dispute between **Maharashtra and Karnataka** over Belgaum has flared up again. It is a longstanding issue between the two states, and has been pending before the Supreme Court for many years.

### A brief history of the Belagavi border dispute:

- **The dispute dates back to the period of Independence** and the reorganization of states on linguistic lines in 1956.
- **At the time of Independence**, the region of **Belagavi (the Belgaum)** was part of the **Bombay presidency**.
- The erstwhile Bombay Presidency, a multilingual province, included the present-day **Karnataka districts of Vijayapura, Belagavi, Dharwad and Uttara-Kannada**.
- **The region was, however, integrated with the state of Mysore (now Karnataka) during reorganisation of states on linguistic lines.**
- **The States Reorganisation Act of 1956**, which divided states on linguistic and administrative lines, made Belgaum and 10 talukas of Bombay State a part of the then Mysore State (which was renamed Karnataka in 1973)
- **While demarcating borders, the Reorganisation of States Commission sought** to include talukas with a Kannada-speaking population of more than 50 per cent in Mysore.
- The essential claim of the **Maharashtra Ekikaran Samiti(MES) and pro-Marathi groups** is that **Belagavi is a largely Marathi-speaking region** and it should be a part of Maharashtra instead of Karnataka which is a Kannada-speaking state.
- The MES and other groups claim that **nearly 45 percent of the district is Marathi speaking** while pro-Kannada groups argue that the Marathi population is only around 35 per cent which is on par with the Kannada-speaking population of the region.
- **The MES came into existence in 1948** with the sole aim of pushing for integration of Belgaum with Maharashtra during the reorganization of states.



- The Government of India constituted the **Mahajan Commission** under former Chief Justice **Mehr Chand Mahajan** on **25 October 1966**.
- The Commission, which **submitted its report in August 1967**, recommended that **264 villages be transferred to Maharashtra (which formed in 1960) and that Belgaum and 247 villages remain with Karnataka**.
- Maharashtra rejected the report, calling it biased and illogical, and demanded another review.
- **Karnataka welcomed the report**, and has ever since continued to press for implementation, although this has not been formally done by the Centre.
- **Maharashtra continues to claim over 814 villages along the border**, as well as Belgaum city, which are currently part of Karnataka.
- **In 2004, the Maharashtra government moved the Supreme Court for a settlement of the border dispute under Article 131(b) of the Constitution**, demanding 814 villages from Karnataka on the basis of the theory of village being the unit of calculation, contiguity and enumerating linguistic population in each village.

#### Article 131

Original jurisdiction of the Supreme Court Subject to the provisions of this Constitution, the Supreme Court shall, to the exclusion of any other court, have original jurisdiction in any dispute

- (a) Between the Government of India and one or more States; or
- (b) Between the Government of India and any State or States on one side and one or more other States on the other; or
- (c) Between two or more States, if and in so far as the dispute involves any question (whether of law or fact) on which the existence or extent of a legal right depends: Provided that the said jurisdiction shall not extend to a dispute arising out of any treaty, agreement, covenant, engagements, and or other similar instrument which, having been entered into or executed before the commencement of this Constitution, continues in operation after such commencement, or which provides that the said jurisdiction shall not extend to such a dispute

## 5. Dam Safety Bill, 2019

### Why in news?

The Dam Safety Bill, 2019, was recently cleared by Parliament for **the surveillance, inspection, operation, and maintenance of all the specified dams across the country**.

- **India ranks third globally** after China and the United States of America, with 5334 large dams in operation
- **67 dams were built** prior to the **20th century** and **1,039** dams during the **first 70 years of the 20th century**.

- **since 1979**, there were **42 instances of dam failure**, the latest being Annamayya reservoir in Kadapa district of Andhra Pradesh

#### Need of this bill

- Dam safety is an issue of concern in the country. And there are no legal and institutional safeguards in this regard
- In 1986, a panel of experts recommended to the Centre that a legislation be framed. **In 2007, Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal Assemblies passed resolutions empowering Parliament to come up with a law**
- **Inter-State basins cover 92% of the country's area** and most of the dams, making the Centre competent to enact such a law
- **Ageing of dams and potential of disaster**- 67 dams were built prior to the 20th century and 1,039 dams during the first 70 years of the 20th century
- Inter-state tussle over dams which require a standard framework to avoid friction like frequent issue between Kerala and Tamil Nadu over **Mullaperiyar**

#### Salient features of the bill:

- **The National Committee on Dam Safety** will be formed and chaired by the **Chairperson of the Central Water Commission**.
- **The Committee's functions will include formulating the policies and regulations for dam safety standards and the prevention of dam failures**, as well as analyzing causes of major dam failures and suggesting changes in dam safety practices.
- All dams in India with a height above **15 metres** come under the purview of the bill.

#### Significance of the bill

- **Preventing disasters** -dam safety unit will be required to inspect the dam before and after the monsoon session, and also during and after natural disasters such as earthquakes and floods.
- Bill will help all the States and Union Territories of India to adopt **uniform dam safety procedures**
- It lays onus of dam safety on the dam owner and provides for penal provisions for commission and omission of certain acts.
- **In the event of a dam failure**, the NCDS will analyse why the failure occurred, and suggest changes in dam safety practices

#### Concerns with this bill

- Primary objection to the bill is that is unconstitutional, as **water as subject falls in the State List**.
- The bill is too focused on **structural safety and not on operational safety**.
- There is **inadequate compensation** to the people affected by dams.
- Many states say it encroaches upon the autonomy of States to manage their dams, and violates the principles of federalism

- Tamil Nadu, which currently possesses four dams situated in Kerala, is opposed to the Bill as it would result in the four dams falling under the NDSA.

#### Other Steps taken by government for dam safety

- **Dam Rehabilitation and Improvement Project**-aims to improve safety and operational performance of dams, along with institutional strengthening with system wide management approach
- **Inter linking of Rivers Project**

#### Way forward

- **Consultations with states** which are likely to be most affected and taking them in confidence like Tamil Nadu
- **Allaying opposition fears** that this would lead to further erosion of autonomy of states and is a move towards more centralization
- Bodies created under the **law should be manned by experts rather than political persons and retired bureaucrats**

#### Types of dam in India

- **Earth dam:** Earthen dam utilizes natural materials with a minimum of processing. In India most of the dams are earthen dam.
- **Gravity dam:** A gravity dam is a dam constructed from concrete or stone masonry and designed to hold back water by primarily utilizing the weight of the material. Gravity dams provide some advantages over embankment dams.
- **Composite dam:** It is an earthen dam which is provided with a stone masonry or concrete overflow (spillway) section.

## 6. NDPS (Amendment) Bill, 2021

#### Why in news?

On December 13, 2021, Lok Sabha passed the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (Amendment) Bill, 2021.

#### Key highlights-

- The bill **amends the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985 and seeks to correct the drafting error in the 2014 amendment to this act.**
- It seeks to correct what the government termed a “**clerical error**”, which was rectified by an ordinance promulgated in September 2021 and the Bill is to effect that change into the Act.
- In 2014, a substantial amendment was made to the NDPS Act to allow for **better medical access to narcotic drugs.**

- In **Section 2 (viii)a**, the amendment defined “**essential drugs**” under **Section 9**, and it allowed the manufacture, possession, transport, import inter-State, export inter-State, sale, purchase, consumption and use of essential narcotic drugs.
- But before the 2014 amendment, a **Section 2(viiiia)** already existed and contained a catalogue of offences for which the punishment is prescribed in **Section 27A**.
- While defining “**essential drugs**” in 2014, the legislation re-numbered **Section 2**.
- However, **Section 2 (viiiia) sub-clauses i-v, which were supposed to be the catalogue of offences, does not exist after the 2014 amendment and is now Section 2(viiiib)**.
- However, the drafters missed amending the enabling provision in **Section 27A to change Section 2(viii)a to Section 2(viii)b**.
- This error in the text meant since 2014, **Section 27A was inoperable**.
- The error was noticed by a **district judge in West Agartala**.
- In June 2021, the Tripura High Court, while hearing a reference made by the district court, flagged the drafting error, urging the Centre to bring in an amendment and rectify it.

#### **Section 27A of the NDPS Act:**

- The provision reads that whoever indulges in financing, directly or indirectly, any of the activities specified in **sub-clauses (i) to (v) of clause (viiiia) of section 2** or harbours any person engaged in any of the aforementioned activities.
- He shall be punishable with rigorous imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than ten years but which may extend to **twenty years and shall also be liable to fine which shall not be less than one lakh rupees** but which may extend to two lakh rupees:
  - Provided that the court may, for reasons to be recorded in the judgment, impose a fine exceeding two lakh rupees.

#### **About NDPS Act, 1985:**

- It is the principal legislation through which the **state regulates the operations of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances**.
- The Act is widely regarded as a **prohibitionist law** which seeks to grapple with 2 kinds of offences: **trafficking of prohibited substances** i.e. cultivation, manufacture, distribution and sale, as well as their consumption.
- It provides for establishment of **specialized courts to deal with offences** set out in the Act.
- **The quantum of punishment under the NDPS Act is based on the quantity of drugs found** which may be classified into 3 categories: small, less than commercial and commercial.
- **Section 8 of the Act explicitly prohibits the cultivation** of opium, poppy, coca or cannabis plants.
- **It also prohibits the production, manufacture, distribution including warehousing, transport, purchasing and selling of prohibited drugs** and psychotropic substances.
- It also prohibits their financing as well as consumption and harboring offenders guilty under the Act.
- The act provides **procedural safeguards to prevent innocent civilians** from being

unnecessarily harassed.

- The 2014 amendment provides for the accreditation of treatment centres by relevant government authorities.
- Nodal agency is the **Department of Social Welfare (awareness)**.
- **The Narcotics Control Bureau** is tasked with the responsibility of overseeing the activities undertaken by various law enforcement agencies.
- **The Ministry of Finance** looks into **cases grappling with drug trafficking, money laundering and other offences which are closely linked with drug abuse**.

## 7. NIPER Amendment Bill, 2021

Why in news?

The **National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education and Research (NIPER)** Amendment Bill, 2021, was recently passed by Rajya Sabha.

Key features of the bill:

- It amends the **National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education and Research Act, 1998**.
- The 1998 Act established **the National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education and Research, Punjab** and declared it as an **Institution of National Importance**.
- The Bill seeks to give the coveted **'institute of national importance'** status to **pharmaceutical education and research institutes – NIPERs – situated in Ahmedabad, Hajipur, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Guwahati and Raebareli**.
- It also envisages establishment of a **Council, a central body, to coordinate the activities of all the institutes to ensure coordinated development of pharmaceutical education and research and maintenance of standards**.

Composition of the Council:

- **The Minister in charge of the Ministry or department of the central government having administrative control of pharmaceuticals (ex officio), as the Chairperson.**
- **The Minister of State of the Ministry or department of the central government having administrative control of the pharmaceuticals (ex officio), as the Vice-Chairperson.**
- **The Chairperson of each Board of Governors (ex officio).**
- **The Director of every institute (ex officio).**
- **The Chairperson of All India Council for Technical Education (ex officio).**
- **The Director General, Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (ex officio).**
- **Three Members of Parliament (Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha).**
- **It rationalises the Board of Governors of each NIPER from its existing strength of 23 to 12 members** and widens the scope and number of courses run by the institutes.
- The Board will be chaired by an **eminent academician or professional**.

## 8. First Democracy Summit

### Why in news?

The United States recently hosted the Summit for Democracy "**to renew democracy at home and to confront autocracies abroad**". The President of the United States also announced the formation of the Presidential Initiative for Democratic Renewal, which will provide foreign assistance initiatives.

### About the summit

It will be held around three themes:

- Defending against authoritarianism,
- Fighting corruption,
- Promoting respect for human rights.
- The summit will gather together **Heads of State, civil society, philanthropy, and the private sector.**
- The Summit is seen as **one way to counter growing Chinese influence.**
- There would be **country-wise commitments** made at the first summit.
- **A second summit which will be in-person, will follow in 2022.**
- Following a year of consultation, coordination, and action, President Biden will then invite world leaders to gather once more to showcase progress made against their commitments.

### India's Stance:

- Democracies should **work together to deal with social media and cryptocurrency** so that they are used to empower rather than undermine democracy.
- India is the **world's largest democracy**, with 2,500 years of democratic tradition, and it proposes to share its democratic experience through digital solutions.
- The ancient city-states under Licchavis and other people arose in India during the late Vedic and Buddhist periods and flourished until the early medieval period, referring to the **civilizational tradition of democracy in India.**
- Democracy has assumed **many forms around the world**, and it is necessary to address democratic practices and symptoms.
- **It is necessary to strengthen democratic practices and systems** on a continuing basis in order to improve inclusion, transparency, human dignity, responsive grievance redress, and power decentralization.

## 9. SMILE Scheme

### Why in news?

The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment is expected to launch a **SMILE Scheme** for the rehabilitation of persons engaged in begging and for providing support to transgender persons.

### About SMILE scheme:

- Two Central Sector Schemes namely **Comprehensive Rehabilitation of persons engaged in the Act of begging** and **Comprehensive Rehabilitation for Welfare of Transgender Persons** have been merged in a single scheme named SMILE.
- **Focus areas:** It is extensively on rehabilitation, provision of medical facilities, counselling, education, skill development, economic linkages etc with the support of State Governments/UTs/Local Urban Bodies, Voluntary Organizations, Community Based Organizations (CBOs) and institutions and others.

#### Features:

- The scheme provides for the **use of the existing shelter homes** available with the State/UT Governments and Urban local bodies for **rehabilitation of the persons engaged in the act of Begging**.
- In case of the non-availability of existing shelter homes, **new dedicated shelter homes** are to be set up by the implementing agencies.
- **Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment** has also initiated **pilot projects on Comprehensive Rehabilitation of Persons engaged in the act of Begging** in ten cities namely Delhi, Bangalore, Chennai, Hyderabad, Indore, Lucknow, Mumbai, Nagpur, Patna and Ahmadabad. These pilots are being implemented in these cities by State Governments/UTs/Local Urban Bodies and Voluntary Organizations.
- Several comprehensive measures including **survey and identification, mobilization, basic hygiene and medical facilities, providing basic documentation, etc** for persons engaged in begging are undertaken under these pilots.

## 10. Raising Legal Age of Marriage for Women

#### Why in news?

The proposal to raise the minimum age of marriage for women from **18 to 21** was cleared by the Union Cabinet based on the recommendations of a **task force** headed by **Jaya Jaitley**.

#### What does the law prescribe on minimum age of marriage?

- Personal laws of various religions that deal with marriage have their own standards, often reflecting custom.
- For Hindus, **the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 sets 18 years as the minimum age for the bride and 21 years as the minimum age for the groom**.
- **The Special Marriage Act, 1954** and the **Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006** also prescribe **18 and 21 years** as the minimum age of consent for marriage for women and men, respectively.
- In Islam, the marriage of a minor who has attained puberty is considered valid.

#### What is the need for increasing the minimum age of marriage for women?

- **Health-** An early age of marriage, and early pregnancies have impacts on nutritional levels of mothers and their children, and their overall health and mental wellbeing.
- It also has an impact on Infant Mortality Rate and Maternal Mortality Rate.

- **Women empowerment-** The move widens the scope for women to pursue higher education and careers.
- It also promotes financial independence among women.
- **Gender-neutrality-** This measure would also contribute to the gender-neutrality reforms undertaken by the government.
- **Further reduction of child marriage-** The NFHS-5 revealed that child marriage has come down marginally from 27% in 2015-16 to 23% in 2019-20 in the country and the government has been pushing to bring this down further.

#### About the Jaya Jaitly committee:

- In June 2020, the Ministry for Women and Child Development set up a task force headed by **Jaya Jaitly along with other members- NITI Aayog member (Health) Dr V K Paul and secretaries of several ministries.**
- The committee was to look at the **feasibility of increasing the age of marriage** and its implication on women and child health, as well as how to increase access to education for women.
- The committee has to recommend a **timeline by which the government could roll out the implementation of the policy**, as well as the amendments that would need to be made in existing laws.
- **The committee received the feedback from young adults from 16 universities** across the country.
- **Over 15 NGOs were also engaged to reach out to young adults** in far-flung areas and marginalised communities.

#### Recommendations

- Increase the age of marriage to 21 years
- Government has to look into **increasing access to schools and colleges for girls**, including their transportation
- Skill and business training to girls
- **Sex education in schools**
- **Awareness campaign** to be undertaken on a massive scale to encourage social acceptance of the new legislation

#### Criticism of the move

- **Illegal marriages:** Such legislation would push a large portion of the population into illegal marriages leading to non-institutional births.
- **Ineffectiveness of existing laws:** Decrease in child marriages has not been because of the existing law but because of an increase in girls' education and employment opportunities.
- **Unnecessary coercion:** The law would end up being coercive, and in particular negatively impact marginalized communities, such as the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes, making them law-breakers.

## 11. Election Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2021

### Why in news?

The Election Laws (Amendment) Bill 2021 has been passed in both houses of Parliament enabling the linking of electoral roll data with the Aadhaar ecosystem.

### Key provisions of the Election Laws (Amendment) Bill 2021:

#### Linking electoral roll data with Aadhaar:

- The 1950 Act provides that **a person may apply to the electoral registration officer for inclusion of their name in the electoral roll of a constituency**. After verification, if the officer is satisfied that the applicant is entitled to registration, he will direct the applicant's name to be included in the electoral roll.
- The Bill adds that the electoral registration officer may require a person to **furnish their Aadhaar number for establishing their identity**.
- If their name is already in the electoral roll, then the Aadhaar number may be required for authentication of entries in the roll.
- Persons will not be denied inclusion in the electoral roll or have their names deleted from the roll, if they are **unable to furnish Aadhaar number** due to sufficient cause as prescribed. Such persons may be permitted to furnish **alternate documents prescribed by the central government**.

#### Qualifying date for enrolment in electoral roll:

- Under the 1950 Act, the qualifying date for enrolment in the electoral roll is **January 1 of the year in which such roll is being prepared or revised**.
- This implies that a person who **turns 18** (i.e., eligible to vote) after January 1 can enrol in the electoral roll only when the roll is prepared/ revised the next year.
- The Bill amends this to provide four qualifying dates in a calendar year, which will be January 1, April 1, July 1, and October 1.

#### Requisitioning of premises for election purposes:

- The 1951 Act permits the state government to requisition premises needed or likely to be needed for being used as polling stations, or for storing ballot boxes after a poll has been conducted.
- **The Bill expands the purposes for which such premises can be requisitioned**. These include using the premises for **counting, storage of voting machines and poll-related material, and accommodation of security forces and polling personnel**.

#### Gender-neutral provisions:

- The 1950 Act permits certain persons who are ordinarily resident in a constituency to register in electoral rolls. Such persons include those holding **a service qualification, such as members of the armed forces or central government employees posted outside India**.

- **The wives of such persons are also deemed to be ordinarily residing** in the same constituency if they reside with them.
- The 1951 Act enables the wife of a person holding a service qualification to vote either in person or by postal ballot. The Bill replaces the term **'wife' with 'spouse'** in both the Acts.

#### Concerns:

- After the Supreme Court's decision in 2015, move to link the voter ID to Aadhaar was put on hold. **"The Aadhaar card Scheme is purely voluntary,"** it stated.
- Apart from that, **Aadhaar was only intended to be used as proof of residence. It does not constitute proof of citizenship.**
- The bill permits electoral registration officers to seek Aadhaar numbers from people who want to register as voters in order to verify their identification.
- Without Aadhaar, the government would be able to use voter identity information to disenfranchise some people and profile citizens.
- Experts have warned that **in the absence of a robust personal data protection law** (a Bill in this regard has yet to be approved by Parliament), **any move to allow data sharing could be problematic.**
- Election data is currently held in its own database by the Election Commission of India (ECI), which has its own verification process and is independent of other government databases.
- The proposed **Aadhaar-election database link will make data available to the ECI and India's Unique Identification Authority (UIDAI).**
- **Citizens' privacy may be violated as a result of this.**

## Economics

### 1. Perform, Achieve and Trade Scheme

#### Why in news?

A recent report by the New Delhi-based non-profit Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) revealed that Perform, Achieve, Trade (PAT) is not effective. The report attributed the **inefficiency of the scheme to non-transparency, loose targets and overlooked deadlines.**

#### What is PAT:

- PAT is a **regulatory instrument to reduce specific energy consumption in energy intensive industries**, with an associated market based mechanism to enhance the cost effectiveness through certification of excess energy saving which can be traded.
- The energy intensive industries including the **thermal power plants are the major players in this entire scheme of PAT.**

- It refers to the calculation of **Specific Energy Consumption (SEC)** in the baseline year and projected SEC in the target year covering different forms of net energy going into the boundary of the designated consumers' plant and the products leaving it over a particular cycle.

#### About Perform Achieve and Trade (PAT) scheme:

- PAT scheme is a flagship programme of **Bureau of Energy Efficiency under the National Mission for Enhanced Energy Efficiency (NMEEE)**.
- **NMEEE is one of the eight national missions under the National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC)** launched by the Government of India in the year **2008**.
- Under this scheme, reductions in specific energy saving targets are assigned to Designated Consumers (DCs) for a **three year cycle**.
- The target reduction for each DC is based on their current levels of energy efficiency, so that energy efficient DCs will have lower target of percentage reduction, as compared to less energy efficient DCs which will have higher targets.
- While calculating the specific energy consumption **"gate-to-gate" approach is adopted**, thereby including all energy consumption against the total production.
- A robust process of normalization is adopted to neutralize the impact on specific energy consumption due to factors beyond the control of participating DCs.
- Verification of the performance of DCs at the end of the cycle is carried out by a cadre of energy professional i.e. **Accredited Energy Auditors** who are empanelled with Bureau of Energy Efficiency.

#### PAT Cycles for Implementation of Scheme:

##### PAT Cycle-I (2012-13 to 2014-15)

- PAT Cycle-I was envisaged to reduce the SEC of 478 designated consumers (DCs) from eight energy intensive sectors viz. Aluminium, Cement, Chlor- Alkali, Fertilizer, Iron & Steel, Paper & Pulp, Thermal Power Plant and Textile.
- The overall energy saving targets for PAT Cycle –I was 6.686 Million Tonne of Oil Equivalent (MTOE) by the end of 2014-15.
- The achievement in PAT Cycle-I is 8.67 MTOE which is an over achievement of about 30 percent in comparison to the assigned targets.
- This energy saving translates in to avoiding about 31 million tonne of CO<sub>2</sub> emission.

#### Issuance and Trading of ESCerts:

- **Ministry of Power has already issued energy saving certificates (ESCerts)** in lieu of energy saving beyond their targets and entitlement to purchase of ESCerts for compliance to meet their shortfall towards their targets.
- The ESCerts could be **traded at two energy exchanges that is Indian Energy Exchange (IEX) and Power Exchange India Limited (PXIL)** or bought by other units under PAT who can use them to meet their compliance requirements.
- Units that are unable to meet the targets either through their own actions or through purchase of ESCerts are liable to financial penalty under the Energy Conservation Act.

- The trading infrastructure is currently under finalization and trading is expected to start in the month of April/May.

#### **PAT Cycle –II (2016-17 to 2018-19):**

- PAT scheme was expanded to new sectors and new DCs from the existing sectors. For PAT Cycle –II three new sectors viz. **Railways, Refineries and Electricity Distribution Companies (DISCOMs)** were included.
- PAT Cycle-II has been notified on **31st March, 2016** and aims to achieve an overall energy consumption reduction of 8.869 MTOE.
- Under PAT Cycle-II, energy reduction targets have been assigned and notified to 621 DCs (448 existing, 89 additional DCs from existing sectors and 84 DCs from new sectors viz. Railways, Electricity DISCOMs and Refineries) in 11 sectors (eight existing sectors and three new sectors).

#### **PAT Cycle –III (2017-18 to 2019-20)**

- PAT scheme is currently proposed to be implemented on rolling basis (i.e. annual inclusion of new DCs).
- In this context, the PAT Cycle III has been notified on **30th March, 2017 to be effective from 1st April, 2017 with inclusion of 116 new DCs.**
- These 116 DCs consume energy about 35 MTOE while they have been assigned energy saving target of 1.06 MTOE at the end of the cycle at 2019-20

#### **National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC)**

National Action Plan for Climate Change (NAPCC) is a Government of India's programme launched in 2008 to **mitigate and adapt to the adverse impact of climate change**. The plan aims at fulfilling India's developmental objectives with focus on reducing emission intensity of its economy.

#### **The 8 missions under NAPCC are as follows:**

1. National Solar Mission
2. National Mission for Enhanced Energy Efficiency
3. National Mission on Sustainable Habitat
4. National Water Mission
5. National Mission for Sustaining Himalayan Ecosystem
6. Green India Mission
7. National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture
8. National Mission on Strategic Knowledge for Climate Change

## **2. Wage Rate Index (WRI)**

### **Why in news?**

The Labour Bureau, under the Union ministry of labour and employment, has decided to make some changes in the Wage Rate Index.

- The new series of Wage Rate Index (WRI) with base year 2016=100 that will replace the old series with base 1963-65=100.

### About Wage Rate Index (WRI)

- WRI is compiled and maintained by the **Labour Bureau**, an attached office of the Ministry of Labour & Employment (MoL&E).
- It has been revised as per the recommendations of **International Labour Organization (ILO)**, **National Statistical Commission (NSC)** etc.
- The new series has increased the scope and coverage in terms of **number of industries, sample size, occupations under selected industries, weight age of industries** etc.
- The New **WRI Series would be compiled twice a year** on point-to-point half yearly basis, as on 1st January and 1st July of every year.
- **About 700 occupations** have been covered under **37 selected industries** in the new series.
- The All India WRI number for all the **37 industries stood at 119.7 in 2020** (half yearly 2) which shows an increment of 1.6 per cent over the index in 2020 (half yearly 1).
- At sector level, the highest WRI in 2020 (half yearly 2) was reported in Plantation Sector (126.5) followed by Manufacturing Sector (119.6) and Mining Sector (116.7).
- Among 37 Industries covered, **the highest WRI was recorded in Drugs & Medicines** (131.4), followed by Sugar (129.8), Motor Cycles (128.1), Jute Textiles (127.9) and Tea Plantation (127.7).
- On the other hand, the **lowest WRI was recorded in Rubber Plantation** (106.7), followed by Paper (110.7), Castings & Forgings (111.3), Woollen Textiles (111.9) and Synthetic Textiles (112.0).
- **Average Daily Absolute Wage Rates stood at Rs. 588.5 in 2020** (half yearly 2) as compared to Rs. 576.1 in 2020(half yearly 1), registering a growth rate of 1.6 per cent.
- Among three sectors covered during 2020 (half yearly 2), the highest Average Daily Absolute Wage Rate was recorded in the Mining Sector (Rs. 1604.3), followed by Manufacturing Sector (Rs. 475.0) and lowest (Rs. 212.3) in the Plantation Sector.
- **The weight of the Manufacturing sector has increased substantially over time** whereas the weight of the Plantation sector and Mining sector has declined.
- **Oil Mining Industry has been newly introduced in the basket in place of Mica Mines Industry**, to make the mining sector more representative of the three different kinds of Mining viz. Coal, Metal and Oil.

### Significance:

- The new base will be **more representative**, and it will be used to determine minimum wages, national floor wages, and other parameters.
- The government **updates the base year for major economic indicators on a regular basis** to reflect changes in the economy and workers' wage patterns.
- It gives employers helpful advice on how to choose **the best human resource strategy**.

### 3. Bank-NBFC Co-lending

#### Why in news?

The RBI's decision to permit **banks to co-lend with all registered NBFCs** (including HFCs) **based on a prior agreement has led to unusual tie-ups** like the one between the State Bank of India (SBI) and Adani Capital.

#### About Co-Lending Model:

- Co-lending or co-origination is a set-up where **banks and non-banks enter into an arrangement for the joint contribution of credit for priority sector lending.**
- Under this arrangement, both banks and NBFCs share the risk in a **ratio of 80:20** (80% of the loan with the bank and a minimum of 20% with the non-banks).
- **Examples-** Small Business Finance (SBFC), an NBFC lending to small businesses, was one of the first NBFCs to co-originate loans with ICICI Bank in 2019.
  - SBI has signed a deal with Adani Capital, an NBFC of a big corporate house, for co-lending to farmers to help them buy tractors and farm implements.
  - IIFL Home Finance tied up with Punjab National Bank.
  - Gold loan NBFC Indel Money tied up with IndusInd Bank to offer gold loan in a co-lending format.

#### Working mechanism of co-lending model:

- The RBI had come out with the **co-origination framework in 2018** allowing banks and NBFCs to co-originate loans.
- These guidelines were **later amended in 2020 and rechristened as co-lending models (CML)** by including **Housing Finance Companies** and some changes in the framework.
- **Aim of CLM-** To improve the flow of credit to the unserved and underserved segment of the economy at an affordable cost.
- As per RBI norms, a minimum 20% of the credit risk by way of direct exposure shall be on NBFC's books till maturity and the balance will be on the bank's books.
- Upon maturity, the repayment or recovery of interest is shared by the bank and NBFC in proportion to their share of credit and interest.
- **NBFCs act as the single point of interface for the customers** and a **tripartite agreement is done between the customers, banks and NBFCs.**

#### Opportunities in Co-Lending:

#### Matters of detail

- Share of loan  
  
NBFCs **20%**  
Banks **80%**
- Banks and NBFCs will have flexibility to price their part of the exposure
- Rate of interest charged to be blended – of banks and NBFCs
- Repayment, and recovery of interest to be shared between banks and NBFCs in proportion to their share of credit and interest
- NBFCs to give an undertaking to banks that their contribution towards the loan amount is not funded by the co-originating bank or any other group company of the partner bank

- Ensures delivery of **credit to the unserved and underserved**
- Help digital lending start-ups and mid-size NBFCs to join their strength of distribution with bank's funds
- Aid banks in **expanding the customer base as NBFCs have reach in tier-3 and tier-4 cities**

#### **Hurdles in co-lending:**

##### **The Banks hold the majority of responsibility:**

- Under the CLM, NBFCs are mandated to retain at least a 20% share of the individual loans on their books.
- This means that the banks will hold 80% of the risk, and will be the big hit in case of default.
- In effect, NBFC decides the borrower while the banks fund the majority of the chunk of the loan.

#### **Corporates in Banking:**

- While the **RBI has not formally allowed big businesses to enter the banking sector, NBFCs are primarily floated by corporate houses.**
- This is risky, especially when 4 big private financing companies — **IL&FS, DHFL, SREI, and Reliance Capita** — have collapsed in the last three years despite the RBI's strict monitoring.

#### **The limited reach of NBFCs:**

- Small NBFCs with hundred branch networks will fall short in serving the underserved and unserved areas, despite the RBI's reference to "the greater reach of the NBFCs".

#### **Way Forward**

- **In order to drive, review, and oversee the decision-making process, the bank's board of directors needs more power.** And to do so, the best talent must be recruited.
- There is also a need for a far **stronger risk-handling system.**
- Now is the time to **look at the foreign market and develop the appropriate business policies** (in terms of global location and product these banks can target) to help these banks become more efficient and competitive with their global counterparts.
- Continuous reforms should be implemented in the areas of,
  - Reduction in turnaround time.
  - Better back-end processes,
  - Investments in technologies,
  - Product innovation

#### **4. Proposal on Algo Trading: SEBI**

##### **Why in news?**

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has issued a discussion paper on regulating algorithmic trading.

##### **About Algo –Trading:**

- Algo trading refers to any order which is generated using automated execution logic.
- The algo trading system monitors the live stock prices, automatically and initiates an order when all the criteria are met.
- This system frees the trader from monitoring the live stock prices and initiate manual order placement.

#### **Working mechanism of Algo-Trading:**

- Traders can deploy their pre-programmed algorithms by connecting them to a broker's trading terminal, which is in turn is linked to a stock exchange server.
- The Algo trading system automatically monitors the live stock prices and initiates an order when the given criteria are met.
- This frees the trader from having to monitor live stock prices and initiate manual order placement.
- Mobile trading is also a form of algo trading, where orders are executed via apps.
- Order execution without human intervention is an advanced form of algo trading. Around 50% of the daily trading volume in Indian stock markets is through this form.

#### **Why is the SEBI trying to regulate Algo Trading?**

- SEBI and stock exchanges regulate and monitor broker terminals, but the algo programmes deployed by traders did not require any exchange approvals so far as there were no rules.
- But SEBI now believes that unregulated/unapproved algos pose a risk to the market as a number of cases have been reported of retail clients losing money based on false promises made by some vendors.
- The unapproved algos can be misused for systematic market manipulation as well to lure retail investors by guaranteeing them higher returns.
- As Algo programmers sell their strategies like assured return products, the potential loss in the case of a failed algo strategy is huge for retail investors.
- Algo trading became controversial in 2015, when it was revealed that NSE gave preferential access to a few algo traders.

#### **SEBI proposal:**

- SEBI wants every algo trading strategy and programme to be approved by the exchanges before they are deployed by traders.
- It has also said that there should be clarity on whether the services offered by third-party algo providers are in the nature of investment advisory services based on research and analysis done by them.
- It wants the exchanges to develop a system to ensure that only those algos which are approved and have a unique ID are deployed.
- Also, brokers will deploy suitable technological tools to ensure that appropriate checks are in place to prevent unauthorized altering or tweaking of algos.
- Currently, exchanges are providing approval for the algo submitted by the broker.

#### **Concerns:**

- Brokers say algo trading volumes could fall once the proposed SEBI norms are implemented, since approval of pre-programmed trading strategies by the exchanges could be a complex affair.
- Also, submitting algo programmes to exchanges for their approval, would mean that vendors may have to reveal their formula.

## 5. SEBI Bans Derivative Trade in Agriculture Commodities

### Why in News?

To reign in rising food inflation, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has **barred exchanges from launching new futures contracts in seven food items** for one year with immediate effect.

### Key Highlights:

- SEBI issued directions to stock exchanges in the commodity derivatives segment for immediately suspending trading in derivative contracts in key farm commodities, **namely paddy (non-basmati), wheat, chana, mustard seeds and its derivatives, soya bean and its derivatives, crude palm oil and moong for a year.**
- The derivative contracts in these commodities were already suspended, as per a SEBI statement on August 16 and October 8, respectively.
- No new contract will be introduced until further orders. In respect of running contracts, no new position will be allowed to be taken. Only squaring up of position has been allowed.

### Need for regulation:

- The step is taken to rein in **rising prices of essential commodities**, which are fuelling inflation.
  - India's retail inflation rate rose to a three-month high of 4.91 per cent in November from 4.48 per cent in the previous month, driven largely by the rise in food inflation to 1.87 per cent from 0.85 per cent
- **The persistence of high core inflation** (i.e., CPI inflation excluding food and fuel) since June 2020 has been an area of policy concern as input cost pressures could rapidly be transmitted to retail inflation as demand strengthens.
  - The RBI governor's assessment is that price pressures may persist in the immediate term.
  - The inflation prints are likely to be somewhat higher over the rest of the year as base effects turn adverse.
  - However, it is expected that headline inflation will peak in Q4 of 2021-22 and soften thereafter. RBI has projected CPI inflation at 5.3% for FY22.
- Moreover, the poultry industry has been demanding a curb on futures trading in soy seed, along with an extension of the import deadline for soymeal, as it was hurting its margins.
  - **Soymeal is a key constituent of poultry feed meal** and its rates are directly connected to soybean prices

### Impact:

- The imports in such commodities, **especially edible oils, would reduce in the short term as traders will not have a hedging platform.**
  - Hedging, which is speculative in nature, has been made difficult.
  - This will lead to release of blocked local produce supplies into the market, which should cool the prices.
  - Imports of commodities for speculative gains will be discouraged.
- It is believed that speculators have a role in jacking up prices and this needed to be discouraged to curb inflation and support growth as the economy is recovering from COVID-19 impact.
- **India is the world's biggest importer of vegetable oil** and this measure will make it difficult for edible oil importers and traders to transact business since they use Indian exchanges to hedge their risk.
- **Agri-futures, driven mainly by NCDEX,** have a checkered history with bans often pushing NCDEX back.
  - Such frequent bans are not a good development for the market as it affects confidence levels.
  - Often, a contract that is banned may not return to the table, which were very effective in price-discovery.
  - Even when the contracts are restored, traders hesitate because of the fear of bans.
  - As it involves losses for market participants with open positions as they must square off contracts before maturity.

### Other Steps taken:

- **Supply side interventions by the Government** had limited the fallout of continuing high international edible oil prices on domestic prices.
- The Union Government substantially **reduced taxes on imports of palm, soy and sunflower oil.**
- Union and State Governments had also **recently reduced excise duty and VAT on petrol and diesel, aimed at bringing down inflation**
  - It has both direct effects as well as indirect effects operating through fuel and transportation costs.

### Way Forward:

- The ban is expected to be **lifted by March when the next mustard crop starts hitting the market and prices cool down.**
  - If the weather remains benign in the coming weeks, India is on course to harvest a bumper 11 million tonnes of mustard in 2021-22, up from 8.5 million tonnes in 2020-21.
- **The way out is not to ban any contract,** but make sure to correct any serious aberration through a combination of higher margins so that if at all the price is getting distorted due to market manipulation, the correction takes place immediately.
- Further, **talking to potential wrongdoers is another way out,** provided trading patterns noticed by the exchange reveals such tendencies.

- Position limits can be changed to ensure undue influence is not exerted by any set of traders.

**Derivative contracts** are between two or more parties where the derivative value is based upon an underlying asset, in this case agri commodities.

- The prices of the derivatives are established by the price fluctuations of the underlying assets.
- Derivatives can be traded on an exchange or over the counter (OTC).

**Derivatives trading takes** place when traders speculate on the future price of an asset through buying or selling of derivative contracts to maximise profit, as compared to buying the underlying asset outright.

- Traders also use derivatives for hedging to minimise risk against an existing position.
- With derivatives, traders can go short and make profit from falling asset prices. They also use derivatives to hedge against any existing long positions. The ultimate objective is to profit.
- This is viewed as a deterrent to bring in price discipline in the market.

**Agri-Futures:** Like equity, currency or interest rate futures, they allow to buy or sell an underlying at a preset price on a future date. All agri contracts end in compulsory delivery.

- **Agri products** available for trade include Wheat, sugar, chana, soyabean, castor, chilli, jeera futures, etc. Edible oil seeds and oils, spices and items like guar are among the more liquid contracts.
- An objective of futures trading is gains reaching farmers, by establishing an efficient price-discovery platform.
- This has been achieved to a large extent on NCDEX, in products such as castor, chana, soy complex, mustard, guar, cumin, etc.

**National Commodity & Derivatives Exchange Limited (NCDEX)** is an Indian online commodity and derivative exchange. It is under the ownership of **Ministry of Finance**.

## 6. Vernacular Innovation Program: NITI Ayog

### Why in news?

Recently, **Atal Innovation Mission (AIM)**, NITI Aayog launched **Vernacular Innovation Program (VIP)** to Empower Innovators, Entrepreneurs in **22 Mother Tongues**.

### About Vernacular Innovation Program (VIP):

- Under the programme, AIM will be training a **vernacular task force (VTF)** in each of the 22 scheduled languages with each task force consisting of vernacular language teachers, technical writers, subject experts and the leadership of regional Atal Incubation Centers (AICs).
- To get the program rolling, **AIM NITI Aayog is launching a train-the-trainer program** where it will collaborate with the Design Department of IIT Delhi to coach the VTF in design thinking and entrepreneurship and the adaptation of these subjects in the 22 languages and cultures.
- Furthermore, **industry mentors have joined hands to lend design thinking expertise**, and CSR sponsors have agreed to generously support the program.

- Upon training the task force over the period of December 2021 to April 2022, the ecosystem will be opened to vernacular innovators.
- VIP is an initiative to **lower the language barrier in the field of innovation and entrepreneurship** such that it will systematically decouple creative expressions and languages of transaction.
- India may be the first nation in the world to launch such an initiative where an innovation ecosystem catering to **22 languages plus English is being built**.

## 7. Anti-Dumping Duty

### Why in news?

The government has decided not to impose Anti-Dumping Duty (ADD) on imports of **certain copper products**, from China, Thailand, Korea and three other countries.

### Anti-dumping duty

- An anti-dumping duty is a **protectionist tariff that a domestic government imposes on foreign imports** that it believes are priced below fair market value.
- Dumping is a process **wherein a company exports a product at a price that is significantly lower than the price it normally charges in its home** (or its domestic) market.

### Who imposes it?

- **Directorate General of Trade Remedies (DGTR)** recommend Finance ministry for imposing the Anti-dumping duty on certain goods.
- However, **the Ministry of Finance takes the final call to impose these duties** and issues notification for Anti-dumping duty.

### Objective of Imposing Anti-dumping:

- The purpose of anti-dumping duty is to rectify the trade distortive effect of dumping and re-establish fair trade.
- In the long-term, anti-dumping duties can reduce the international competition of domestic companies producing similar goods.

### Does WTO have any provision on Anti-dumping duty?

The WTO agreements uphold the **principles of equality for the smooth flow of trade in goods**, but they also allow exceptions — in some circumstances. Three of these issues are:

- Actions taken against dumping (selling at an unfairly low price)
- Subsidies and special **“countervailing” duties to offset the subsidies**
- Emergency measures to limit imports temporarily, designed to “safeguard” domestic industries.

- The legal definitions are more precise, but broadly speaking the **WTO agreement allows governments to act against dumping where there is genuine** (“material”) injury to the competing domestic industry. In order to do that the government has to be able to show that dumping is taking place, calculate the extent of dumping (how much lower the export price is compared to the exporter’s home market price), and show that the dumping is causing injury or threatening to do so.
- **GATT (Article 6) allows countries to take action against dumping.** They allow countries to act in a way that would normally break the GATT principles of binding a tariff and not discriminating between trading partners. Typically anti-dumping action means charging extra import duty on the particular product from the particular exporting country in order to bring its price closer to the “**normal value**” or to remove the injury to domestic industry in the importing country.
- **Anti-dumping measures must expire five years after the date of imposition,** unless an investigation shows that ending the measure would lead to injury.

#### **General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)**

- GATT was an international trade agreement came into effect on **January 1, 1948.**
- The purpose of GATT was to liberalise trade by reducing tariffs and reducing quotas among member countries.
- GATT was replaced by **WTO in 1995.**

## **8. State of India’s Livelihood (SOIL) Report 2021: FPOs**

### **Why in news?**

Recently, State of India’s Livelihood (SOIL) Report 2021 has been released.

### **About SOIL report:**

- It is an **annual Report released by the ACCESS Developmental Services.**
- It has analysed only **Farmer Producer Companies (FPC — FPOs registered under The Companies Act, 2013)** since they make up a large majority of the organisations started in recent years.
- It is an authoritative commentary on
  - Policy and programmes of the government, potential opportunities for the poor, and
  - Role of the private sector and the civil society in livelihoods promotion.
- It tracks the trends and analyses the environment in the sector

### **Key finding of the report:**

- In the last 7 years, just **1-5 % of FPOs have received funding under central government schemes** introduced to promote them.
- **Only 5% of total registered FPOs have been able to secure the grants under Equity Grant Scheme and Credit Guarantee Scheme.**
- **FPOs registered under Companies Act** make up a large majority of the organisations while the **FPOs registered as cooperatives /societies are less in number.**

### Farmer Producer Organizations:

- Farmer Producer Organizations (FPO) are based on the **collectivization of producers, particularly small and marginal farmers**, in order to build an effective alliance to handle many of agriculture's challenges, such as greater access to investment, technology, inputs, and markets.
- Farmers are members of FPOs, which are a type of **Producer Organization (PO)**.
- A PO is a legal entity composed of primary producers, such as farmers, milk producers, fishers, weavers, rural artisans, and craftsmen.
- **FPOs are voluntary organisations** that are controlled by their members, who take an active role in setting policy and making decisions.
- **They are open to anybody** who can use their services and is ready to undertake the responsibilities of membership, regardless of gender, racial, social, political, or religious discrimination.
- FPO operatives **provide education and training to their farmer-members, elected representatives, managers, and employees** so that they can effectively participate in the development of their FPOs.

## 9. Consumer Protection (Direct Selling) Rules, 2021

### Why in news?

Central Government has notified the Consumer Protection (Direct Selling) Rules, 2021.

### Key highlights:

- These Rules shall apply to **all goods and services bought or sold through direct selling**.
- **These Rules shall also apply to a direct selling entity which is not established in India**, but offers goods or services to consumers in India.
- **Existing direct selling entities need to comply of these rules within ninety days** from the date of publication of these rules in the Official Gazette.
- **The direct sellers** as well as the **direct selling entities** using **e-commerce platforms for sale shall comply with the requirements of the Consumer Protection (e-Commerce) Rules, 2020**.
- State Government must set up **a mechanism to monitor or supervise the activities of direct sellers and direct selling entities**.
- Direct selling entities will be liable for the grievances arising out of the sale of goods or services by its direct sellers.

# India and World

## 1. Russia-Ukraine Conflict

### Why in news?

Thousands of Russian troops have been deployed to stations along Ukraine's border, sparking fears among Western leaders and Ukraine itself that Moscow is planning an invasion.

### Roots of the Russia-Ukraine Conflict

- Ukraine was a part of the Russian empire for centuries before becoming a Soviet republic.
- It won independence as the USSR broke up in 1991
- Since then, it has moved to shed its Russian imperial legacy and is in increasingly close ties with the West.
- After the Crimean annexation, both nations have signed ceasefire agreements at Minsk in 2014 and 2015.

### Beginning of the conflict:

- In 2014, then Russian-leaning Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich rejected an association agreement with the European Union in favor of closer ties with Moscow.
- This sparked mass protests that led to his ouster in 2014.
- Russia responded by annexing Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula and throwing its weight behind a separatist insurgency that broke out in Ukraine's east.

### Beginning of armed conflict

- More than 14,000 people have died in the fighting that devastated Ukraine's eastern industrial heartland known as Donbas.
- Ukraine and the West accused Russia of sending its troops and weapons to back the rebels.
- Moscow denied that, charging that Russians who joined the separatists were volunteers.
- Earlier this year, a spike in cease-fire violations in the east and a Russian troop concentration near Ukraine fueled war fears.

### Why is Russia resented over Ukraine?

- **Cultural ties defying the conflict:** The Russian president has repeatedly described Russians and Ukrainians as "one people" and claims that Ukraine has unfairly received historic Russian lands during Soviet times.
- **Influence of the 'West':** The Kremlin has accused Ukraine of failing to honor the 2015 peace deal and criticized the West for failing to encourage Ukrainian compliance.
- **Asylum to rebels:** The agreement was a diplomatic coup for Moscow, requiring Ukraine to grant broad autonomy to the rebel regions and offer a sweeping amnesty to the rebels.
- **Affinity with the US and NATO:** Ukraine's aspirations to join NATO represent a red line for Moscow.

### American concern over Russian build-up

- **Buffer state with Russia:** Ukraine is a crucial buffer between Russia and the West.
- **Heavy troop deployment:** Russia hasn't provided any details about its troop numbers and locations, saying that their deployment on its own territory shouldn't concern anyone.
- **Invasion:** Russia is planning to deploy an estimated 175,000 troops and almost half of them are already stationed along various points near Ukraine's border in preparation for a possible invasion.
- **Protection of its ally:** Ukraine has been a close ally of the US. Hence, NATO has placed its military infrastructure closer to Russia.

### Recent developments

- As it moves a large number of troops towards the border, Russia seeks assurances from the US that Ukraine will not be inducted into NATO.
- However, US President Joe Biden has made it clear that he is not prepared to give any such assurance.
- This has left the countries in a stand-off, with tens of thousands of Russian troops ready to invade Ukraine at short notice, and the West not budging on Russia's demands.
- Experts believe that Russia is keeping the tensions high at the Ukraine border in order to get sanctions relief and other concessions from the West.

#### Minsk Agreements:

- **Minsk I:** Ukraine and the Russian-backed separatists agreed a 12-point ceasefire deal in the capital of Belarus in September 2014.
- Its provisions included prisoner exchanges, deliveries of humanitarian aid and the withdrawal of heavy weapons.
- The agreement quickly broke down, with violations by both sides.
- **Minsk II:** In 2015, an open conflict was averted after the 'Minsk II' peace agreement was signed, under the mediation of France and Germany.
- It was designed to end the fighting in the rebel regions and hand over the border to Ukraine's national troops.

## 2. World Inequality Report 2022

### Why in news?

India stands out as a '**poor and very unequal country**', with an affluent elite as one-fifth of the national income is held by the top 1% of the population while only 13% is held by the bottom half of the population, according to World Inequality Report 2022.

### About the report:

- It presents the most up-to-date and complete data on the various facets of inequality worldwide as of 2021: **global wealth, income, gender and ecological inequality**.
- The World Inequality Database **aims to provide open and convenient access to the most extensive available database on the historical evolution of the world distribution of income and wealth**, both within countries and between countries.

- WID was initially created as the **World Top Incomes Database (WTID)** in **January 2011** with the aim of providing convenient and free access to all the existing series.
- In December 2015, the WTID was subsumed into the WID, **The World Wealth and Income Database**.
- **MENA (Middle East and North Africa) is the most unequal region in the world; Europe has the lowest inequality levels.**
- MENA consists of Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen.
- **Nations have become richer, but governments have become poor**, when we take a look at the gap between the net wealth of governments and net wealth of the private and public sectors.
- Wealth inequalities have increased at the very top of the distribution.
- **The rise in private wealth has also been unequal** within countries and at the world level.
- **Global multimillionaires have captured a disproportionate share of global wealth growth over the past several decades: the top 1% took 38% of all additional wealth accumulated since the mid-1990s, whereas the bottom 50% captured just 2% of it.**
- **Gender inequalities remain considerable at the global level**, and progress within countries is too slow
- Data shows that these inequalities are not just a **rich vs. poor country** issue, but rather a **high emitters vs low emitters** issue within all countries.

#### India's performance:

- It says that India is **among the most unequal countries** in the world, with **rising poverty and an 'affluent elite.'**
- It highlights that the **top 10% and top 1% in India hold 57% and 22% of the total national income** respectively while the **bottom 50% share has gone down to 13%.**
- The average national income of the Indian **adult population is Rs 2,04,200.**
- Here, the **bottom 50% earns Rs 53,610** while the **top 10% earns Rs 11,66,520**, over 20 times more.
- The report says that emerging economies like **India and China experienced faster increases in private wealth** than wealthy countries after they transitioned away from regulated economies.
- In India, particularly, **private wealth went up from 290% in 1980 to 560% in 2020.**
- The report shows that the **income inequality in India under the British colonial rule (1858-1947) was very high**, with a top 10% income share around 50%.
- After independence, due to socialist-inspired five-year plans, this share was reduced to 35-40%.
- **The average household wealth in India is around Rs 9,83,010.**
- In 2021, the wealthiest 10% of the population owned 65% of total household wealth in India.
- The share of female labour income share in India is equal to 18% which is significantly lower than the average in Asia (21%, excluding China) & is among the lowest in the world.

### 3. India-Russia Summit

#### Why in news?

Recently, **21st India – Russia Annual summit** took place. The Joint Statement titled **‘India-Russia: Partnership for Peace, Progress and Prosperity’** noted, **“The completion of 5 decades of the 1971 Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation and 2 decades of Declaration on Strategic Partnership”** is proof for long-standing and time-tested India-Russia relations.

#### Key Highlights:

- The long awaited **‘A-203 assault rifles deal’** was inked at the end of bilateral talks between Defence Ministers paving the way for the production of over six lakh rifles in Amethi.
- While the meeting saw the signing of **28 agreements** across sectors from defence to energy to space exploration, science and technology, heavy engineering, to trade and investment; but could not conclude the much anticipated **‘Reciprocal Exchange of Logistical Support’ (RELOS)**.
- Among other deals, the two sides signed the **‘Agreement on Program of the Military-Technical Cooperation from 2021-2031’**.
- On the issue of **AUKUS and the Indo-Pacific**, the Russian minister debunked these new formats calling them **“non-inclusive” and violative of international norms**.
- India confirmed that issues such as **Chinese incursions in Ladakh and the situation in Ukraine did come up during the conversations between India and Russia**.
- The leadership also discussed the **evolving situation in Afghanistan**, especially the security situation and its implications in the region, the current political situation, issues related to terrorism, radicalisation and drug trafficking etc.
- Russian side has invited the Indian side to Moscow for the next round of 2+2 dialogue to be held in 2022.

#### Areas of cooperation in India-Russia Relations

- **On defence:** Russia is the key and principal supplier of arms and armaments to the Indian armed forces, accounting for over 60% of weapons. It comprises the whole gamut covering the Indian Army, Indian Air Force and Indian Navy. India recently inducted the S-400 Triumf missile systems. BrahMos missile, Sukhoi Su-30 fighter aircraft, T-90 tanks, and the Talwar and the Krivak class stealth frigates are some prominent ones.
- **Bilateral trade:** The two countries trade in diverse sectors from defence and energy to IT, pharmaceuticals, agro-industries, mineral and metallurgy, fertilizers, and infrastructure projects. India-Russia trade was valued at the **U.S.\$10.11** billion in 2019–20, but that is not a true reflection of the potential.
- **Civil nuclear energy relations:** India and Russia jointly developed Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant (KKNPP). Both signed agreements on the construction of 12 nuclear power plants in India during the coming decades.
- **Space relations:** 2015 marked the 40th Anniversary of the launch of India’s first satellite “Aryabhata” on a Russian launch vehicle ‘Soyuz.’ Russia also signed an agreement to train Indian astronauts for India’s first manned space mission(Gaganyaan Project).

## IMPORTANCE OF RUSSIA FOR INDIA

### Balancing China:

- Russia organised a trilateral meeting among the foreign ministers of Russia, India and China following deadly clashes in Galwan valley.
- This shows that Russia can contribute in defusing tensions with China whose relations with India have come to an inflection point.

### Emerging New Sectors of Economic Engagement:

- Mining, agro-industrial, and high technology, including robotics, nanotech, and biotech.
- India's footprint in the Russian Far East and in the Arctic is set to expand.
- Connectivity projects may get a boost too.

### Combating Terrorism:

- India and Russia are working on Afghanistan.
- Similarly, both are calling for early formalisation of Comprehensive Convention on International terrorism.

### Support at Multilateral Forums:

- Russia has been a long standing supporter of India's membership of the Nuclear Suppliers Group and Permanent Membership in an expanded UNSC.
- Important supplier of defence materials and equipment of all kinds.

### Challenges in India-Russia relationships:

- **India Going West:** China's expansionist foreign policy forced India to shed past hesitations and actively pursue closer ties with the West, particularly the US.
- **Russia Going East:** Russia revved up its own "Pivot to the East". The most distinct results of which are markedly improved relations with China, and better ties with Turkey, Iran, and Pakistan.
- **Defence:** India has been recently diversifying its defence relations with US, Israel etc. Russia's share of Indian defense imports fell from 79 percent between 2008-2012 to 62 percent between 2013-2017.
- **Trade has been one-dimensional i.e. defence based.** The trade in 2017-18 was \$10.7 billion, which is far below potential in comparison to India's trade with China (\$89.7 billion), the United States (\$74.5 billion).
- **Towards Taliban:** Russia is showing inclination towards Taliban in Afghanistan while India continues to have concerns about the group.

### Way forward:

- It is in the vital interest of both countries to ensure that the **area which relates to the security and defence, civil nuclear energy and space among, is insulated from mutual differences in outlook on some geo-political issues** and the pressures of other powers.

- It would also be mutually beneficial for both countries to **explore other areas of cooperation such as connectivity through land and sea as well as trade.**
- There is a need of a **free trade agreement to augment trade.**
- India should pursue and facilitate **Russia's engagement in the Indo-Pacific.**
- India must promote a **mutually beneficial trilateral cooperation between Russia, China, and India.**
- There is a need for a more **"extensive Eurasian partnership involving the EAEU and China, India, Pakistan, and Iran".**
- India can help Russia by providing the much-needed **workforce in sectors like agriculture and construction** without engaging in permanent settlement.
- Both countries must take advantage of policies like **'Make in India'.**

#### 4. RATS-SCO

##### Why in news?

The National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS), Government of India in association with Data Security Council of India (DSCI), as a Knowledge Partner, organized a **two-day Practical Seminar on "Securing Cyberspace in the Contemporary Threat Environment"** for delegates from Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Member States.

- **India assumed the Chairmanship of Council of Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure of SCO (RATS SCO)** from October 28, 2021 for a period of one year.

##### Key highlights of the Seminar:

- The Seminar is the first event to be hosted by India during its Chairmanship.
- This Seminar addressed the key areas like **Policies and Strategies, Cyber Terrorism, Ransomware, and Digital Forensics among others.**
- The representatives from **Executive Committee (EC) of RATS SCO and all SCO member countries attended this Seminar.**
- The program focused on the **changing nature of online crime and criminal behaviour** in order to understand the threats, trends, issues, responses and ethical questions associated with, mainly terrorists using technology.
- This Indian initiative is an effort to **enhance the collaboration among RATS SCO Member States to counter the misuse of internet by Terrorists, Separatists and Extremists.**

##### Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS)

- **Headquarters** - Tashkent, Uzbekistan
- RATS is a **permanent organ of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO).**
- It's objective is to help members states **fight combat, extremism, terrorism and separatism.**
- The Head of RATS is elected for a three-year term.
- All the member's states also have their own representatives at RATS.

- The RATS was formed in the **June 2004** summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) which was held in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.
- RATS is engaged in **furthering cooperation and ties between member countries** on concerns of terrorism, security, drug trafficking, crime and cyberwarfare.

#### Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)

- The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) is a **Eurasian economic, political and security organisation** originally formed by the leaders of the six countries of **China, Russia, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan**.
- **India became a full member in 2017.**
- SCO was formed on **15th June 2001**.
- It emerged from the **Shanghai Five which was established earlier in 1996**.
- Pakistan joined along with India in June 2017 as a full member.
- **The SCO is the biggest regional organisation** as per the **population and the geography covered**.
- **Objective** - to promote cooperation among the member countries on issues of security, intelligence sharing, border disputes resolution, military cooperation, counter-terrorism and countering the influence of the USA on Asia.

## 5. Trincomalee Oil Tank Farm Deal: India- Srilanka

#### Why in news?

After a year of negotiations, **Sri Lanka will ink the deal with India to jointly develop the Trincomalee oil tank farms** — a coveted project that has remained controversial for decades.

#### About Trincomalee Oil Tank Farms

- The facility, **built by the British around World War II as a refueling station**, has 99 storage tanks that look like giant wells.
- It is located in **'China Bay'** in close proximity to the internationally coveted deep water natural harbour of Trincomalee.
- They have **a capacity of 12,000 kilolitres each**.
- Eighty-four of those are in the 800-acre Upper Tank Farm (UTF). For a good part of a century now, these tanks have remained unused, shrouded in a forest.
- The Lower Tank Farm (LTF) has 16 tanks, spread across 50 acres.
- In 2003, **Indian Oil Corporation set up its Sri Lankan subsidiary called Lanka IOC, to work on this oil farm**.
- Currently, Lanka **IOC runs 15 tanks**. The new agreement is being negotiated for the remaining tanks.

#### Historical background

- Trincomalee harbor is the **second deepest natural harbor in the world**.

- The British who were in control of the island decided to make this as their **primary logistics station in the east after World War I.**
- It is also a lesser-known but **important logistic station during World War II.**
- British started the **oil storage project in 1924 and completed in late 1930s.**
- After that it was abandoned by the British in 1948 when Sri Lanka gained independence.
- In 2002, the development of this tank farm was revived by an Indian company **Indian Oil Corporation (IOC).**

#### India's interest in Trincomalee

- The development of the Trincomalee Oil Tank farm has been a **recurring talking point in Indo-Lanka relations since 1987.**
- It was **first mentioned** in the **Indo- Lanka Accord signed by PM Rajiv Gandhi and President Jayewardene.**
- Despite that, nothing really took off until 2003, when Indian Oil Corporation set up Lanka IOC, its Sri Lankan subsidiary.
- The agreement remained dormant for years, until the **Sirisena- Wickremesinghe administration tried revisiting it through the 2017 MoU.**

#### Significance of Trincomalee

- **Demography:** Trincomalee is home to 3.7 lakh Muslim, Tamil and Sinhala people and Trincomalee, in Sri Lanka's post-war years.
- **Tourism:** It has emerged as a favorite destination for surfers from around the world, gradually transforming with plush resorts and restaurants dotting its coast.
- **Important sea route:** Trincomalee remains in spotlight as a potential transit point for international trade routes, particularly drawing India which has known strategic interests there.
- **Balancing China:** From India's geostrategic viewpoint, Trincomalee is an important counterbalance to the southern Hambantota Port backed substantially by China..

## 6. Worldwide Cost of the Living report

#### Why in news?

The Worldwide Cost of the Living report was recently released that highlights **Tel Aviv (Israel's capital)** as the **most expensive city** in the world to live in. **The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU)** compiled the report. It **compares different cities' cost of living indices.**

#### Key highlights:

- The 2021 edition of the report explores the cost of living in **173 cities**, measured against **impactful global events.**
- On average, prices for goods and services have risen by **3.5% year-on-year**, the highest inflation rate seen in the last five years.

- Tel Aviv tops the rankings, making it the most expensive city in the world to live in.
- Paris and Singapore came joint second, followed by Zurich and Hong Kong. New York came in sixth, and Geneva took seventh place.
- **Tel Aviv has climbed in the rankings due to the strength of the Israeli shekel against the dollar**, and increases in transport and grocery prices.
- **Covid-19's impact:** Supply chain bottlenecks and the changing consumer demand have increased the cost of living in many of the biggest cities. Meanwhile, inflation is the fastest it has been in the past five years.
- In India, **Ahmedabad was ranked among the survey's top ten cheapest cities.**
- **Damascus (Syria's capital) is the cheapest city.** It is followed in the ranking of the cheapest cities by Tripoli (Libya), Tashkent (Uzbekistan), Tunis (Tunisia), and Almaty (Kazakhstan).
- As the index is benchmarked against prices in New York City, the cities with **currencies that are stronger against the US dollar would appear higher in the rankings.**

## 7. Barbados: World's Newest Republic

### Why in news?

- Recently Barbados has deposed Queen Elizabeth II as the country's head of state, making it the world's newest republic nearly 400 years after becoming a British colony.
- By breaking away from Britain 55 years after gaining independence, the Caribbean island nation was able to cleanse itself of the remains of colonial authority.
- Barbados, on the other hand, will remain one of the 54 Commonwealth countries.

### About Barbados:

- It is a small island country in the Caribbean Sea's south-eastern corner.
- Saint Lucia to the north, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to the west, and Trinidad and Tobago to the south are its neighbours.
- Bridgetown is the capital.
- Barbados obtained independence from the United Kingdom on November 30, 1966.
- Leadership:
  - Barbados' current President is Dame Sandra Prunella Mason.
  - Barbados' current Prime Minister is Mia Amor Mottley.
- Barbados is a member of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), which was founded in 1973.

### Barbados' history:

- Barbados became an **English colony for the first time in 1625**. It was a link in the lines of trade, commerce, and tyranny that English mercantilism and colonialism cultivated for centuries, and it was a part of the British Empire for over 400 years.
- Slavery, indentured labour, and a lack of democracy – **the Caribbean witnessed some of history's most institutionalised and invisibilised evils.**

### Relations between India and Barbados:

- **Shared Platforms:** India and Barbados have friendly relations and participate actively in the United Nations (UN), Commonwealth, Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), and other international organisations.
- Barbados is also a **member of the International Solar Alliance**, which it ratified in January 2021. Air Services Agreement: In 2015, India and Barbados signed an Air Services Agreement to make travel arrangements easier for citizens and to allow for direct air connectivity and chartered flight operations between the two countries.
- **In 2015, Bridgetown,** Barbados hosted the first **ever Foreign Office Consultations (FOC) between India and Barbados.**
- **UNSC Reform:** In 2007, Barbados voted in favour of a G-4 resolution to increase the UN Security Council.
- In 2011–12, the country voted in favour of **India's candidacy for a non-permanent seat on the UN Security Council**, and it continues to back India's bid for a permanent seat.

### Bilateral Trade:

- Vehicles, pharmaceuticals, textiles, iron and steel, organic chemicals, and other Indian exports total **USD 12.76 million in 2019-20.**
- Electrical machinery, optical photography, and cinematographic equipment are among the items **imported by India (USD 1.48 million in 2019-20).**
- **Sports and Culture:** Cricket has a strong link in India, and Barbadian cricketers from the past and present are well-known among Indian sports fans.
- Many Barbadian cricketers play for teams in the Indian Premier League.
- About 2500 persons of Indian ancestry have settled in Barbados, and the majority of them have now gained local nationality.

# Environment

## 1. Kyhytysuka Sachicarum: New Marine Reptile

### Why in news?

An international team of researchers has discovered a new marine reptile. The specimen, a metre-long skull, has been named *Kyhytysuka sachicarum*.

### About *Kyhytysuka sachicarum*:

- *Kyhytysuka* means '**the one that cuts with something sharp**' in an indigenous language from the region in central Colombia.
- It has been named so to honour the **ancient Muisca culture** that existed there for millennia.
- *Kyhytysuka* was a mid-sized ophthalmosaurus with heterodont dentition and several adaptations suggesting that it was a **macropredatory vertebrate hunter living in shallow waters**.
- The animal shows the evolution of a **unique arsenal of teeth to devour its prey** against other ichthyosaurs that had small, equally sized teeth for feeding on small prey.
- The researchers compared it with other Jurassic and Cretaceous ichthyosaurs and defined a new type of ichthyosaur.
- The first definitive ichthyosaur remains in Colombia were discovered in the 1970s in the **Paja Formation of Villa de Leyva**.
- Whereas other ichthyosaurs had small, equally sized teeth for feeding on small prey, this new species modified its tooth sizes and spacing to build an arsenal of teeth for dispatching large prey, like big fishes and other marine reptiles.
- The species comes from an important transitional time during the **Early Cretaceous period** when the Earth was coming out of a relatively cool period, had rising sea levels, and the supercontinent Pangea was splitting into northern and southern landmasses.



## 2. Observer Status to International Solar Alliance: UN

### Why in news?

Recently the **United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)** has conferred Observer Status to the International Solar Alliance (ISA).

### Expected benefits of granting observer Status to ISA

- Observer status is a **privilege granted by some organizations to non-members** to give them the ability to participate in the organization's activities.
- It is often granted by **intergovernmental organizations (IGO) to non-member parties and international nongovernmental organizations (INGO)** that have an interest in the IGO's activities.
- Observers generally have a **limited ability to participate in the IGO, lacking the ability to vote or propose resolutions.**

#### About International Solar Alliance (ISA)

- The ISA was conceived as a joint effort by **India and France** to mobilise efforts against climate change through the deployment of solar energy solutions.
- It was presented by the leaders of the two countries at the **21st Conference of Parties (COP21) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)** held in Paris in 2015.
- **Headquarters: Gurugram (India)**
- **The Assembly is the apex decision-making body of the ISA.** It meets annually at the Ministerial level at the seat of the ISA.
- **Membership:** A total of 80 countries have signed and ratified the ISA Framework Agreement and 101 countries have only signed the agreement

#### Features

- ISA provides a **dedicated platform for cooperation among Governments, multilateral organisations, industry, and other stakeholders** to help achieve a common goal.
- It assists member countries in finding **suitable bilateral or multilateral funding.**
- **ISA does not explicitly provide funds or technology** and it **helps create conditions that make funding, developing and deploying solar applications on a large scale possible**

#### Objectives

- To achieve the **common goal of increasing the use and quality of solar energy** in meeting the **energy needs of prospective ISA member countries in a safe, convenient, affordable, equitable and sustainable manner.**
- To mobilize investments of more than **USD 1000 billion by 2030.**
- **Reduce the cost of finance to increase investments in solar energy in member countries** by promoting innovative financial mechanisms and mobilizing finance from Institutions;
- Facilitate **collaborative research and development (R&D)** activities in solar energy technologies among member countries.
- **Promote a common cyber platform** for networking, cooperation and exchange of ideas among member countries.

### 3. India Young Water Professional Programme- 1st edition

#### Why in news?

The first edition of the **India Young Water Professional Program** was inaugurated by the Ministry of **Jal Shakti**. The goal of this programme is to train future water leaders.

#### About the programme:

- The National Hydrology Project has taken on this project. **Australia India Water Centre will implement it** (a consortium of Australian and Indian universities).
- It is centred on a **model of engaged training and learning**. The Program will use the **70-20-10 framework to achieve its goals**, which asserts that learning requires three types of experience:
  - 70 percent of the time (learn and develop on the job)
  - 20 percent exposure (learn and develop through others)
  - Education accounts for 10% of the total (learn and develop through formal training)
- It also emphasises gender equality and diversity, because sustainable water management can only benefit from all members of society's perspectives and abilities.
- **It is outcome-oriented**, and by the end of the programme, participants will have learned specific tools and techniques.
- A second edition of YWP will be planned in the second half of 2022, based on the success of the first.

#### The program's objectives

- To provide water professionals with the **required skills, information, behaviours, and networks** so that they may better contribute to India's water resource development and management.
- To fulfil the water sector's competency needs and priorities in India. The **Australia-India Water Centre will carry out the program's implementation** (a consortium of Australian and Indian universities).

#### Main characteristics of the program:

- For starters, **the Program is unlike any other capacity-building or training programme. The Engaged Training and Learning Model is the focus.**
- Through Situation Understanding and Improvement Projects, around **70% of the curriculum is devoted to project-based learning (SUIP).**
- Second, the **Program emphasises gender equality and diversity** since sustainable water management requires all parts of society to contribute their perspectives and abilities.

#### What purpose does this programme serve?

- The programme is a **huge step forward in the water connection between Australia and India**. It will also assist in the preparation of future water leaders.

## 4. Project RE-HAB

#### Why in news?

Project RE-HAB was initiated by the **Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC)** in **Village Mornoi** in **Assam's Goalpara district**, which is plagued by **elephant-human conflicts**.

#### About RE-HAB PROJECT:

- **"Bee-fences"** are established under Project RE-HAB by placing bee boxes in elephant corridors to prevent them from entering human territory.
- When elephants try to pass through, a tug or pull prompts the bees to swarm the elephant herds and prevent them from going any further.
- Elephants are irritated by honey bees, according to scientific evidence.
- Project RE-HAB is a sub-mission of **KVIC's National Honey Mission**.
- The Honey Mission is a programme to increase the bee population, honey production and beekeepers' income by setting up apiaries.

#### Achievement:

- RE-HAB was a **huge success in Karnataka**, so it's now being implemented in Assam with more efficiency and technological know-how.
- This project has reduced elephant attacks by more than 70% in just six months.

#### Benefits:

- It will use honeybees to block elephant attacks in human habitations, minimising the number of people and elephants killed.
- It will also aid in the **preservation of biodiversity and the maintenance of natural balance**.
- **It is incredibly cost-effective** when compared to other methods such as digging trenches or installing fences, and it does not damage the animals.

## 5. Wildlife Conservation in India

#### Why in news?

According to recently released report of the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau and State Forest and Police Authorities, **about 2054 incidences of wild animal killing or illicit trafficking** were documented in India between 2018 and 2020.

#### About:

- WCCB has worked with state enforcement agencies to carry out a variety of **species-specific enforcement activities**.
- The Wildlife Crime Control Board (WCCB) is a **statutory multi-disciplinary organisation** set up by the Indian government under the **Ministry of Environment and Forests** to tackle **organised wildlife crime in the country**.
- Its headquarters are in **New Delhi**.
- Enforcement operations targeted at **specific species**

- From the 15th of December 2016 to the 30th of January 2017, the **WCCB launched Operation “Save Kurma.”**

#### **Conservation steps taken up by WCCB:**

##### **Save Kurma:**

- From the 15th of December 2016 to the 30th of January 2017, the WCCB launched Operation “Save Kurma.”
- Its mission is to combat live turtle and tortoise poaching, transportation, and illegal commerce.

##### **Operation Turtshield:**

- Another operation, “Operation Turtshield-I” ran from December 1, 2019 to January 31, 2020, and “Operation Turtshield-II” ran from December 1, 2020 to February 28, 2021.
- It was created to combat the illegal traffic in live turtles.

##### **Operation Lesknow:**

- WCCB conducted Operation “Lesknow” (1 August 2017 to 31 August 2017), “Lesknow-II” (1 September 2018 to 30 September 2018), and “Lesknow-III” (1 October 2018 to 30 November 2018). (1st September, 2019 to 30th September 2019)
- Its goal was to draw law enforcement organisations’ attention to the illegal wildlife trafficking in lesser-known species.

##### **Operation Clean Art:**

- WCCB launched it in October of this year.
- Its purpose was to draw law enforcement’s attention to the illegal wildlife trade in Mongoose hair brushes.

##### **Operation Softgold:**

- It was operational from October 1, 2018 to March 31, 2019.
- Its goal was to raise awareness among weavers and traders involved in the illegal trade of Shahtoosh Shawls (made from Chiru wool).

##### **Operation Birbil:**

- Its goal was to stop the unlawful traffic in wild cats and birds.
- During the operation, 23 cases were discovered, nine of which involved the seizure of various bird species.

##### **Operation Wildnet:**

- Its goal was to raise the attention of law enforcement officials across the country to the ever-increasing illegal wildlife trafficking on the internet and through social media platforms.

##### **Operation Freely:**

- Its focus was on illegal trade of live birds and “

#### Operation Wetmark:

- Its focus was to ensure prohibition of sale of meat of wild animals in wet markets across the country.

#### The Consequences of Illegal Wildlife Trade

- Species are on the verge of extinction as a result of illegal wildlife trade demands.
- Overexploitation of wildlife resources as a result of illegal trading causes ecosystem imbalances.
- The unlawful trade threatens wild plants that supply genetic diversity for agriculture.
- Illegal wildlife trade, as part of illegal trade syndicates, destabilises the country's economy, resulting in societal insecurity.

#### Way Forward:

- **Public awareness and education** are critical in instilling a compassionate society in order to protect animals and find long-term solutions to these problems.
- To have a beneficial influence, all of these **issues must be discussed jointly on a worldwide basis.**
- There is a pressing need to address **expanding urbanisation, rising temperatures, and ecotourism**, all of which are severely impacting and fuelling animals.
- Urban species have evolved differently than their non-urban counterparts as a result of rapid urbanisation.

## 6. Climate Change & Infectious Diseases

#### Why in news?

- According to a recent study published in the journal ‘**Science of the Total Environment**,’ climate change factors were responsible for **9-18 percent of all infectious illness cases.**
- Climate change caused by human activities may **jeopardise public health** achievements made in recent years, **particularly in countries like India**, which is high on the list of climate-vulnerable nations.

#### Key highlights of the report:

- **Children's Vulnerability:** It is anticipated that children will suffer the majority of the disease burden caused by climate change around the world, with the poorest being disproportionately affected.
- The increased risk associated with children is attributable to a **mix of physiological susceptibility and exposure risk.**

- Climate variables such as **temperature, humidity, rainfall, sun radiation, and wind speed** were found to be significantly linked to infectious diseases such as **gastrointestinal, respiratory, vector-borne, and skin disorders**.
- **Impact:** Child anthropometry (the study of the measures and proportions of the human body) and socioeconomic conditions altered the climate-disease link, with a large number of children suffering from stunting, wasting, and underweight conditions.

#### Climate Change and Infectious Diseases: An Example

- **Malaria is a major public health issue**, and it appears that it will be the vector-borne disease most affected by long-term climate change.
- In malaria-endemic locations, the incidence of malaria fluctuates **according to the season**. In India, for example, the link between malaria and extreme climatic occurrences has long been researched.
- Malaria epidemics were common in the **Punjab region**, which was watered by rivers, in the early twentieth century.
- Excessive monsoon rainfall and excessive humidity were discovered early on to be a crucial factor in mosquito breeding and survival.
- According to recent studies, the chance of a **malaria epidemic increases fivefold in the year following an El Nio occurrence**.

#### Significance of this research

- The study's findings will **aid in drawing the attention of government and policymakers** to the importance of **prioritizing good child health measures**, since the current association may raise disease burden in the future under climate-change scenarios.

#### Way forward:

- Climate change is predicted to have a significant impact on infectious disease transmission patterns. As a result, more information about the **underlying complicated causal relationships** is needed, and this knowledge may be used to **anticipate future consequences** using more detailed, better validated, and integrated models.
- Because the current connection may raise illness burden in the future under **climate-change scenarios in an already malnourished paediatric population through numerous pathways**, **governments and policymakers must prioritise effective child health policies**.

## 7. Biological Diversity (Amendment) Bill, 2021

#### Why in news?

- Recently, the Biological Diversity (Amendment) Bill, 2021, was introduced in Parliament.
- The reforms aim to **decriminalise certain rules and encourage more foreign investment in the biological resource chain**, including research, patenting, and commercialization, without jeopardising national security.

- Opposition parties, on the other hand, have raised concerns about the bill, which has been assigned to a select committee. They urged that the bill be forwarded to a standing committee of Parliament.

#### Key highlights of the bill:

- Once passed by Parliament, the Bill will amend the **Biological Diversity Act of 2002**.
- The Act aims to **fulfil India's obligations under the Nagoya Protocol and the Convention on Biological Diversity**.
- The bill **aims to relieve pressure on wild medicinal plants by supporting medical plant cultivation**.
- The bill proposes **exempting AYUSH practitioners** from notifying biodiversity boards in order to gain access to biological resources or knowledge.
- The bill also makes research more efficient, simplifies the patent application procedure, and decriminalises some offences.
- Without jeopardising the national interest, **the bill encourages more foreign investment in biological resources, research, patenting, and commercialization**.
- The law focuses on who has access to biological resources and information, as well as how that access is monitored.
- **The role of state biodiversity boards has also been clarified and strengthened** by the bill.
- **Offences are being decriminalized:** Violations of the law relating to access to biological resources and benefit-sharing with communities, which are currently recognised as criminal offences and are not subject to bail, are proposed to be reclassified as civil offences.

#### Concerns Voiced by Experts

##### Trade trumps conservation:

- It prioritises intellectual property and commercial trade over the act's main goal of biological resource conservation.

##### Threat of Bio-piracy:

- Exemptions for AYUSH Practitioners from the requirement to get approvals could lead to "bio piracy."
- The practise of exploiting naturally occurring genetic or biochemical material in trade is known as biopiracy.
- **Biodiversity Management Committees (BMCs)** are being marginalised: State biodiversity boards will be able to represent BMCs in determining benefit sharing arrangements under the proposed modifications.
- National and state biodiversity boards are mandated by the Biodiversity Act of 2002 to consult biodiversity management committees (formed by every local body) before making any decisions on the use of biological resources.

##### Exempting Cultivated Medicinal Plants from the Act:

- The measure also exempts cultivated medicinal plants from the Act's scope. It is, however, nearly impossible to tell which plants are cultivated and which are wild.

- Under the Act's **access and benefit-sharing provisions**, this clause could allow huge corporations to avoid the need for prior approval or to share the benefit with local communities.

**Way forward:**

**Effective Forest Rights Act (FRA) Implementation:**

- The government must work to establish **confidence between its agencies in the area and the people** who rely on the forests by treating them as equal citizens with the rest of the country.
- The FRA's flaws have already been identified; all that's left is to fix them.
- **Integration of International Treaties:** The Nagoya Protocol cannot be implemented in isolation and must be coordinated with other international agreements.
- As a result, while integrating the Nagoya Protocol with the **International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA)**, legislative, administrative, and policy actions that cross each other's paths must be considered.

**People's Biodiversity Register (PBR):**

- The PBR should **attempt to capture people's perspectives** of how biodiversity resources should be managed, as well as their understanding of their status, usage, and history. It should also chronicle ongoing changes and forces driving changes in biodiversity resources.
- PBRs can be beneficial in preserving **farmers' or communities' rights to traditional knowledge about a particular variety.**

## 8. Indian Desert Cat

**In news:**

- For the first time, an Indian desert cat has been spotted in **Madhya Pradesh's Panna Tiger Reserve (PTR).**
- A desert cat has also been spotted in the **state's Nauradehi refuge.**

**About Indian Desert Cat:**

- **The Asiatic Wildcat, or Asian Steppe Wildcat,** is another name for the Indian Desert Cat.
- **Felis lybica** is the scientific name for this species.
- Its **fur is more yellow or reddish in colour, with characteristic little black or reddish-brown patches and stripes,** and it is smaller than the European wildcat.
- The species' toes have cushion-like hair that helps them adjust to the changing desert temperatures.
- **This cat can survive without water and can be**



found in deserts.

- It can be found all across the world, from the Caucasus and Turkey to western India, Kazakhstan, western China, and southern Mongolia.

#### Status of Conservation:

- The wildcat (including *Felis silvestris* and *Felis lybica*) is considered as **Least Concern in the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species**.

## Science and Technology

### 1. Agni-P Missile

#### Why in news?

- Recently the Agni-P, a next generation nuclear-capable ballistic missile, was successfully tested off the **coast of Odisha on Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam's island**.
- This is the **missile's second test**. The first test was conducted in June of last year.

#### About Agni-P missile:

- The Agni-P is a **two-stage solid-propellant missile** with a **dual redundant navigation and guidance system**.
- It can travel up to **2000 kilometres**.
- It's a **surface-to-surface ballistic missile** with a **canister**.
- **Canisterization reduces launch time** while also improving storage and mobility.
- It is a new generation enhanced form of the Agni class of missiles with increased features like as **manoeuvrability and accuracy**.
- Comprised entirely of **composite materials**.
- Improving **India's credible deterrence capabilities, including enhanced manoeuvrability and accuracy over previous Agni missiles**.

### 2. Hydrogen-enriched compressed natural gas (HCNG):

#### Why in news?

The use of "hydrogen-enriched compressed natural gas (HCNG)" is becoming more popular. This comes as India prepares to launch its **National Hydrogen Energy Mission**, which might force the **fertiliser, steel, and petrochemicals industries to switch to green hydrogen**.

#### About HCNG:

- When **hydrogen is combined with compressed natural gas**, the result is HCNG.
- It can be used in place of **gasoline, diesel fuel, and propane (C3H8) / LPG**, and it emits fewer harmful gases during combustion.

#### HCNG has the following benefits:

- CO emissions are reduced by up to 70% with HCNG.
- Fuel savings of up to 5% are possible.
- The first step in the direction of a future hydrogen economy.
- It is possible to adjust engines to release less NO.
- To run on HCNG, engines only require minor modifications.
- High-load applications and heavy-duty vehicles benefit from this gasoline.
- H2 has a higher Octane rating, which means it performs better.

#### Concerns:

- **Physically blending CNG with hydrogen requires a series of energy-intensive procedures,** making H-CNG more expensive than CNG.
- While the **NITI Aayog-CII Action Plan for Clean Fuel** recommends the use of H-CNG as an alternative fuel, it also points out that physical blending of CNG and hydrogen requires a series of energy-intensive procedures, making **H-CNG more expensive than CNG.**
- The research and development arm of IOCL has created a method that eliminates the need for physical blending. Its '**Compact Reforming Process**' uses a single step to make a hydrogen-CNG mixture from natural gas. According to the EPCA research, the cost of production is much lower than physical mixing.
- With current technology, automobiles and autos would be unable to use H-CNG because hydrogen is "**extremely volatile,**" posing a risk of increased combustion temperature and risk.
- Higher hydrogen blend levels necessitate end-use system adaptation.
- **Changes to the engine's structural characteristics are required,** as well as the development of new infrastructure for the preparation of HCNG.
- Calculating the optimal H2/NG (Natural Gas) ratio.

### 3. Laser Communications Relay Demonstration (LCRD)

#### Why in news?

The new Laser Communications Relay Demonstration was launched by NASA (LCRD). Its NASA's first laser communications system, launched from **Florida's Cape Canaveral Space Force Station.**

#### About LCRD (Laser Communications Relay Demonstration):

- Laser communications, also known as **optical communications,** uses **infrared light** to convey data and is used in LCRD.
- The LCRD spacecraft is launched into a **geosynchronous orbit** about 35,000 kilometres above the Earth's surface.
- The LCRD is equipped with **two optical terminals,** one for receiving data from a user spacecraft and the other for transmitting data to ground stations.

- The **digital data will be converted into laser pulses by the modems**. This will then be conveyed by light beams that have been encoded.

#### Radio vs. Laser

- **Different wavelengths of light are used in laser communications and radio waves**. It transmits information using infrared light, which has a shorter wavelength than radio frequencies.
- This will allow more data to be transmitted in a shorter amount of time.
- LCRD will send data to Earth at **1.2 gigabits per second** using infrared lasers (Gbps).
- With today's **radio frequency technologies, transmitting a complete map of Mars back to Earth would take about nine weeks**. According to NASA, using lasers, we can reduce this time to roughly **nine days**.

#### Benefits of a Laser System

- **Different wavelengths of light are used in laser communications and radio waves**.
- Infrared light, which has a shorter wavelength than radio waves, is used by the laser. This will allow **more data to be transmitted in a shorter amount of time**.
- When compared to radio equipment, **optical communications systems are smaller, lighter, and use less power**.
- **More room for science instruments requires a smaller size**. A lighter launch equals a lower cost. Less power means the spacecraft's batteries will last longer.

## 4. Earth's Black Box

#### Why in news?

Recently, Australian scientists and artists trying to establish a black box of the globe, and by doing that they hope to hold the rest of the world accountable for their activities.

#### Key highlights:

- The box will be built in **Tasmania**, an island state off Australia's south coast.
- It will be **composed of 3-inch thick steel and solar panels** will cover it.
- It will function similarly to a **plane's flight recorder**, which documents the final minutes of a plane's flight before it crashes.
- Earth's Black Box's storage drives are expected to last between **30 and 50 years**.
- The black box will be about the size of a **city bus**, with storage drives inside that **will record climate change dialogues as well as ambient CO2 levels and average temperatures**.

#### What kind of data is collected by the Box?

- Two sorts of data will be collected and kept inside the **monolith**.

- It will collect data on **climate change**, including land and marine temperature readings, animal extinction, energy consumption, human population, ocean acidification, and atmospheric CO2 levels.
- It will **collect contextual data** such as newspaper headlines, trending stories, key news articles, and social media updates.

The reasons for Tasmania's selection are as follows:

The island of Tasmania was chosen for its **relative geopolitical and environmental safety**, and the **monolith will be built to survive natural disasters** like cyclones and earthquakes, as well as **vandalism** thanks to its sloped walls.

**What Is Its Importance?**

- The usage of a black box will actually **help to prevent a big climate change disaster**.
- Climate change is one of humanity's greatest threats, worsening economic and health disparities, increasing the frequency and intensity of natural disasters, and jeopardising the global food supply.

## 5. Supersonic Missile Assisted Release of Torpedo(SMART)

**Why in news?**

Recently the **DRDO successfully test-fired a long-range Supersonic Missile Assisted Torpedo (SMART)** off the coast of **Balasore in Odisha**.

**Key highlights:**

- The missile is launched from a **mobile launcher** on the ground and has a range of range.
- The technology was created to **improve anti-submarine warfare capability** much beyond the torpedo's traditional range.
- The system is a standoff torpedo delivery system based on next generation missiles.
- It was a textbook launch, with the **electro optic telemetry system**, varied range radars, down range sensors, and down range ships all monitoring the entire trajectory.
- A torpedo, a parachute delivery system, and release mechanisms were all carried by the missile.
- The innovative technologies used in this **canister-based missile system include two-stage solid propulsion, electromechanical actuators, and precision inertial navigation**.
- India's anti-submarine warfare capability will be improved thanks to the SMART system.

## 6. Log4j Vulnerability

**Why in news?**

Recently Log4j Shell, a **new vulnerability**, is being hailed as one of the **biggest cyber security weaknesses** ever identified.

#### Concerning the Log4j flaw:

- Log4j Shell is the official name for the vulnerability, which is **CVE-2021-44228**.
- Each vulnerability identified around the world is assigned a unique CVE number.
- It is built on an **open-source logging library** that is **utilised in most commercial and government applications**.
- Hackers are already testing exploits for this weakness, which provide them access to an application and might potentially allow them to run malicious software on a device or servers.
- The issue affects Log4j 2 versions, a popular logging library used by applications all throughout the world.
- Logging allows developers to see all of an application's activity.

#### Concerns:

- It's a major issue because **it might allow hackers to take control of java-based web servers and launch "remote code execution" (RCE) assaults**.
- To put it another way, the flaw might allow a hacker to **take control of a system**.
- It considers this vulnerability to be highly serious.
- The bug **"may be exploited through HTTP or HTTPS (encrypted form of browsing),"** which exacerbates the issue.

## 7. First Green Hydrogen Microgrid Project: Andhra Pradesh

#### Why in news?

Recently **National Thermal Power Corporation Ltd** was granted the country's **first green hydrogen microgrid project** at its Simhadri (near Visakhapatnam) plant in Andhra Pradesh.

#### Key highlights:

- NTPC created this **one-of-a-kind project arrangement in-house**. It would serve as a stepping stone toward large-scale hydrogen energy storage projects. It corresponds to India's goal of becoming carbon-neutral by 2070.
- The hydrogen would be created utilising a **state-of-the-art 240 kW Solid Oxide Electrolyser that would be powered by a nearby Floating Solar installation**.
- NTPC had previously announced the development of **India's largest floating solar facility in Ramagundam, Telangana**.
- The hydrogen generated during the day will be kept at high pressure and then powered by a 50 kW Solid Oxide Fuel Cell.
- A solid oxide fuel cell (also known as a SOFC) is an electrochemical conversion device that generates energy by oxidising a fuel.

### Significance:

- **Helpful in the Deployment of Several Microgrids:** The project will be beneficial in the future study and deployment of multiple microgrids in off-grid and important places across the country.
- Clean energy production is a critical tool for combating climate change and limiting its disastrous consequences.
- It will open up the possibility of decarbonizing the country's far-flung regions, such as Ladakh, J&K, and others, which are reliant on diesel generators.
- Decarbonization refers to the removal or reduction of gaseous carbon compounds emitted into the atmosphere.
- NTPC Renewable Energy Limited (NTPC REL) has also agreed to collaborate on a green hydrogen mobility project with the Union Territory of Ladakh.
- **Energy Security:** Hydrogen fuel has the potential to transform India's energy security, as the country imports 85 percent of its oil and 53 percent of its gas.
- India is considering making it necessary for fertiliser factories and oil refineries to purchase green hydrogen in order to boost clean fuels.
- For the City Gas Distribution (CGD) network, NTPC is also planning to use hydrogen for transportation by combining it with natural gas.

## 8. e-Chhawani Project

### In news:

**The Defence Minister** of India recently launched the eChhawani project, which includes a **GIS-based automatic water supply system for people of Cantonment Board**.

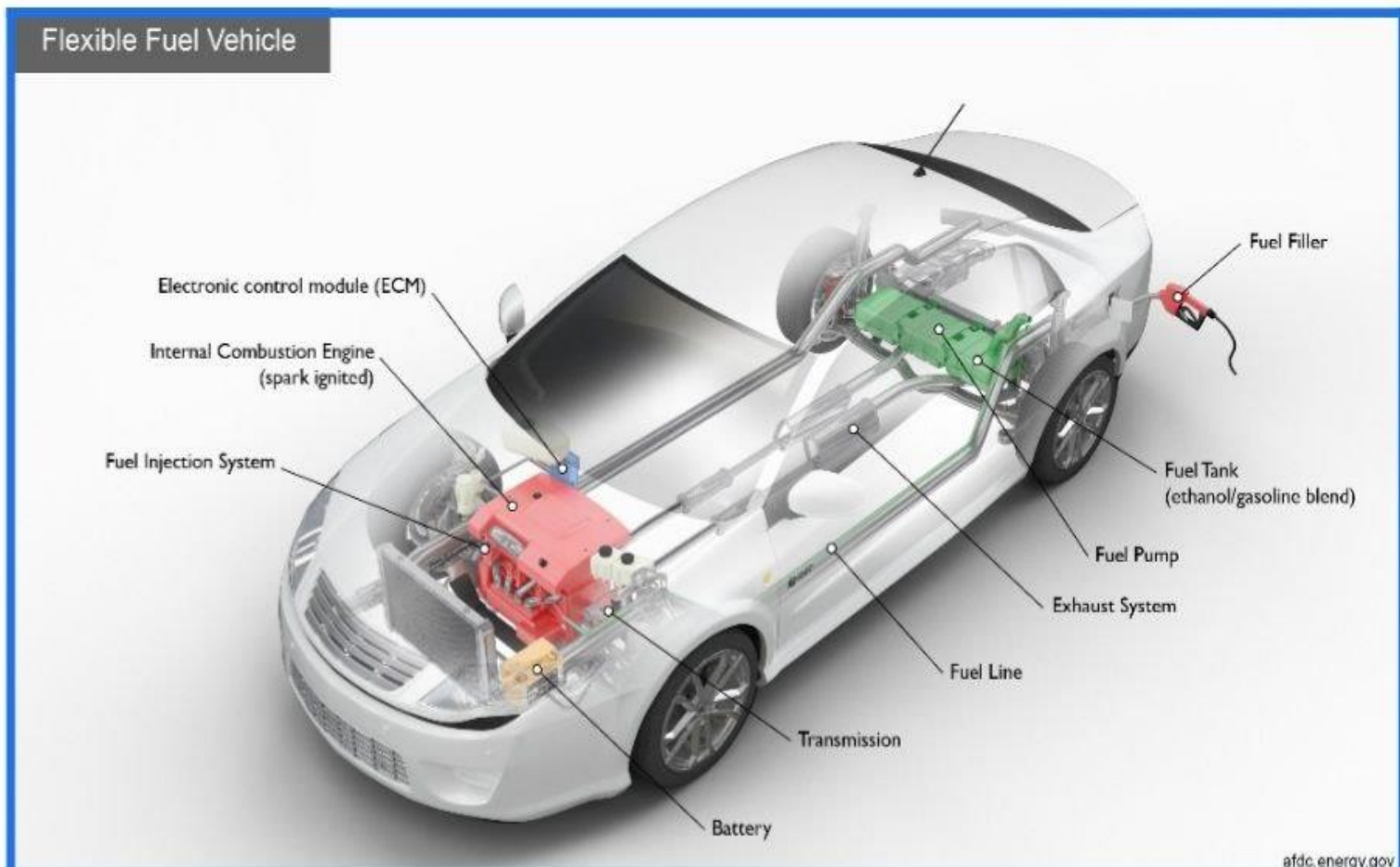
### About eChhawani Project:

- eChhawani is a **citizen-centric project** of the Ministry of Defence's Directorate General of Defence Estates.
- Through the unified eChhawani Portal, Cantonment Boards deliver online citizen services to more than 20 lakh citizens across 62 Cantonments across the country.
- **Aims:** To promote citizen involvement with Cantonment Boards by improving employee training, knowledge, and responsiveness to public requirements in a transparent and efficient manner.
- It allows citizens to use the Cantonment Board websites to access a variety of online services provided by the Cantonment Boards.

## 9. Flex Fuel Vehicles

### Why in news?

Recently, the government has advised carmakers to start making Flex Fuel Strong Hybrid Electric Vehicles (FFSHEV).



#### What are FFVs (flexible fuel vehicles)?

- A fuel-efficient vehicle (FFV) is a **customized version of a vehicle that can run on both gasoline and doped gasoline with various levels of ethanol mixes.**
- Vehicles equipped with FFVs will be **able to use all mixes as well as run on unblended gasoline.**
- FFVs have engines that can run on more than 84 percent ethanol mixed gasoline.

#### Benefits:

- FFVs are designed to **cut down on the usage of dirty fossil fuels and hazardous emissions.**
- Because **alternative fuel ethanol costs Rs 60-62 per litre and petrol costs more than Rs 100 per litre in many regions of the nation, Indians will save Rs 30-35 per litre by switching to ethanol.**
- FFVs will have a **distinct advantage in India since they will allow vehicles to use various blends of ethanol mixed gasoline** available in various sections of the country.
- These vehicles are also a logical continuation of the Union Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas's **Ethanol Blended Petrol (EBP) initiative**, which began in **January 2003.**

- Because India has a surplus of corn, sugar, and wheat, the obligatory ethanol blending programme will help farmers earn more money.
- Increased use of ethanol as a car fuel will help the Indian economy save money on imports, as the country imports more than 80% of its crude oil requirements.

#### The disadvantages and challenges of employing FFVs:

- Customer adoption will be a **huge hurdle because the cost of ownership and operating costs will be quite high** when compared to 100% gasoline vehicles.
- **When running on 100% ethanol, the operating costs (because to poorer fuel efficiency) will be more than 30% higher (E100).**
- Because ethanol has significantly different chemical characteristics than gasoline, **flex fuel engines are more expensive. Ethanol has a low calorific value (40%) when compared to gasoline, as well as a high latent heat of vaporisation, which causes charge/combustion cooling.**
- **Ethanol also acts as a solvent and could wipe out the protective oil film inside the engine thereby could cause wear and tear.**

## Himachal Current Affairs

### Rs. 2095 crore ADB Project in the State

#### In news:

Recently, the State Government has succeeded in getting in-principle approval of Rs. 2095 crore in ADB infrastructure Development Project for the State.

#### Key Highlights:

- **90 percent of the loan amount** would be supported by **Government of India** whereas **10 percent would be State share**, as the State of **Himachal Pradesh is a Special Category State.**
- The project aimed at giving a **fresh impetus to tourism** in the State through creation of new destinations, improving existing destinations besides ensuring maintenance and preservation of heritage.
- The project also envisages development of **eco tourism** by ensuring **development of lesser known places to lower burden on already crowded tourist destinations.**
- The project would be implemented in **two tranches.**
- The first tranche would be worth more than **Rs. 900 crore** while the second tranche would be more than **Rs.1100 crore.**
- The project would kick start from **March next year.**

## Himachal Pradesh-a Treasure of Tourism

### In news:

Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur released book titled Himachal Pradesh-a Treasure of Tourism authored by former IAS Officer and noted author **K.R. Bharti**,

- The book brought to fore the **treasure trove of tourism of Himachal Pradesh** in its all beauty and details.

## Swarnim Himachal Kala Mahosav

### In news:

Himachal Pradesh Government is organizing Swarnim Himachal Kala Mahotsav at **New Delhi from 4th to 9th December, 2021 at Hotel Lalit.**

### Key Highlights:

- This event is a part of year long Swarnim Himachal Celebrations to **commemorate the 50 years of statehood** and is being **organized by the Language Art and Culture department of State in joint collaboration with Hotel Lalit.**
- **Himachali artisans will put up stalls showcasing** Himachali handicrafts, woodcraft, metal craft, Kangra paintings, Kinnauri and Kullu shawls, Chamba Rumal etc.
- **Folk dance and folk music of Himachal will also be showcased** besides **Himachali cuisine** including sepu vadi, rajma madra, Chambyali palda etc will also be available and people can taste delicacies of the state.
- The event is an initiative of **Dr. Mallika Nadda** Chairperson Special Olympics and **Dr. Jyotsna Suri** Chairperson Lalit Group of Hospitality.

## Run for Himachal, Himachal marathon

### In news:

Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur along with other political leadership of centre and states flagged off the **Run for Himachal, Himachal marathon** at **New Delhi on 5th December 2021..**

### Key Highlights:

- This event is part of the **Swarnim Himachal Mahotsav** and the **Marathon was organized by the joint collaboration of State Government, Himachal Social Bodies Federation and Himachali diaspora residing in NCR Delhi.**
- The RUN FOR HIMACHAL was held from **Rajghat to Himachal Bhawan.**

## Governor and CM condoles sudden demise of Gen Bipin Rawat

### In news:

General Bipin Rawat was a four-star general of the Indian Army who was appointed as the **first CDS of India on 31 December 2021**. He assumed office on 1 January 2020.

About CDS Bipin Rawat	
Birth	16 March 1958 ( <b>Pauri, Uttarakhand</b> )
Death	8 December 2021 (Coonoor, Tamil Nadu)
Age	63 years
Education	National Defence Academy (B.Sc.) I.M.A. Defence Services Staff College (MPhil) U.S. Army Command & General Staff College (ILE) Chaudhary Charan Singh University (PhD)
Wife	<b>Madhulika Rawat</b>
Father	<b>Lt. General Laxman Singh Rawat</b>
Years of Service	16 December 1978 – 8 November 2021
Awards	Param Vishisht Seva Medal Uttam Yudh Seva Medal Ati Vishisht Seva Medal Yudh Seva Medal Sena Medal Vishisht Seva Medal

**Muskan Negi**

#### **In news:**

Governor Rajender Vishwanath Arlekar has congratulated Muskan Negi, a **renowned singer** of Himachal Pradesh for winning first prize at **Golden Voice Award**, a national level competition organised at New Delhi.

#### **About Muskan Negi:**

- **Muskan is visually impaired** and is highly talented PHD scholar.
- Muskan is a **youth icon of Election Commission for HP polls** and **brand ambassador of Umang Foundation**.

### **1st position in implementation of Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and Systems (CCTNS)**

#### **In news:**

Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur has congratulated the **Director General of Police Sanjay Kundu** and **his team** for being **awarded 1st position amongst the Hilly States** in the **implementation of Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and Systems (CCTNS)**.

#### **About CCTNS:**

- This is a **National Level award for Hilly States** and Himachal Pradesh has been awarded as best performing State amongst the ten Hilly States for the **second year in succession**.
- There are **22 different parameters/criteria** like Hardware/Software deployment, Network Connectivity, Data Migration, Capacity Building etc. to decide this award.
- The Conference on **Good Practices in Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and Systems (CCTNS)** and **Interoperable Criminal Justice System (ICJS)** was held through **online platform** at **National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), New Delhi**, which was inaugurated by Minister of State (Home) and attended by Senior Police Officers of all States and Union Territories.

### **6th State Finance Commission**

#### **In news:**

The 3rd meeting of the 6th state finance commission, which was chaired by **Satpal Singh Satti**, has recommended to extending its term up to **31 October, 2022**.

### **Eat Right Mela**

#### **In news:**

Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur inaugurated the Eat Right Mela at the historic **Dhalpur ground** in **District Kullu** on **22th December 2021**

## Statue of former PM Atal Behari Vajpayee

### In news:

On the occasion of **97th birth anniversary** of former Prime Minister and Bharat Ratan Atal Behari Vajpayee, Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur unveiled statue of the former Prime Minister at **Mall Road, Manali in Kullu district**.

## Shikhar Samyik magazine

### In news:

Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur released a special issue of Shikhar Samyik, an international peer reviewed and referred half yearly research journal humanities and social science, **Vichar Atal ke Aar Paar** edited by **Dr. Inder Singh Thakur** on the occasion of the birth anniversary of Bharat Ratna Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

- The magazine provides a glimpse of the life of the great politician, leader, thinker, poet and Bharat Ratna Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

## Development projects of Rs. 11,281 crore

### Why in news?

On the occasion of Bharat Ki Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, Golden Jubilee of statehood of Himachal Pradesh on **27th December 2021**, the Prime Minister would dedicate and lay foundation stone of development projects worth **Rs.11,281 crore** in the state.

### Key Highlights:

- These projects would include dedication of **111 MW Sawra-Kuddu Hydro Electric Project (HEP)** constructed with an outlay of **Rs. 2081.60 crore** on river **Pabbar in district Shimla**.
  - The Sawra-Kuddu HEP would generate **386 Million units of electricity per annum**, which will generate annual revenue of about Rs. 120 crore to the state.
- The Prime Minister would lay foundation stone of **Shri Renuka ji Dam project**, a national project conceived as a storage project of **Rs. 6700 crore** on river **Giri in district Sirmaur**.
- PM would lay foundation stone of **66 MW Dhaulasidh Hydro Electric Project**, which would be constructed with an expenditure of **Rs. 688 crore**. The project is located on **river Beas in District Hamirpur and Kangra**.
- PM would also lay foundation stone of **210 MW Luhri Hydro Electric Project stage-I** to be completed with an expenditure of **Rs. 1811 crore**, a **joint venture between Government of India and Government of Himachal Pradesh**. The project is located on **river Satluj in Shimla and Kullu Districts**.

### **Renukaji Dam project**

- Renuka dam project has been conceived on **Giri River, as a storage project.**
- **Giri river is a tributary of the Yamuna.** The project is being conceived in **Sirmaur district** of Himachal Pradesh.
- It envisages making a dam of **148-metre height**, which will supply water to **Delhi and other basin states.**
- The dam will also generate a power of **40 MW.** 90% of the cost of irrigation or drinking water component will be provided by central government while 10% will be provided by rest of the basin States.

### **Online RTI portal**

#### **In news:**

Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur launched online RTI portal of Department of Administrative Reforms, and with this **Himachal Pradesh became first State amongst small States** and **fourth after Maharashtra, Karnatka, and Uttar Pradesh in the Country to launch this portal.**

### **'Malana Cream'**

#### **In news:**

Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar released **the book 'Malana Cream'** authored by **Dr. Devkanya Thakur.**

### **Aditya Dev Chand Katoch**

#### **In news:**

Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur has expressed deep grief over the death of **Aditya Dev Chand Katoch, husband of former Minister Chandresh Kumari Katoch.** He was 78 years old.

# Defence

## EKUVERIN-21

- The EKUVERIN-21 joint military exercise aims to enhance synergy and inter-operability between the Armed Forces of both the nations.
- The participants conducted Counter-Terrorism and Counter-Insurgency Operations.

## PANEX-21

- The PANEX-21 is a Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) Exercise that is conducted for BIMSTEC nations.
- The exercise was organized at the College of Military Engineering in Pune.

## DRDO conducted Flight Test of HEAT 'Abhyas'

- The test was conducted from Integrated Test Range at Chandipur off the Odisha coast.
- In the test activities, a high subsonic speed trajectory at a very low altitude with high endurance was demonstrated.

## Pralay' Missile

- The 'Pralay' missile is developed by Defence Research Development Organisation (DRDO).
- It is a solid-fuel, battlefield missile and is based on Prithvi Defence Vehicle from the Indian ballistic missile program.

## Summit and Conferences

### 5th Indian Ocean Conference

- The 5th Indian Ocean Conference was addressed by External Affairs Minister Dr S Jaishankar in Abu Dhabi.
- While addressing he highlighted the importance of respecting and facilitating freedom of navigation and over flight.

### PM Modi attended Summit for Democracy

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi attended the 'Summit for Democracy' in a virtual manner.
- He highlighted India's civilizational ethos which is the original source of democracy.

### PM Modi inaugurated All India Mayors' Conference

- The conference aims to serve the goal of GOI to ensure ease of living in urban areas of the country.
- It is being held in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh, and was organized by the Department of Urban Development of Uttar Pradesh.

### 6th India Water Impact Summit 2021

- At the event, MoU was signed between **NMCG and the Centre for Policy Research (CPR)** to work in the research domain to develop production activities to rejuvenate India's rivers.
- MoU was signed between **C-Ganga and the Norwegian Institute of Bioeconomy Research (NIBIO)** for having a sludge management framework.

### National Conf. on Investment Opportunities in Highways, Transport, Logistics

- The National Conference on Investment Opportunities in Highways, Transport, and Logistics was held recently in **Mumbai**.
- Various MoUs were signed at the conference in the presence of the **Union Minister of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH), Nitin Gadkari**.

## Government schemes

### Call your Cop' Mobile App

- The app will allow the people of the state to **get in touch with the police directly with just a single click via the app**.
- The app will also allow **total modernization of the police department**.

### AIRNxt Programme

- The AIRNxt program will offer a platform for youth to **air their voices as a part of the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav celebrations**.
- The youths from local colleges, universities can participate in the program and **raise the topic and youth-centric shows for discussions**.

### SRESTHA Scheme

- The SRESTHA Scheme aims to **uplift the socio-economic status and overall development of Scheduled Castes students**.
- Under the scheme, **quality residential education to meritorious SC students will be granted in reputed private schools**.

### ITU and DoT Conducted Joint Cyber Drill 2021

- The objective of the drill was to **enhance cyber security and make India ready for various cyber security parameters and platforms**.
- It also helped to **enhance protection and incident response capability of India**.

### NGDRS and Banadhikar App

- The Tripura government launched **National Generic Document Registration System (NGDRS) and BanAdhikar App**.

- The BanAdhikar App is a **GPS-based mobile app** that will be used for forest patta land demarcation.

#### **PM Narendra Modi Inaugurated InFINITY Forum**

- **The Indonesia, South Africa, and the U.K** were the partner countries of the forum.
- At the event, PM Modi highlighted the **role of fintech** and also stated that **these companies hold a major role in the future.**

#### **‘She is a Changemaker’**

- The programme was officially launched by **Rekha Sharma, Chairperson of NCW** in collaboration with **Rhambhau Mhalgi Prabodhini, Thane, Maharashtra.**
- The program aims to enhance the **leadership skills and capacity building of women political leaders.**

#### **Swachh Technology Challenge**

- The moto of the challenge **to evolve entrepreneurial skills for country’s waste management unit.**
- These skills will be utilized by Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) **to implement various components of SBM-U 2.0.**

#### **‘Milk Price Incentive Scheme’**

- The scheme **grants incentives to around 53,000 people of the state.**
- Under the scheme, the state government **will spend Rs 444.62 crore** which will be utilized **to open 500 milk sales centers.**

#### **Atmanirbhar Hastshilpkar Scheme**

- The ‘Atmanirbhar Hastshilpkar’ scheme aims to **grant support to the artisans in the Northeast region.**
- Under the scheme, financial assistance will be granted to the **artisans in the form of term loans for income-generating activities.**

#### **ADB approved Loan to Improve Urban Services in India**

- In this regard, the ADB has approved a loan of **USD 350 million.**
- The loan will be **utilized to support various policies and schemes framed by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs** for enhancing **universal coverage of piped water supply and improved sanitation in the urban areas of the country.**

#### **‘LokpalOnline’—Digital Platform**

- The name of the digital Platform for the **Management of Complaints** is **‘LokpalOnline’.**
- The platform can be **accessed by all citizens** and they can file complaints on this from **anywhere and anytime.**

#### **‘Unnati’ - An e-learning platform**

- The platform was **launched under the ‘YUVA’ scheme of the Delhi Police.**
- The ‘Unnati’ is **an e-learning and certification initiative** in which **education and skill training will be given to school dropouts from the weaker sections of society.**

#### **Maa Umiya Dham Development Project**

- The total funds allotted to construct the temple and other buildings is **Rs 1,500 crore.**
- It will be constructed on **74,000 square yards of land.**

#### **Jharkhand CM launched SAHAY Scheme**

- The scheme aims to promote sports. It aims **to dissuade youths from joining ranks of rebels.**
- During the first phase, **72,000 young talents from rebel-hit districts will be given training in particular sports.**

#### **‘Khel Nursery Scheme 2022-23’**

- The ‘Khel Nursery Scheme 2022-23’ was launched by **Haryana’s Minister of State for Sports and Youth Affairs, Sandeep Singh.**
- These sports nurseries will be set up in government, **private educational institutions, and private sports institutions.**

#### **‘Mukhyamantri Vayu Swasthya Seva’-- Odisha**

- The ‘Mukhyamantri Vayu Swasthya Seva’ means **‘Chief Minister’s Air Health Service’.**
- Under the scheme, districts **like Malkangiri, Nabarangpur, Nuapada, and Kalahandi will be able to avail better healthcare services.**

#### **Free Smartphone Yojana – Uttar Pradesh**

- The Government of Uttar Pradesh will be launching an ambitious **‘Free Smartphone Yojana’.**
- Under the scheme, **the state government will distribute smartphones and tablets to the students studying in the final year of graduation and above.**

#### **Vernacular Innovation Program (VIP)**

- Under this program, innovators and entrepreneurs will be given **access to the innovation ecosystem in 22 scheduled languages by GOI.**
- To have an exceptional capacity for the VIP, **Vernacular Task Force (VTF) in each of the 22 scheduled languages will be developed by AIM.**

#### **‘Meendum Manjappai’ Scheme**

- The scheme aims **to promote the usage of cloth bags among people and ban the use of plastic bags as they are harmful to the environment.**

- The scheme motivates people to use 'yellow' cloth bag or 'manjapai' as it is called in the Tamil language.

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

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated Kanpur Metro Rail Project and Bina-Panki Multiproduct Pipeline Project.
- Along with this, he also attended the 54th Convocation Ceremony at IIT Kanpur.

### **MOU**

#### **Walmart and Flipkart signed MoU with Madhya Pradesh**

- They have signed MoU to create an ecosystem of **capacity building for MSMEs in MP.**
- The state's Department of MSME, Walmart, and Flipkart will help MSMEs to transform to **digital domain so that they can sell their products across India through online retail platforms.**

#### **Paytm Signed MoU with Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship**

- The MoU was signed to train 6000 individuals for a period of 3 years in the Fintech industry.
- The Paytm aims to build India's technology ecosystem which will drive financial inclusion in India.

#### **ONGC Signed MoU with SECI**

- The MoU was signed **between Subhash Kumar, Chairman and Managing Director of ONGC and Suman Sharma, Managing Director of SECI.**
- The ONGC has set the target **to generate a minimum of 10 GW of renewable power by 2040.**

#### **Karnataka Vikas Grameena Bank Signed MoU with Liberty General Insurance**

- As per the agreement, **there will be the distribution of Liberty's general insurance products via network of KVGB.**
- This partnership will help **to enhance insurance penetration in the country through 629 branches of KVGB.**

#### **SBI signed MoU with Kendriya Sainik Board**

- The MoU was signed to grant support and education **to the children of war veterans, ex-servicemen, and war widows.**
- Under the MoU, **SBI will provide Rs 1,000 per month to 8,333 war veterans'.**

#### **BoB signed MoU with CHFL**

- The MoU was signed to source and finance housing loan borrowers under Co-lending Model (CLM) mechanism.
- Due to this partnership, multiple opportunities are opened up for both entities to enhance their businesses.

#### **India signed Air Bubble Agreement with Australia**

- The agreement will enable the travel of eligible passengers between the two countries.
- The air bubble agreement is a process to resume flights between two nations with preconditions during pandemics.

#### **Karnataka signed LoU with UNDP**

- The LoU was signed as a part of the 'Code-Unnati', which is a State-level initiative.
- It was signed to enhance entrepreneurship and employment opportunities for the youths and women of the state.

#### **Defence Ministry signed MoU with IITE Gandhinagar**

- This will help to boost the capacity building of teachers of Sainik Schools so that they can provide quality education to students learning in these schools.
- The MoU was also led to enhancing the brand of existing Sainik Schools and will also generate a way to set up 100 Sainik Schools.

#### **Pact signed between JICA and TN Health Dept.**

- The RoD was signed to prevent and control Non-Communicable Diseases in the state.
- The project for the same is termed as 'Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases in Tamil Nadu project'.

#### **Rajasthan signed MoU with Rays Power Infra**

- The government of Rajasthan signed MoU with Rays Power Infra to construct a solar power plant with the capacity to generate 500 MW of green electricity.
- The MoU will work to develop an eco-friendly future in the energy sector.

#### **AP signed MoU with UN-FAO and ICAR**

- The MoU was signed to strengthen methods to support farmers in agriculture.
- Various sustainable agri-food systems will be framed and will be adopted by the state in its agriculture sector.

#### **India signed Lol with Vietnam**

- The Lol was signed between India's Union Minister of Information and Broadcasting, Anurag Thakur, and Vietnam's Minister of Information and Communication, Nguyen Manh Hung.

- Under the Lol, both the nations will share information and experience in order **to develop policies and regulatory norms in digital media and social networks domains.**

#### **MCA signed MoU with Financial Intelligence Unit**

- The MoU will impart significance in the development of **MCA21 Version 3 and FINNET 2.0.**
- The sharing of data between the entities will help **to improve regulatory and facilitating functions.**

#### **NIPL signed MoU with Western Union**

- The MoU was signed **to perform a real-time bank account payment system in India.**
- The NIPL is an **international payment arm of NPCI.**

#### **HAL signed Contract with BEL**

- The contract was signed **to develop and supply 20 types of systems for the 83 LCA (Light Combat Aircraft) Tejas Mk1A fighter aircraft program.**
- In this regard, the **contract worth Rs 2,400 crores were signed between both entities.**

#### **NCC signed MoU with NHAI**

- The MoU was signed **to reuse plastic wastes collected by NCC Cadets during Puneet Sagar Abhiyan and other Swachhta activities.**
- The reuse will **take place for countrywide road construction which will be undertaken by NHAI.**

#### **NITI Aayog signed Sol with UN-WFP**

- The Sol was signed **to offer a focus on mainstreaming millets and offer support to India to have an exchange of information in the same.**
- The Sol was **signed with the consideration as 2023 will be celebrated as the International Year of Millet.**

#### **India signed MoU with Maldives**

- The MoU will also facilitate trade between both countries as there will be **an electronic exchange of data on a real-time basis.**
- This will **enable fast-track customs payments, identify and eradicate frauds in the same and reduce the time for clearances.**

#### **SIDBI signed MoU with West Bengal**

- The PMU will analyze current strategies and frameworks of MSMEs in the state and will accordingly guide stakeholders **to develop sector-specific products.**
- It will also develop an **expert agency in partnership with the MSME department of the state to execute the objectives of MoU.**

#### **HOP Electric signed pact with Gov. of Rajasthan**

- The MoU was signed to **expand its product portfolio and production capacity.**
- Under the MoU, **an EV manufacturing plant will be set up in Jaipur city of Rajasthan.**

#### **Federal Bank signed MoU with Schwing Stetter**

- The MoU was signed to offer **customized financial solutions to their customers.**
- The federal bank will also be able to **use advanced technology for enhancing customer experience through this partnership.**

## **Index and Ranking**

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

- The **EIU's (Economist Intelligence Unit's) Worldwide Cost of Living Index 2021** was announced.
- As per the index, **Tel Aviv, Israel is the most expensive city in the world to live in 2021.**

#### **Lowy Institute Asia Power Index 2021**

- As per the index, **India is ranked at 4th position to become the most powerful country in the Asia- Pacific region with a score of 37.7 out of 100.**
- The 1st position was gained by the **United States with a score of 82.2 out of 100.**

#### **Global Health Security Index 2021**

- The index is **topped by the United States with an index score of 75.9.**
- The 2nd and 3rd positions are marked by **Australia and Finland respectively.**

#### **Global Unicorn Index 2021**

- As per the index, **India is ranked at 3rd position.**
- India has replaced the UK at the 3rd spot thus by adding 33 unicorns in 2020.

#### **India ranked 3rd Among Dope Violators**

- The report is **topped by Russia with 162 number times involvement in dope-related activities.**
- The second position is marked by Italy with **157 number times involvement in dope-related activities.**

#### **Good Governance Index 2021**

- The GGI 2021 is framed by the **Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG).**
- The index **analyzes and assesses the state of Governance across the states and UTs.**

#### **NITI Aayog's 4th State Health Index for 2019–20**

- The State Health Index **provides health outcomes and status of Indian states and UTs.**
- The ranking of the index was **framed by NITI Aayog, World Bank, and Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) jointly.**

#### **Atal Ranking of Institutions on Innovation Achievement (ARIIA) 2021**

- The ARIIA is an initiative under the Ministry of Education and it ranks major educational institutions and universities as per their performance in **'Innovation and Entrepreneurship Development'.**
- The rankings were made **under two categories- Technical and Non-Technical.**

## **Report**

#### **10th Annual World Cooperative Monitor Report 2021**

- As per the report, **Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative Limited (IFFCO) was ranked as 'number one Cooperative' among the top 300 cooperatives in the world.** It has held the same position as last year.
- In the overall ranking, **IFFCO is ranked at 60th position in the 2021 report of WCM.**

#### **World Migration Report 2022**

- As per the report, **the number of air passengers at the global level dropped to 60% in 2020 to 1.8 billion (down from 4.5 billion in 2019).**
- Also, the internal displacement **due to disaster, conflict, and violence is increased to 40.5million (up from 31.5 million in 2019).**

#### **Top 100 Arms-Producing and Military Services Companies 2020**

- The HAL is ranked at **42nd position, BEL at 66th and Indian Ordnance Factories' is ranked at 60<sup>th</sup> position in the list.**
- The companies of **India contribute 1.2% of total arms sales of companies in the SIPRI Top 100 list of 2020.**

#### **Forbes' List of the World's 100 Most Powerful Women 2021**

- The **'Forbes' list of the World's 100 Most Powerful Women 2021' or '18th Edition of Forbes' list of the World's 100 Most Powerful Women' was released recently.**
- As per the list, **Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman was ranked at 37th position. This is for the third time in a row that she has attained a position on the list.**

#### **India Skills Report 2022**

- The report reveals that a **higher percentage of women than men are found to be employable in India.**
- The sectors like **IT, pharmaceutical, e-commerce, and banking, financial services, and insurance will hire 20% more fresh graduates in 2022 than in 2021.**

### World Inequality Report 2022

- The economic reforms and liberalization framed and **adopted by India have proved beneficial to the top 1%.**
- In India, **1% richest people hold 22% of the total national income in 2021 and the top 10% owns 57% of the income.**

### World Talent Ranking Report 2021

- The report analyses and **ranks the ability of nations in developing, attracting, and retaining talent.**
- As per the report, **India is ranked at 56th position among 64 nations.**

### CEBR World Economic League Table 2022

- As per the report, **India is highlighted as the 6th largest economy in 2022 and the 3rd largest economy in 2031.**
- India's economic forecast by CEBR for various years is: **7th (2021), 6th (2022), 5th (2026), 3rd (2031), and 3rd (2036).**

## Appointments

Name of the Person	Designation
Eva Magdalena Andersson	1st Female Prime Minister of Sweden
Lt Gen Manoj Kumar Mago	Commandant of National Defence College (NDC)
Ajay Bhushan Pandey	Head the committee set up by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment to review the criteria for reservation for the Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) category as per the norms of the provisions of the explanation to Article 15 of the Constitution
Sambit Patra	Chairman of India Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC) by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet
Sanjay Dutt	Brand Ambassador for the 50th-year celebrations of Arunachal Pradesh
Smriti Mandhana	Brand ambassador of GUVI
Naomi Kawase	UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador for cultural and creative industries
Pradip Shah	Chairman of the National Asset Reconstruction Company (NARCL)

Sanjay Jain	Chief executive of India Debt Resolution Company (IDRCL)
Gita Gopinath	IMF's Deputy Managing Director
Alka Upadhyaya	Chairperson of National Highways Authority of India (NHAI)
Sanjay Bandopadhyay	Chairman, Inland Waterways Authority of India
Dharmendra S Gangwar	Secretary, Department of Border Management
Sundeep Kumar Nayak	Director-General, National Productivity Council, Department for Promotion of Industry & Internal Trade
Ravindra Jadeja	Brand ambassador of Kinara Capital
Jasprit Bumrah	Brand ambassador of Unix
Adama Barrow	President of Gambia
Ittira Davis	MD and CEO of Ujjivan Small Finance Bank
Sunil Arora	Board of Advisors for the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA)
Neeraj Chopra and PV Sindhu	Brand ambassadors of Disney BYJU'S Early Learn App
Sanjiv Mehta	President of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI)
Olaf Scholz	New German chancellor
Arvind Kumar	Director-General of Software Technology
Leena Nair	New global CEO of Chanel
Ravinder Bhakar	Charge of National Film Development Corporation (NFDC), Films Division, and Children Films Society of India (CFSI)
Catherine Russell	Head of UN children's agency UNICEF
Army Chief General Manoj Mukund Naravane	India's new Chief of Staff Committee (CoSC)
Madhabi Puri Buch	Head a 7-member committee set up by SEBI for Leveraging Regulatory and Technology Solutions (ALERTS)

Mohit Jain	President of The Indian Newspaper Society for the year 2021-22
Rishabh Pant	Brand ambassador of Uttarakhand
Karl Nehammer	President of Austria
Atul Dinkar Rane	New CEO and MD of BrahMos Aerospace Limited
Pradeep Kumar Rawat	India's next Ambassador to China
Harjinder Singh	India's Chef de Mission 2022 Winter Olympics
PV Sindhu	Member of the Badminton World Federation's (BWF) Athletes'
Justice Sanjaya Kumar Mishra	Acting Chief Justice of the High Court of Uttarakhand
HO Suri	MD and CEO of IFFCO-TOKIO General Insurance
Rajeev Ahuja	New MD of RBL Bank
Kamlesh Gandhi	Co-Chairman of the Finance Industry Development Council (FIDC)
Mohammed Ben Sulayem	First non-European president of motorsport's world governing body, the International Automobile Federation (FIA)
Eishin Chihana	New Chairman of India Yamaha Motor (IYM) Pvt Ltd
Narandran 'Jody' Kollapen	South Africa's highest judicial bench, the Constitutional Court
Vivek Joshi	To head the committee setup by GOI to look into the demand for withdrawal of Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act 'AFSPA' in Nagaland
Atul Kumar Goel	MD & CEO of Punjab National Bank (PNB)
Soma Sankara Prasad	MD & CEO of UCO Bank
IAS Praveen Kumar	Director General & Chief Executive Officer, Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs (IICA)
Radhika Jha	CEO of Energy Efficiency Services (EESL)
Vasudevan PN	MD and CEO of Equitas Small Finance Bank
Vijay Raaz and Varun Sharma	Brand ambassadors of EaseMyTrip

Dr. Anupam Ray	India's Permanent Representative at UN Conference on Disarmament in Geneva
Durga Shankar Mishra	New Chief Secretary of Uttar Pradesh
Chandra Prakash Goyal	Director-General of Forests & Special Secretary (DGF&SS), Ministry of Environment, Forests & Climate Change

## Award and Honors

Awards	Awardee
7th Dr. M S Swaminathan Award for 2017-19	V Praveen Rao
4th Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay NIF (New India Foundation) Book Prize 2021	The book titled 'Naoroji: Pioneer of Indian Nationalism'
'Asom Bhaibav' award, the highest civilian Assam state award for his contribution to cancer care in the state	Ratan Tata
Woman of the Year Award by the World Athletics	Anju Bobby Georg (Indian athlete)
Ciprian Foias Prize for the 'highly original work' in Operator Theory by the American Mathematical Society (AMS)	Nikhil Srivastava (Indian-American mathematician)
Global SME Finance Awards 2021	ESAF Small Finance Bank Limited
56th Jnanpith Award	Nilmani Phookan Jr (Assamese poet)
57th Jnanpith Award	Damodar Mauzo (Konkani novelist)
'Young Geospatial Scientist' award	Ropesh Goyal
2022 Royal Gold Medal by the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA)	Balkrishna Doshi (Indian architect)
2021 DST-ICTP-IMU Ramanujan Prize for Young Mathematicians from Developing Countries for her outstanding work in affine algebraic geometry and commutative algebra	Neena Gupta (Indian Mathematician)

Two DigiDhan awards from the Union Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology	Karnataka Bank
10th annual Dr. Ida S. Scudder Humanitarian Oration	Azim Premji
ET BFSI Excellence Awards 2021 in two categories of 'Innovative API/Open Banking model' category and 'Best Digital Customer Experience initiative' category	DBS Bank India
SJFI (Sports Journalists Federation of India) Medal 2021	Sunil Gavaskar
Golden Peacock Environment Management Award 2021	Steel Authority of India Ltd. (SAIL)
UN Women's Award for Leadership Commitment 2021 at the 2021 Regional Asia-Pacific Women's Empowerment Principles Awards Ceremony	Divya Hegde
Most Innovative Research Institutions category award by the CII	IIT Roorkee
Mother Teresa Memorial Award for Social Justice 2021	Dr. Anil Prakash Joshi (Environmentalism)
Digital Innovation of the Year Award at Times Higher Education (THE) Asia Awards 2021	O. P. Jindal Global University (JGU)
'Most Effective Bank-Fintech Partnership: Agile and Adaptable' award at the IBSi Global Fintech Innovation Awards 2021	Vayana Network and Federal Bank
'Most innovative best practice' category award at the coveted Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) Digital Transformation Award 2021	HDFC Bank
Sushila Devi Award 2021 for the Best Book of Fiction for her novel titled 'Kintsugi'	Anukruti Upadhyay
Global Environment and Climate Action Citizen Award 2021	Viral Sudhirbhai Desai (Industrialist)

'2021 Person of the Year' by People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) India	Alia Bhatt
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## Important Days

Date	Day	Theme
1st December 2021	World AIDS Day	--
1st December 2021	57th Raising Day of Border Security Force (BSF)	--
1st December 2021	59th Statehood Day of Nagaland	--
2nd December 2021	International Day for the Abolition of Slavery	--
2nd December 2021	World Computer Literacy Day	--
2nd December 2021	National Pollution Control Day	--
3rd December 2021	International Day of Persons with	--
4th December 2021	National Navy Day	Theme: 'Swarnim Vijay Varsh' (50 years of India's victory in the Indo-Pakistan war, which took place in 1971)
4th December 2021	International Day of Banks	--
5th December 2021	International Volunteer Day (IVD) or International Volunteer Day for Economic and Social Development	Theme: Volunteer now for our common future
5th December 2021	World Soil Day	--
6th December 2021	Mahaparinirvana Divas	--
7th December 2021	International Civil Aviation Day	Theme: 'Advancing Innovation for Global Aviation Development'
7th December 2021	National Armed Forces Day or National flag day of India	--

8th December to 14th December 2021	Energy Conservation Week by Ministry of Power	--
9th December 2021	International Anti-Corruption Day	Theme: 'Your right, your role: say no to corruption'
10th December 2021	Human Rights Day	Theme: 'EQUALITY – Reducing inequalities, advancing human rights'
11th December 2021	International Mountain Day	Theme: Sustainable mountain tourism
11th December 2021	UNICEF Day	--
12th December 2021	International Day of Neutrality	--
12th December 2021	International Universal Health Coverage Day	Theme: 'Leave No One's Health Behind: Invest in health systems for all'
14th December 2021	National Energy Conservation day	--
15th December 2021	International Tea Day	--
16th December 2021	50th Vijay Diwas	--
18th December 2021	World Arabic Language Day	Theme: The Arabic Language and Civilizational Communication
18th December 2021	Minorities Rights Day	--
18th December 2021	International Migrants Day	Theme: Harnessing the potential of human mobility
19th December 2021	Goa Liberation Day	--
20th December 2021	International Human Solidarity Day	--
20th December to 25th December 2021	Good Governance Week 2021	Theme: 'Prashasan Gaon Ki Aur'

22nd December 2021	National Mathematics Day	--
23rd December 2021	Kisan Diwas or National Farmers' Day	--
24th December 2021	National Consumer Rights Day	--
25th December 2021	Good Governance Day	--
27th December 2021	International day for Epidemic Preparedness	--

## Books & Authors

Name of the Book	Author	Published by
The Ambuja Story: How a Group of Ordinary Men Created an Extraordinary Company.	Indian businessman and philanthropist Narotam Sekhsaria	HarperCollins Publishers India
1971: Charge of the Gorkhas and Other Stories	Rachna Bisht Rawat	Penguin Random House India (PRHI)
Public Service Ethics	Prabhat Kumar, former Governor of Jharkhand	IC Centre for Governance
The Midway Battle: Modi's Roller-coaster Second Term	Gautam Chintamani	IC Centre for Governance
Watershed: How We Destroyed India's Water and How We Can Save It	Mridula Ramesh	Hachette India
Pride, Prejudice and Punditry	Dr Shashi Tharoor	Aleph
Gandhitopi Governor	Shri Yarlagadda Lakshmi Prasad	Emesco Books
Rewinding of First 25 years of Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology	Shri S.S. Oberoi	

The Monk Who Transformed Uttar Pradesh: How Yogi Adityanath Changed UP Waala Bhaiya' abuse to a Badge of Honour	Shantanu Gupta	Garuda Prakashan
Sahakar Sandarbha	Union Home Minister Amit Shah released	
Spices Statistics at a Glance 2021	Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar released	Directorate of Arecanut and Spices Development (DASD)
The Turnover Wizard (autobiography of former NTPC and NBCC chief Arup Roy Choudhury)	Vice-President M Venkaiah Naidu released	HP Hamilton
Dr. V.L. Dutt - Glimpses of a Pioneer's Life Journey	V.L. Indira Dutt & released by Vice-President M. Venkaiah Naidu	
The Modi Gambit : Decoding Modi 2.0	Sanju Verma (Economist and BJP national spokesperson)	Gaurav Book Center Private limited

## Sports

- Indian tennis player Ramkumar Ramanathan won his maiden Challenger level singles title 12 years after turning a Pro, after he defeated Evgeny Karlovskiy of the Russian Tennis Federation in the final of the ATP Challenger tournament in Manama, Bahrain.
- Squash star Saurav Ghosal made history as he became the first Indian to win the Malaysian Open Championships after beating Miguel Rodriguez 11-7, 11-8 and 13-11 in the men's singles final in Kuala Lumpur to win the 2021 Malaysian Open Squash Championships title.
- Legendary Indian athlete Anju Bobby George has been bestowed with the Woman of the Year Award by World Athletics for grooming talent in the country and for her advocacy of gender equality.
- India beat European giants Belgium by a solitary goal 1-0 to progress to the semifinals in the FIH Junior Men's Hockey World Cup at the Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar in Odisha.
- New Zealand's Mumbai-born spinner Ajaz Patel claimed all 10 Indian wickets in the second Test, becoming only the third bowler in cricket history to achieve the feat.
- India's Ananya Bansal won the country's first silver medal in shot put in the F-20 category at the Asia Youth Paralympic Games in Manama, Bahrain.
- Mercedes Driver Lewis Hamilton won the inaugural Saudi Arabian Grand Prix at Jeddah Corniche Circuit, Saudi Arabia.
- Argentina defeated six-time winners Germany 4-2 in the FIH Men's junior hockey world cup 2021 final at the Kalinga Stadium in Odisha.
- World number seven Indian shuttler PV Sindhu settled for a silver medal after being defeated by South Korea's An Se-young in the BWF World Tour Finals.

- The Indian men's squash team won the silver medal at the 20th Asian Squash Championship in Malaysia.
- The Russian Tennis Federation has won the Davis Cup after beating Croatia 2-0 in the final in Madrid after 15 years.
- India beat New Zealand by 372 runs in the second test at Mumbai to win the two-match series 1-0.
- Sanket Mahadev Sargar won the gold medal in the Men's 55kg snatch category at the ongoing Commonwealth Weightlifting Championships 2021 in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.
- Indian para-athletes won 41 medals (12 gold, 15 silver, and 14 bronze medals) at the Asian Youth Para Games held in Riffa city.
- On Dec 10, 2021, Reigning world chess champion Magnus Carlsen of Norway defended his title and won the FIDE World Championship in Dubai, UAE.
- Red Bull's Max Verstappen defeated Mercedes' Lewis Hamilton to win his maiden F1 world championship title in the Abu Dhabi Grand Prix at the Yas Marina Circuit in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.
- 23-year-old Chandeeep Singh, an International Para Taekwondo Athlete bagged a silver medal in Men's plus 80 kg event at 9th Para World Taekwondo Championships held at Istanbul, Turkey from December 9 to 12 2021.
- Indian rower Arvind Singh won the gold medal beating his opponents with a time of 7:55.942 in the men's lightweight single sculls at the Asian Rowing Championships 2021 in Thailand.
- The International Cricket Council (ICC) has announced Australia opener David Warner and West Indies all-rounder Hayley Matthews were voted the ICC Players of the Month for November 2021.
- Union Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports Anurag Singh Thakur inaugurated the first edition of Khelo India U21 Women's Hockey League at the iconic Major Dhyani Chaudhary National Stadium in New Delhi.
- The central government has identified a total of 148 athletes, including 20 new inductees, in seven Olympic disciplines and six Paralympic disciplines for support under the Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS) at a meeting of the Mission Olympic Cell of the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports.
- Kidambi Srikanth became the first Indian male shuttler to win silver in men's singles event at the BWF World Championships 2021.
- India's Hansini Mathan Rajan defeated Syria's Hend Zaza, the youngest athlete of this year's Tokyo Olympics, to win the girls singles event at the 2021 ITTF Hopes and Challenge table tennis tournament in Amman.
- Indian men's hockey team won the bronze medal at Asian Champions Trophy 2021 after beating Pakistan 4-3 in a third-place play-off match.
- Himachal Pradesh beat Tamil Nadu by 11 runs to clinch their maiden Vijay Hazare Trophy title at the Sawai Mansingh Stadium in Jaipur.
- World No. 7 Nitesh Kumar doubled his gold tally at the 4th Para-Badminton National Championship, which concluded in Bhubaneswar, Odisha.
- Japanese tennis player Moyuka Uchijima beat fourth seed Diana Marcinkevica of Latvia 6-2, 7-5 in the singles final of the 20th edition of the NECC Deccan \$25,000 Women's ITF Championships.

- In Hockey, Uttar Pradesh were crowned the winners of the 11th Junior National Men's
- Championship following a 3-1 victory over Chandigarh in the final at Kovilpatti, Tamil Nadu

## Nation and States Miscellaneous

- The Union government has formed a five-member committee to ensure timely completion of various projects executed under the Central Vista Redevelopment Plan.
- Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag Thakur, has announced that, Prasar Bharati has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with IIT, Kanpur to develop Next Generation Broadcast solution for digital terrestrial broadcasting
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate InFINITY Forum, a thought leadership Forum on FinTech, on 3rd of December via video conferencing.
- Parliament passed the Farm Laws Repeal Bill, 2021, with the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha approving it on the first day of the Winter Session.
- Government has approved the strategic disinvestment of Central Electronics Limited.
- NITI Aayog has pushed for Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) for speedy access to justice.
- Production Linked Incentive of Rs. 120 crore is provided for Indian manufacturers of drone and drone components
- As 21.52 crore loans have been extended to women borrowers by Member Lending Institutions (MLIs) under the Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY) since inception of the Scheme.
- As a part of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav to celebrate and commemorate 75 years of progressive India, NITI Aayog is organizing knowledge sharing workshop on Natural Farming a series of events from November 2021 to April 2022.
- On November 30, The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment announced the Centre has formed a three-member committee to review the criteria for reservation for the Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) category.
- On Dec 03, 2021, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi will inaugurate InFINITY Forum, a thought leadership Forum on FinTech via video conferencing.
- 'Bijli Utsav' organized by REC in Assam as part of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav
- The President of India, Ram Nath Kovind, has inaugurated the fifth International Ambedkar Conclave, being organised by the Forum of SC and ST Legislators and Parliamentarians and Ambedkar Chamber of Commerce, (December 2, 2021) in New Delhi
- Ministry of Culture implements Scheme of Financial Assistance for the Development of Buddhist/Tibetan Culture and Art under "Kala Sanskriti Vikas Yojna (KSVY)
- The Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (CIE) of IIIT Hyderabad has won a Rs.5-crore grant under the Startup India Seed Fund Scheme run by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Government of India.
- The Democratic-controlled U.S. Senate passed a bill to fund the government through mid-February, averting the risk of a shutdown after overcoming a bid by some Republicans to delay the vote in a protest against vaccine mandates.
- Ride-hailing company Ola has received 1 million reservations for its electric scooter, Chief Executive Officer Bhavish Aggarwal, with first deliveries on track for December 15.
- The Centre is set to launch the Residential Education for Students in High Schools in Targeted Areas (SRESHTA) scheme.

- The Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (Amendment) Bill, 2021 was introduced in the Lok Sabha.
- The first-ever India Russia 22 Ministerial Dialogue is underway in New Delhi.
- External Affairs Minister Dr S Jaishankar has stressed on the importance of respecting and facilitating freedom of navigation and overflight and unimpeded commerce in a globalised world, while addressing the fifth Indian Ocean Conference in Abu Dhabi.
- Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh has called upon Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) to invest more in research & development and manufacture new products & technologies and thereby contribute to the security and progress of the country.
- National Cadet Corps (NCC) is conducting 'Azadi ki Vijay Shrankhla aur Sanskritiyon ka Mahasangam' event as part of Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav.
- As the nation celebrates 75 years of independence with Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, MyGov has lauded the citizens who actively participated in the MyGov challenges, shared their logo ideas, and helped the government in formulation of policies and programmes.
- The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI), the apex anti-smuggling intelligence and investigation agency functioning under the aegis of the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC), celebrated its 64th Founding Day.
- Union Minister for Tourism Shri G Kishan Reddy inaugurated tourist facilitation center and public utilities and changing room on Colva Beach in South Goa.
- As part of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav" celebrations, MeitY Startup Hub held its Tech-Startup Summit.
- Shri Ram Nath Kovind, the Honourable President of India, will award the President's Standard to the 22nd Missile Vessel Squadron, also known as the Killer Squadron at a ceremonial parade to be held at Naval Dockyard, Mumbai on 08 Dec 21.
- The Lok Sabha has passed the National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education and Research (Amendment) Bill, 2021
- AAI to spend around INR 25,000 crores in next five years for expansion and modification of existing terminals.
- To initiate infrastructure development to boost the economy after COVID-19 pandemic, Union Budget 2021-22 has provided a capital outlay of Rs. 5.54 lakh crore, an increase of 34.5% over Budget Estimate of FY 2020-21.
- Scheduled Commercial Banks recover Rs 90 crore from financial frauds in last 5 years
- Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban 2.0 (SBM-U 2.0), under the aegis of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA), has launched the Swachh Technology Challenge.
- Chief Justice of India N V Ramana pressed for establishing a new body to improve judicial infrastructure.
- The Innovations in Technology Dissemination component of National Agricultural Technology Project (NATP) was implemented in seven States in the country namely, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Orissa, Maharashtra and Punjab through four project districts in each State.
- The National Development Council (NDC) in its 53rd meeting held on 29th May, 2007 adopted a resolution to launch a Food Security Mission comprising rice, wheat and pulses to increase the annual production of rice by 10 million tonnes, wheat by 8 million tonnes and pulses by 2 million tonnes by the end of the Eleventh Plan (2011-12).
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated three mega projects worth ₹9,600 crore in

- Gorakhpur in Uttar Pradesh.
- A Curtain Raiser Event for Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief exercise, PANEX-21, for the member nations of BIMSTEC countries, was held at Kothari Auditorium DRDO Bhawan, New Delhi on 07 Dec 2021.
- Permanent Mission of India to the WTO in Geneva signs tripartite MoU with Centre for Trade and Investment Law, New Delhi.
- The Ministry of Civil Aviation and Ministry of Health & Family Welfare has mandated contactless self-declaration at Air Suvidha Portal, to ensure the smooth passage of international travellers arriving in India.
- NITI Aayog and CSE release Waste-wise Cities: Best practices in municipal solid waste management
- Parliament has passed the Assisted Reproductive Technology (Regulation) Bill, 2021 with the Rajya Sabha approving it. The Bill has already been passed by the Lok Sabha.
- The Lok Sabha has passed the High Court and Supreme Court Judges (Salaries and Conditions of Service) Amendment Bill, 2021 by voice vote.
- The Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) virtually launched "Certification Course on Home Energy Audit (HEA)", during "National Energy Conservation Week: 8th–14th December 2021", marked as Iconic Week under "Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav".
- The President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind, presented the President's Standard to the 22nd Missile Vessel Squadron of the Indian Navy in Mumbai, Maharashtra (December 8, 2021).
- The National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) along with the Centre for Ganga River Basin Management and Studies (c-Ganga) are organizing the 6th edition of the India Water Impact Summit (IWIS) from 9th December to 14th December 2021.
- Towards the closure of the "Infinity Forum, 2021", IFSCA launched the FinTech Hackathon "Sprint04: Market-Tech".
- Power Ministry is celebrating Energy Conservation Week under Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav from 8th to 14th December. This year, the theme for the competition is 'Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav: Energy Efficient India' and 'Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav: Cleaner Planet'.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit Balrampur, Uttar Pradesh and inaugurate the Saryu Nahar National Project.
- Union Minister for Finance and Corporate Affairs Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman has participated virtually from New Delhi in the G20 International Seminar hosted in Bali by the G20 Presidency of Indonesia. G20's theme for the year, "Recover Together, Recover Stronger".
- "Main Bhi Digital 3.0" campaign aimed at digital onboarding of Street Vendors who are provided loans under PM SVANidhi Scheme
- The Minister of State for Petroleum and Natural Gas, Shri Rameswar in the Lok Sabha has informed that the Government has set a target to raise the share of natural gas in energy mix to 15% in 2030 from about 6.7% now.
- The Education Ministry has launched a mobile app called Bhasha Sangam in order to help people acquire basic conversation ability in languages other than one's mother tongue to at least 75 lakh people.
- On December 9, 2021, India's Permanent Ambassador to the UN, T S Tirumurti announced The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) has granted Observer Status to the International Solar Alliance.

- Rajya Sabha is now taking up the Delhi Special Police Establishment (Amendment) Bill, 2021.
- Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya has chaired India Global Forum Healthcare Roundtable in Dubai.
- Ministry of Tourism under its Dekho Apna Desh Initiatives organising webinars on 'Jyotirlingam Temples of Maharashtra': various tourism centric subjects, themes etc.
- Haiderpur Wetland of Western Uttar Pradesh has been recognised under the 1971 Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, bringing the total number of such designated areas in the country to 47.
- Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi addressed a function on "Depositors First: Guaranteed Time-bound Deposit Insurance Payment up to Rs. 5 Lakh" in New Delhi.
- As a part of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, a week-long event, "Celebrating Innovation Ecosystem", to be hosted by Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), is proposed to be held in January 2022.
- The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has initiated a National Helpline Against Atrocities (NHAA). The Helpline is available round the clock on toll-free number "14566" across the country in Hindi, English and regional language of the State/UTs.
- Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi inaugurated Shri Kashi Vishwanath Dham in Varanasi. He prayed at the Kaal Bhairav Temple and Kashi Vishvanath Dham in Kashi.
- Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban) 2.0 and AMRUT 2.0 to make the city's garbage free and water secure during the mission period of five years (2021-2026)
- Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu will inaugurate an exhibition on Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat in Hyderabad city.
- North Eastern Development Finance Corporation Ltd. (NEDFi) has launched the Atma Nirbhar Hastshilpkar scheme which will provide financial assistance to the grass root Artisans of the region.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will address the function on Depositors First-Guaranteed Time- bound Deposit Insurance Payment up to 5 Lakh rupees in Vigyan Bhawan.
- Ministry of Defence (MoD) has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Indian Institute of Teacher Education (IITE) Gandhinagar to facilitate training to teachers of Sainik Schools
- Doordarshan will be hosting the international finals of Robocon 2022 in August next year. The Robot competition, which is organised by Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union and hosted by different member countries every year, will be held in New Delhi in 2022.
- Chairperson, Lokpal of India, Justice Pinaki Chandra Ghose inaugurates Digital Platform for Management of complaints- 'LokpalOnline'
- NITI Aayog in partnership with Bharti Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Bharti Enterprises, launched Convoke 2021-22.
- NTPC has awarded a project of "Standalone Fuel-Cell based Micro-grid with hydrogen production using electrolyser in NTPC Guest House at Simhadri (near Visakhapatnam)".
- As part of the ongoing 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' celebrations, the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI), in association with the State Bank of India (SBI) and the Indian Banks' Association (IBA), organised a one-day workshop, in hybrid mode, on the subject titled "Committee of Creditors: An Institution of Public Faith".
- Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya has chaired India Global Forum Healthcare Roundtable in Dubai. Mr Mandaviy, he discussed various issues related to healthcare.

- Ministry of Women and Child Development has invited all the stakeholders on the draft
- 'Trafficking in Persons (Prevention, Care and Rehabilitation) Bill, 2021'.
- Virendra Kumar inaugurates 'Samajik Adhikarita Shivar' for distribution of aids and assistive devices to 'Divyangjan' and Senior Citizens
- Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi will lay the foundation stone of Ganga Expressway in Shahjahanpur, Uttar Pradesh on 18 December 2021.
- Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi addressed farmers at the National Conclave on Natural Farming through a video conference.
- MeitY organises 25th CISO Deep Dive Training program under Cyber Surakshit Bharat initiative
- Venkaiah Naidu inaugurates the National Parliamentary Conference on Tuberculosis among Women
- The National Anti-Doping Bill, 2021, The Wild Life (Protection) Amendment Bill, 2021 and The Chartered Accountants, the Cost and Works Accountants and the Company Secretaries (Amendment) Bill, 2021 are scheduled to be introduced in the Lok Sabha.
- Rural Development Minister Giriraj Singh launched the Management Information System (MIS) portal for rankings of States and Union Territories in Land Acquisition Projects.
- The Ministry of External Affairs will be organizing the second Atal Bihari Vajpayee Lecture on 24 December 2021.
- India's Ashok Leyland and the combat vehicles research and development establishment (CVRDE) have partnered to develop and manufacture the 600hp indigenous engine for combat vehicles.
- The union cabinet approved the proposal to raise the minimum age of marriage for women from 18 to 21 years old.
- A programme to support India-US S&T-based entrepreneurial initiatives that address the development and implementation of next-generation clean and renewable energy, energy storage, and carbon sequestration has been announced to tackle climate and clean energy challenges.
- As a part of the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, Shri Nagendra Nath Sinha, Secretary, Department of Rural Development, Ministry of Rural Development will launch the overdraft facility of Rs. 5,000 to verified women SHG members under DAY-NRLM, on 18th December 2021.
- The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) has launched the
- Unified Logistics Interface Platform's (ULIP) Hackathon – 'LogiXtics' in order to crowdsource more ideas which will benefit the logistics industry.
- Ministry of Panchayati Raj organises National Webinar on Atmanirbhar Panchayats in commemoration of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav.
- Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Shri Nitin Gadkari has laid Foundation stone and Inaugurated 232 km of National Highways at a cost of Rs.4160 Crore in Jaunpur and Mirzapur in Uttar Pradesh in presence of Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh Shri Yogi Adityanath.
- Competition Commission of India (CCI) approves acquisition of shareholding in Air India Limited, Air India Express Limited and Air India SATS Airport Services Private Limited by Talace Private Limited.

- The Competition Commission of India (CCI) approves acquisition up to 16.94% equity share capital of IRB Infrastructure Developers Limited by Bricklayers Investment Pte. Ltd. under Section 31(1) of the Competition Act, 2002.
- The Competition Commission of India (CCI) approves acquisition of controlling stake in Forbes Enviro Solutions Limited by Lunolux Limited under Section 31(1) of the Competition Act, 2002.
- NITI Aayog signed a Statement of Intent with United Nations World Food Program (WFP) on 20th December 2021.
- PANEX-21, a multi-national - multi-agency exercise is being organised at Pune from 20-22 Dec 2021.
- Bharati Pravin Pawar, Union Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare inaugurated the National Oxygen Stewardship Program of the Union Health Ministry, at AIIMS New Delhi.
- Atal Innovation Mission, NITI Aayog launches Vernacular Innovation Program (VIP) to Empower Innovators.
- The Government of Gujarat is organising the 10th Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit 2022, from 10 -12 January 2022, at Mahatma Mandir Convention and Exhibition Centre, Gandhinagar, Gujarat.
- In a major bid to realize the nation's goals of improving "Ease of living" and "Ease of doing business", the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) is conducting a National Workshop on the "Next Phase of Reforms for Reducing Compliance Burden" on 22nd December, 2021.
- The union minister for Home and Cooperation, Shri Amit Shah, chaired the Consultative Committee of the Ministry of Home Affairs on the topic "Cyber Crime: Threats, Challenges and Response" in New Delhi.
- Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), NITI Aayog and the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) rolled out their first Agri-Tech Challenge cohort for its ambitious innovative Agri-tech program that aims to help smallholder farmers across Asia and Africa to address their challenges in the aftermath of the pandemic.
- Bhupender Yadav has inaugurated 35th edition of "Hunar Haat" in New Delhi
- The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi addressed the 2nd National Committee meeting on Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav in New Delhi.
- Under Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Ann Yojana, Centre is providing five-kilogram food grains per person per month free of cost to all beneficiaries covered under the National Food Security Act
- Union Tribal Affairs Minister, Arjun Munda has launched 'TRIFED Van Dhan', a Pictorial Chronicle of Tribal grit and enterprise.
- Arjun Munda inaugurates 14 Honey Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) of TRIFED
- The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA), Government of India has launched the 'Azadi@75 Star Rating Protocol of Garbage Free Cities- Toolkit 2022', the most important governance tool of waste management – the Star Rating Protocol for Garbage Free Cities.
- Union Minister for Chemicals and Fertilizers Shri Mansukh Mandaviya has chaired a high-level meeting in which it was decided to continue support to domestic industry for production of P&K fertilizers

- Union Minister of Home Affairs and Minister of Cooperation, Mr Amit Shah has released the Good Governance Index 2021 prepared by DARPG on Good Governance Day at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi.
- NITI Aayog as the premier policy 'Think Tank' of the Government of India, believes in the mantra
- 'what gets measured gets done.
- National Book Trust, India, under Ministry of Education, has announced the results of the All- India Contest organized on the Theme 'National Movement of India' under the PM-YUVA Mentorship Scheme as part of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav programmes.
- Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi will visit Kanpur on 28 December 2021 and inaugurate the completed section of Kanpur Metro Rail Project.
- Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi will visit Mandi, Himachal Pradesh on 27 December 2021. He will inaugurate and lay the foundation stone of hydropower projects worth over Rs 11,000 crore.
- Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM) organised a special event called "Discourse on Rural Financial Inclusion" on 18th December, 2021 through virtual mode to celebrate 75 years of the independence of the country under Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav.
- India has imposed anti-dumping duties on five Chinese products, including certain aluminum goods and some chemicals, for five years to guard local manufacturers from cheap imports from the neighboring country.
- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has e-inaugurated 27 infra projects constructed by Border Roads Organisation (BRO).
- Nagaland Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio, the Centre has decided to constitute a five-member committee to look into the withdrawal of Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958 or AFSPA from the northeastern state.
- The Karnataka legislative assembly has passed the Protection of Right to Freedom of Religion Bill, 2021 popularly known as the anti-conversion bill amid protests.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has attended the 54th Convocation Ceremony of the Indian Institute of Technology in Kanpur.
- Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has visited Haldwani, Uttarakhand on 30th December, 2021 and has inaugurated & lay the foundation stone of 23 projects worth over Rs 17500 crore.
- India has achieved its NDC target with total non-fossil based installed energy capacity of 157.32 GW
- The Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IIT Madras) has been recognised as the Most Innovative Educational Institute in India for the third consecutive year. It has been Ranked #1 in the Atal Ranking of Institutions on Innovation Achievements (ARIIA)
- Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) NITI Aayog has released the second edition of – 'Innovations for You'- a compendium of innovations focused on agriculture featuring 70 startups supported by Atal incubation Centers (AICs) of AIM and 'The Ingenious Tinkerers'
- Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has inaugurated and laid the foundation stone of 23 projects worth over Rs 17500 crore in Uttarakhand.

## States

- Asian Paints has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Government of Gujarat, commencing the proposed expansion of manufacturing capacity at its Ankleshwar facility at a total investment of about Rs.960 crore at the current prices.
- Nagaland DGP T. John Longkumer officially launched the 'Call your Cop' mobile App at Police Headquarters in Kohima.
- The Chennai-headquartered ICT Academy, an initiative of the Government of India in collaboration with the State governments and industries, has partnered with UiPath, an enterprise automation software company, to take the UiPath Academic Alliance programme to over 1,000 ICT Academy partner institutions across India.
- Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma inaugurated the ambitious Assam Micro Finance Incentive and Relief Scheme-2021 at Collegiate High School playground in Tezpur in Sonitpur district, Assam.
- Union Ministry of Electronics & IT, Govt of Andhra Pradesh and NASSCOM launch 'Centre of Excellence of IoT and AI' in Visakhapatnam
- Drinking water supply schemes worth Rs 1,816 Crore were approved for Rajasthan in the State- level Scheme Sanctioning Committee (SLSSC) meeting held.
- Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi will visit Dehradun and inaugurate & lay the foundation stone of multiple projects worth around Rs 18,000 crore
- The Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG) in collaboration with Government of Odisha is organizing a Regional Conference on the theme: "Replication of Good Governance Practices," at Bhubaneswar in a semi-virtual mode
- Nagaland observed the 59th Statehood Day at the Nagaland Civil Secretariat Plaza in Kohima on 1st December 2021.
- Union Minister of Ports, Shipping & Waterways and AYUSH Sarbananda Sonowal has announced AYUSH Development packages for Manipur.
- Himachal Pradesh government will organize a mega event at AIIMS Bilaspur to mark the achievement of hundred percent COVID vaccination of second dose for its eligible population.
- Central grant of Rs. 1,667 Crore released to Maharashtra under Jal Jeevan Mission
- Buoyed by the success of its innovative Project RE-HAB (Reducing Elephant-Human Attacks using Bees) in Karnataka, Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) has now replicated the project in Assam.
- Drinking water supply schemes of Rs 267.66 Crore were approved under Jal Jeevan Mission in Uttarakhand in the State-level scheme sanctioning committee (SLSSC) meeting held on 2nd December, 2021.
- Jal Jeevan Mission in Meghalaya, the Government of India released 169.60 Crore to the State. Central fund of ₹678.39 Crore has been allocated to the State for 2021-22 for the implementation of Jal Jeevan Mission, which is nearly four times the allocation for 2020-21.
- With a focus to expedite the implementation of Jal Jeevan Mission in Punjab, the Government of India released 402.24 Crore to the State.
- The Government of India and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) has signed a \$125 million loan to improve access to safe and affordable drinking water supply and citywide inclusive sanitation services in Dehradun and Nainital cities in the state of Uttarakhand.

- The Government of India and Asian Development Bank (ADB) has signed a \$150 million loan to provide access to inclusive, resilient, and sustainable housing for the urban poor in the state of Tamil Nadu.
- The Union Government led by Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi is according top priority to make provision of tap water connection in every rural household across the country, for which since August, 2019, Jal Jeevan Mission is under implementation in partnership with States.
- The Union Government led by Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi is according top priority to make provision of tap water connection in every rural household across the country, for which since August, 2019, Jal Jeevan Mission is under implementation in partnership with States.
- Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh to inaugurate 7th International Science Festival of India in Goa
- Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal launched the 'Meghalayan Age' store in New Delhi.
- In the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, the NITI Aayog will be establishing 1000 Atal Tinkering Laboratories (ATLs) of which 187 will be established by the end of this financial year.
- North Eastern Council, Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (MDoNER) have sanctioned a project for construction of Outdoor Stadium at Chayangtajo in East Kameng District, Arunachal Pradesh.
- Union Minister for Ports Shipping and Waterways Shri Sarbananda Sonowal inaugurated the River Cruise Services at the Marmugao Port in Goa.
- Union Minister for Ports Shipping and Waterways Shri Sarbananda Sonowal inaugurated the River Cruise Services at the Marmugao Port in Goa.
- With a focus to expedite the implementation of Jal Jeevan Mission in Jammu & Kashmir, the Government of India released Rs 604 Crore to the Union Territory.
- Drinking water supply schemes of Rs 56.7 Crore were approved under Jal Jeevan Mission by Uttarakhand in the State-level scheme sanctioning committee (SLSSC) meeting held on 13th December, 2021.
- In Madhya Pradesh, the first drone fair in the country was organised at Gwalior. Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, Madhya Pradesh will be made a leading state by using drone technology.
- Odisha has signed an agreement with United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) to launch "Mission Shakti Living Lab" for the financial empowerment of women.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Maa Umiya Dham Development Project in Gujarat is a perfect example of the notion of 'Sabka Prayas' as this auspicious project will be fulfilled with the efforts of all.
- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurated the exhibition of defence products of Bharat Electronics Limited in Kotdwar, Uttarakhand through virtual medium.
- Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Science & Technology, Dr Jitendra Singh inaugurated the seventh edition of India International Science Festival (IISF- 2021) at Panaji, Goa.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has chaired the All-India Mayors' Conference in Varanasi via video conferencing.

- The Haryana government has started the Khel Nursery Scheme to promote sports in the state. This was stated by Minister of State for Sports and Youth Affairs Sandeep Singh.
- The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) has approved the \$150 million 'Chennai City Partnership: Sustainable Urban Services Programme' that seeks to strengthen institutions and improve the quality and financial sustainability of selected urban services in Chennai.
- North East Cane And Bamboo Development Council (NECBDC) Guwahati organised a Two-Day Youth Conclave organized by Chandra Prabha Saikiani Centre for Women Studies Tezpur University (A Central University), Assam.
- Haryana Minister of State for Sports and Youth Affairs Sandeep Singh had started 'Khel Nursery Scheme 2022-23' to promote sports in the state.
- The Government of India and the German Development Bank – KFW (Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau) has signed agreements for Euro 140 million reduced interest loan and Euro 2 million grant for Energy Reform Programme, Madhya Pradesh.
- 7 new Internet Exchanges launched by MoS (Electronics & IT) Shri Rajeev Chandrasekhar and MoS( Law & Justice) in Uttar Pradesh
- Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Shri Nitin Gadkari has inaugurated and laid foundation stone of National Highway projects of 240 Km worth Rs.9119 crore in Meerut and Muzaffarnagar in Uttar Pradesh.
- Drinking water supply schemes of Rs. 164.03 Crore were approved under Jal Jeevan Mission by Uttarakhand in the State-level scheme sanctioning committee (SLSSC) meeting held on 23rd December, 2021.
- The Ministry of AYUSH announced a slew of major initiatives to push healthcare facilities in the state of Uttar Pradesh.
- Renewable energy firm Amp Energy India has commissioned its second open access solar project in Maharashtra. Amp Energy India has recently commissioned a 13.5 MW solar power project for cement manufacturer Orient Cement
- The Chief Minister of Haryana, Manohar Lal Khattar has launched the 'Haryana Kaushal Rozgar Nigam portal' and announced to set up the Atal Park & Smriti Kendra in Gurugram, Haryana.

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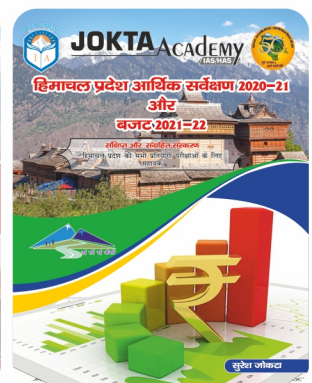
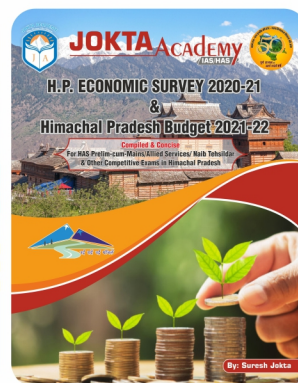
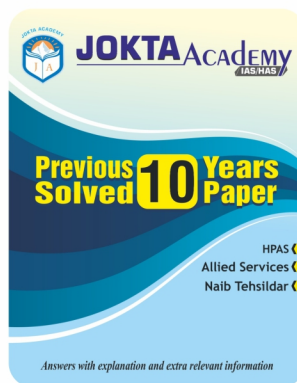
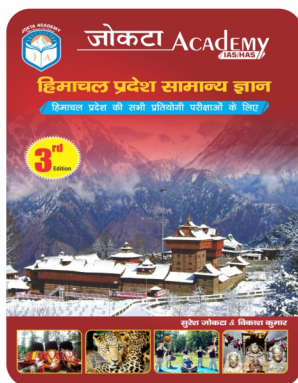
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