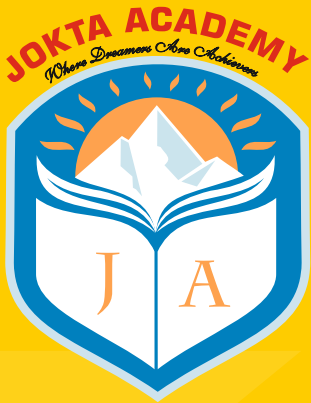


# JOKTA Academy

IAS/HAS



JOKTA Academy  
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**PRE/MAINS  
HPAS NOTES  
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JOKTA Academy  
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**PRE/MAINS  
HPAS MAINS  
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# GENERAL AWARENESS JULY 2021

# 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 alot in clearing District manager exam. My engagement with academy as well as with Suresh Jotka Sir benefited me immensely to clear the exam.

*Vipin Kumar*  
VIPAN KUMAR  
District Manager  
(2021)



**Anshul Kumar**  
HAS Rank-15 (DEO)

## EXECUTIVE OFFICERS/SECRETARY



**Anubhav sharma**  
Executive Officer



**Piyush Chauhan**  
Secretary



**Rajneesh Chauhan**  
Secretary



# 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



**Sunil Kumar**  
Ex Inspector

Every Success story is an outcome of so many JOKTA's 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.



**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)



**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

*Dharmender Kumar*  
Dharmender Kumar  
HPAS-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  
(HPAS-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



# Our Previous Year's Achievers



**Somil Gautam**  
HPAS Rank3 (SDM)

I must admit with sincere honesty that Jotita Sir's books and various compilations for Budget and Economic Survey really helped me tremendously to streamline my preparation for HPS Exam. My engagement with the Academy and faculty helped me immediately to clear the Exam.

*Somil Gautam*  
Rank-3 in HPS-2016



**Mahender Pratap Singh**  
SDM

It is really astonishing that the Jotita Sir's books, compiled his long & budget of HP has helped me continuously throughout my preparation. Jotita Sir's name that which made me actual realization of the exam which was not only a true preparation. Really benefited in reading HPAS Exam.

*(Mahender Pratap Singh)*  
HPS-2016



**Vishwa M. Dev Chauhan**  
HAS (SDM)

It is a pleasurable undertaking to state that Jotita Sir's books on Micro & Macro and previously - compiled Economic Survey supplemented with the compilation series complemented my entire preparation in a short span of 1 year. Jotita Sir's guidance and such interviews to Jotita Sir helped me in improving my DAF and self confidence. Everything all together helped me clearing this exam in my first attempt.

*(Vishwa M. Dev Chauhan)*  
HAS-2017-18



**Varun Gulati**  
HPAS Rank-12 (Tehsildar)

It is a privilege acknowledging to write, compile and share the name of Jotita Sir's books in such a brilliant and simple way. The Jotita Sir's and the materials provided by him are helping the journey of clearing HPAS examination.

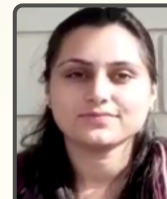
*Varun Gulati*  
Rank-12 in HPAS-2016



**Rohit Kanwar**  
Tehsildar

I would like to thank Jotita Sir's Academy for its support and guidance during my HPAS journey. The name and study material provided by the academy were precise & accurate thereby ensuring material for HPAS exam. Jotita Sir's name is a very helpful name which is appreciable in my kind of guidance needed for preparation.

*Rohit Kanwar*  
Tehsildar



**Girija Mankotia**  
HAS (DTO)

I am thankful to Jotita Sir whose guidance has an important role to play in my success. Sir, your knowledge, experience and active support has been of great help, especially for the personality test. Your influence has extended well into my future.

*Girija Mankotia*



**Anurag Garg**  
HAS (ETO)

Jotita Sir's books & Economic Survey is undoubtedly a guide for the day of HPAS exam. Jotita Sir's name is a very helpful name which is appreciable in my kind of guidance needed for preparation.

*Anurag Garg*  
HAS (ETO)  
(2016)



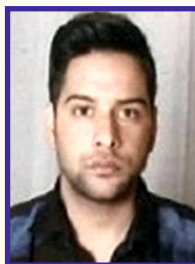
**Manish Kapoor**  
RFO (H.P.F.)

It is an absolute honour & matter of huge pride for me to express my heartfelt gratitude to Jotita Sir & Jotita Academy. Because it is the only academy in which, which focuses specifically on HPAS exam supplemented by quality & crisp material as well as interview guidance programme which boosts aspirants confidence at every single stage of HPAS exam, resulting in aspirants getting selected in HPAS as well as various HP exams.

*Manish Kapoor*  
RFO (H.P.F.)



**VIKASH KUMAR**  
Allied Services  
(T&E Inspector)



**ANIL KUMAR**  
HPAS (B.D.O)



**GAURAV CHAUHAN**  
HPAS (Assistant Registrar)



**RAJEEV RANTA**  
Tehsildar



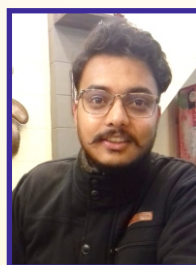
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**NAMAN GUPTA**  
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**GAURAV KUMAR KAUNDAL**  
Excise and Taxation  
Inspector (ETI)



**NAVJOT SINGH**  
Food and Civil  
Supply Inspector (FCS&CA)



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# Polity and Governance

## Draft Anti-Trafficking Bill

### Why in News?

Recently, the **Ministry of Women and Child Development** has **invited comments/suggestions** from all the stakeholders on the **draft Trafficking in Persons (Prevention, Care and Rehabilitation) Bill, 2021**.

### The draft bill aims to

- **Prevent and counter trafficking in persons**, especially women and children.
- **Provide care, protection and rehabilitation to the victims**, while respecting their rights, while creating a supportive legal, economic and social environment for them.
- **Ensure prosecution of offenders** and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.
- A previous draft had been introduced in 2018 and had been passed by Lok Sabha despite stiff opposition from both parliamentarians as well as experts.
- **Experts say that nearly all the concerns raised in 2018 have been addressed in this new draft Bill.**

### Provisions of the new bill

#### Coverage

- **Persons on any ship or aircraft registered in India** wherever it may be or carrying Indian citizens wherever they may be,
- **A foreign national or a stateless person** who has his or her residence in India at the time of commission of offence under this Act, and
- The law will apply to every offence of trafficking in persons with cross-border implications.

#### Wider definition of trafficking

- **It extends beyond the protection of women and children as victims to now include transgender as well as any person who may be a victim of trafficking.**
- **It also does away with the provision that a victim necessarily needs to be transported from one place to another to be defined as a victim.**
- **“Trafficking in Persons” is defined to include –**
  - **Any person who** recruits, transports, transfers, harbors or receives another person;
  - **By means of** threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of authority or of vulnerability, or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person;
  - **For the purpose of exploitation of that person;**

#### Defines ‘Exploitation’

- **Exploitation will include** the “prostitution of others” or other forms of sexual exploitation including pornography, any act of physical exploitation, forced labor or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or forced removal of organs, illegal clinical drug trials or illegal bio-medical research or the like.



- Examples of aggravated offences listed in the Bill include offences that result in the death of the victim or his dependent or any other person, including death as a result of suicide.
- This also includes cases where the offence has been caused by administering any chemical substance or hormones on a person for the purpose of early sexual maturity.

#### **Government Officers as Offenders**

- Offenders will also include **defense personnel and government servants, doctors and paramedical staff or anyone in a position of authority.**

#### **Stringent penalty**

- It is proposed that whoever commits the offence shall be **punishable with a term for ten years but which may extend to imprisonment for life and shall also be liable to fine which may extend to Rs 10 lakh.**
- Offence against a child of less than twelve years of age, or against a woman for the purpose of repeated rape, the person shall be punished with rigorous imprisonment for twenty years, but which may extend to life.
- **In case of second or subsequent conviction, the accused may be punished with death sentence. The fine may extend up to Rs 30 lakh.**
- When a public servant, or a police officer, or a person in charge of or a staff of a women's or children's home or institution is involved, he shall be punishable on conviction for the remainder of natural life.
- A person advertising, publishing, printing, broadcasting or distributing any material that promotes trafficking of a person or exploitation of a trafficked person will invite punishment.

#### **Investigation agency**

- **The National Investigation Agency (NIA)** shall act as the national investigating and coordinating agency responsible for the prevention and combating of trafficking in persons.

#### **Timeframe for granting compensation**

- **The district legal services authority (DLSA)** shall provide immediate relief to the victim and dependent, including aid and assistance for medical and rehabilitation needs, within seven days.
- The DLSA shall award interim relief to a victim or any dependant within a period of thirty days of an application submitted and after due assessment.
- The bill also says the investigation needs to be completed within 90 days from the date of the arrest of the accused.

#### **National Anti-Human Trafficking Committee:**

- Once the law is enacted, the **Centre will notify and establish a National Anti-Human Trafficking Committee**, for ensuring overall effective implementation of the provisions of this law.
  - This committee will have representation from various ministries with the home secretary as the chairperson and secretary of the women and child development ministry as co-chair.
  - State and district level anti-human trafficking committees will also be constituted.

#### **Human Trafficking in India**

- According to statistics of **India's National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB)**, trafficking has manifold objectives.

- These include **forced labor, prostitution, and other forms of sexual exploitation**. According to the NCRB, three out of five people trafficked in 2016 were children below the age of 18 years. Of these, 4,911 were girls and 4,123 were boys.
- **Sexual exploitation for prostitution was the second major purpose for human trafficking in India, after forced labor.**
- **Victims of trafficking in India disproportionately represent people from traditionally disadvantaged gender, caste, and religious groups.**
- People from these groups have been systemically kept at a disadvantage in education, access to productive resources and spaces and legal remedies enhancing their vulnerability.
- Across regions, studies have found that **majority of victims are women and children belonging to the Scheduled Castes (SCs), the Other Backward Classes (OBCs), the Scheduled Tribes (STs) and minority religions.**
- Children are trafficked first and then placed in labor either forced or for earning a sub minimal wage or in case of the more unfortunate ones, i.e. **particularly girls and young boys, are forced into sexual exploitation.**
- Usurious money-lending and debt bondage will also become a force-multiplier for sourcing child labor from the country-side, from desperate families for bondage and trafficking.

### Criticism of the Bill

- According to the United Nations' human rights experts; **it was not in accordance with the international human rights laws.**
- The Bill seemed to **combine sex work and migration with trafficking.**
- **The Bill was criticized for addressing trafficking through a criminal law perspective** instead of complementing it with a human-rights based and victim-centred approach.
- It was also criticized for promoting **"rescue raids"** by the police as well as the institutionalization of victims in the name of rehabilitation.
- It was pointed out that certain vague provisions would lead to **blanket criminalization of activities that do not necessarily relate to trafficking.**

### Significance of the Bill:

- The transgender community, and any other person, has been included which will automatically bring under its scope activity such as organ harvesting.
- Also, cases such as forced labour, in which people lured with jobs end up in other countries where their passports and documentation are taken away and they are made to work, will also be covered by this new law.

### Legislations in India that prohibits human trafficking

- **Article 23 (1)** in the constitution of India prohibits trafficking in human beings and forced labour.
- **Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956 (ITPA)** penalizes trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation.
- India also prohibits bonded and forced labour through the **Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act 1976**, Child Labour (Prohibition and Abolition) Act 1986, and Juvenile Justice Act.
- **Sections 366(A) and 372 of the Indian Penal Code**, prohibits kidnapping and selling minors into prostitution respectively.
- **The Factories Act, 1948** guaranteed the protection of the rights of workers.

### International Conventions, Protocols and Campaigns



- **Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children in 2000 as a part of the UN Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime.**
- This protocol was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in **2000**.
- **The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) is responsible for implementing the protocol.**
- It offers practical help to states with drafting laws, creating comprehensive national anti-trafficking strategies, and assisting with resources to implement them.
- Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air. It entered into force on 28 January 2004.
- This also supplements the UN Convention Against Transnational Organised Crime. The Protocol is aimed at the protection of rights of migrants and the reduction of the power and influence of organized criminal groups that abuse migrants.
- **Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)** is a non-binding declaration that establishes the right of every human to live with dignity and prohibits slavery.
- **Blue Heart Campaign:** The Blue Heart Campaign is an international anti-trafficking program started by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).
- **Sustainable Development Goals:** Various SDGs aim to end trafficking by targeting its roots and means viz.
- **Goal 5** (Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls),
- **Goal 8** (Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all) and
- **Goal 16** (Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels).

#### Concerns over the new bill

- The bill is not clear about **how the NIA will gather information and intelligence** from different parts of the country through Anti-Human Trafficking Units (AHTUs) at district level and State level.
- **The bill is largely silent on rescue protocols except the “reason to believe”** by a police officer not below the rank of a sub-inspector. This makes the role of the AHTUs unclear in the rescue and post-rescue processes.
- There are also concerns about **absence of community-based rehabilitation**, missing definition of reintegration and also about the funds related to rehabilitation of survivors in the bill.
- In absence of rescue protocol there is always the fear of forced rescue of adult persons who may have been trafficked but do not wish to get rescued.
- **The proposed Bill criminalizes sex work and the choice of sex work as profession.** The Draft Trafficking Bill has mixed up the issue of trafficking and sex work.

#### Way Forward

- **Foresight and preparedness:** in the midst of the current lockdown can save the lives of crores of women, men and children and avoid an impending humanitarian crisis
- **Collaboration is key:** A lot of work needs to be done in a collaborative manner, between key stakeholders such as the government and civil society organizations, for any substantial change to be seen.
- **Assessment and review of legal framework:** The central government must assess the existing criminal law on trafficking and its ability to counter the crime and meet the needs of the victim.
- **Increase in budgetary allocation for law enforcement and victim rehabilitation:** There is a gross deficit in the budgetary allocation to combat human trafficking.

- **Curbing the rise of online Child Sexual Abuse material:** The upsurge of child sexual abuse material and its easy access can only be controlled by placing greater accountability on Internet Service Providers and digital platforms that host this content.
- **Safety net in source areas of trafficking:** Schools, communities, religious authorities and the local administration need to recognize and control trafficking and bonded labour in villages.
- **Intensive campaignings:** must educate communities about the threat and modus operandi of trafficking agents, especially in the source areas such as Jharkhand, Bihar, West Bengal, and Assam.
- **Monitoring:** The railway and other transport facilities have to be intensely monitored.
- **Public Awareness and Sensitization:** Awareness around existing government social welfare schemes and the means to access them should be generated and the government must immediately initiate registration of unorganized workers.
- **Financial protection:** Special financial protection should be extended for the next year in order to keep the wolf away from the door.

## Silambam

### Why in News?

Recently, an Indian named **Ganesan Sandhirakasan** has **won the top prize in a government-initiated competition for migrant workers in Singapore** for his performance of **Silambam**.

### About Silambam:

- Silambam is **promoted in Tamil Nadu by the rulers Pandya, Chola and Chera** and the reference to the sale of Silambam staves, pearls, swords and armours can be seen in a Tamil literature 'Silapaddigaram'.
- This art also **travelled to Malaysia**, where it is a famous sport apart from a **self defence technique**.
- For mock fighting and self-defence the long-staff technique is used. **In fact, Lord Muruga (in Tamil Mythology) and sage Agasthya are credited with the creation of Silambam.** Even during Vedic age, training was imparted to young men as a ritual and for an emergency.

**Techniques of Silambam:** Swift movements of the foot, use of thrust, cut, chop, sweep to achieve mastery & development of force, momentum & precision at different levels of the body, snake hits, monkey hits, hawk hits etc.

### Other Martial Arts of India

- **Gatka-** Punjab
- **Paika-** Odisha
- **Thag Ta-** Manipur
- **Kalaripayattu-** Kerala
- **Choliya-** Uttarakhand
- **Pang Lhabsol-** Sikkim
- **Musti Yudha-** Uttar Pradesh
- **Mardani Khel-** Maharashtra
- **Pari Khanda-** Bihar



## Joint Communication' for Tribal Communities

### Why in News?

A joint communication was signed by the **Ministry of Tribal Affairs and the Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change** which is **aimed at giving more power to the tribal communities in managing the forest resources.**

### About the recently signed Joint Communication

- The Joint Communication pertains to **more effective implementation of the Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006** and for **harnessing the potential for livelihood improvement of the Forest Dwelling Scheduled Tribes (FDSTs)** and other **Traditional Forest Dwellers (OTFDs).**
- **State forest departments will carry out verification of claims** for forest rights, mapping of forest lands involved and provision of necessary evidence as required, authentication of records, joint field inspections, awareness generation etc.
- **State forest departments are to undertake projects for value chain addition** including capacity building of primary collectors, new harvesting methods, storage, processing and marketing of Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFP).
- **A nodal agency to be designated for specific non-timber forest products** as supply chain platforms in collaboration with TRIFED, Ministry of Ayush, MFP (Minor Forest Produce) Federations, Van Dhan Kendras etc.

### Forest Rights Act, 2006

- Schedule Tribes and Other Forest Dwellers Act or Recognition of Forest Rights Act came into force in **2006. The Nodal Ministry for the Act is Ministry of Tribal Affairs.**
- It has been enacted to recognize and vest the forest rights and occupation of forest land in forest dwelling Scheduled Tribes and other traditional forest dwellers, who have been residing in such forests for generations, but whose rights could not be recorded.
- **This Act not only recognizes the rights to hold and live in the forest land under the individual or common occupation for habitation or for self-cultivation for livelihood, but also grants several other rights to ensure their control over forest resources.**
- The Act also provides for **diversion of forest land for public utility facilities managed by the Government**, such as schools, dispensaries, fair price shops, electricity and telecommunication lines, water tanks, etc. with the recommendation of Gram Sabhas.
- Rights under the Forest Right Act 2006:
  - **Title Rights-** ownership of land being framed by Gram Sabha.
  - **Forest management rights-** to protect forests and wildlife.
  - **Use rights-** for minor forest produce, grazing, etc.
  - **Rehabilitation-** in case of illegal eviction or forced displacement.
  - **Development Rights-** to have basic amenities such as health, education, etc.

### Challenges in implementation of the Forest Right Act

- **Adivasi lands in Jammu and Kashmir have not been protected, nor have these communities been given ownership rights.** Instead, evictions of Adivasis have intensified in the last few years.
- A series of legislation– **amendments to the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, the Compensatory Afforestation Fund Act and a host of amendments to the Rules to the FRA-** undermine the **rights and protections given to tribal in the FRA**, including the condition of “free informed consent” from gram

Sabhas for any government plans to remove tribal from the forests and for the resettlement or rehabilitation package.

- **The process of documenting communities' claims under the FRA is intensive** — rough maps of community and individual claims are prepared democratically by Gram Sabhas. These are then verified on the ground with annotated evidence, before being submitted to relevant authorities.
- **There is a reluctance of the forest bureaucracy to give up control with FRA being seen as an instrument to regularise encroachment.** This is seen in its emphasis on recognising individual claims while ignoring collective claims — Community Forest Resource (CFR) rights as promised under the FRA — by tribal communities. To date, the total amount of land where rights have been recognised under the FRA is just 3.13 million hectares, mostly under claims for individual occupancy rights.
- **In almost all States, instead of Gram Sabhas, the Forest Department has either appropriated or been given effective control over the FRA's rights recognition process.** This has created a situation where the officials controlling the implementation of the law often have the strongest interest in its non-implementation, especially the community forest rights provisions, which dilute or challenge the powers of the forest department.
- **Saxena Committee pointed out several problems in the implementation of FRA.** Wrongful rejections of claims happen due to lack of proper enquiries made by the officials.

#### Forest Resources

- Forests are not only home to trees and animals. **They are also a vital source of resources.** They give clean air, timber, fuel, wood, fruits, food, fodder, and more. These are known as forest resources upon which many depend for livelihood and survival.
- **Forests provide resources, which make its conservation and protection further important.** It is also because of these resources that forests are exploited.

#### Initiatives for forest conservation and preservation:

- **Indian Forest Act, 1927, Forest Conservation Act, 1980, National Forest Policy, 1988, National Mission for Green India, National Afforestation Program, Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.**

## Uttar Pradesh (UP) New Population Policy 2021-30

### Why in News?

Recently, **Uttar Pradesh (UP)** unveiled its **New Population Policy 2021-30**, on the occasion of **World Population Day (11th July)**.

### Objectives of the New Policy:

- Decreasing the **total fertility rate** from **2.7 to 2.1 by 2026 and 1.7 by 2030.**
- **Increase modern contraceptive prevalence rate** from **31.7% to 45% by 2026 and 52% by 2030.**
- Increase **male methods of contraception** use from **10.8% to 15.1% by 2026 and 16.4% by 2030.**
- Under the policy, **five-pronged approach** to population control will be adopted. It will also focus on improving health.
- Government will provide a **proper system for safe abortion.**
- Government will also make efforts towards **stabilization of population by providing solutions for impotence and infertility.**



- Efforts towards **reducing infant and maternal mortality rate** will also be made through improved health facilities.
- Policy will focus on **comprehensive arrangements for care of elderly** and **give importance to improved management of education, health, and nutrition for adolescents aged 11 to 19 years.**
- Efforts will be made to **maintain demographic balance across different communities and ensure easy availability of advanced health facilities.**

#### Incentives:

- **Promotions, increments, concessions in housing schemes and others perks to employees** who adhere to population control norms, and have two or less children.
- **Public servants who adopt the two-child norm will get two additional increments** during the entire service, maternity or as the case may be, paternity leave of 12 months, with full salary and allowances and three percent increase in the employer's contribution fund under the National Pension Scheme.
- For those who are **not government employees** and still contribute towards keeping the population in check, will get benefits in like **rebates in taxes on water, housing, home loans etc.**
- **If the parent of a child opts for vasectomy, he/she will be eligible for free medical facilities till the age of 20.**
- The Uttar Pradesh government plans to set up a **state population fund** to implement the measures.

#### Awareness creation:

- The draft bill also asks the state government to **introduce population control as compulsory subject in all secondary schools.**

#### Applicability:

- The provision of this legislation shall apply to a **married couple where the boy is not less than 21 years of age and the girl is not less than 18.**
- The policy will be **voluntary** – it will **not be enforced upon anyone.**

#### Need for these measures:

- **Overpopulation exerts strain on resources.** It is therefore necessary and urgent that the provision of basic necessities of human life including affordable food, safe drinking water, decent housing, access to quality education, economic/livelihood opportunities, power/electricity for domestic consumption, and a secure living is accessible to all citizens.

#### Issues and concerns associated with the Bill:

- **Experts have advised caution against any population policy** that puts women's health and well being at risk.
- Given that the **burden of contraception and family planning disproportionately falls on women,** it is likely that female sterilisation will increase further.
- Stringent population control measures can potentially lead to an increase in these **practices and unsafe abortions given the strong son-preference in India,** as has been witnessed in a few states in the past.

#### World Population Day

- In 1989, the **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)** recommended that 11th July be observed by the international community as World Population Day, a day to focus attention on the urgency and importance of population issues.

- **UNDP was inspired by the public interest and awareness that was created by "Five Billion Day" on 11th July 1987** when the world's population reached 5 billion.
- A resolution to the effect was passed, and the day was first marked on **11th July, 1990**.
- **The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) was created in 1969**, the same year the United Nations General Assembly declared "parents have the exclusive right to determine freely and responsibly the number and spacing of their children."
- **Theme 2021: Rights and Choices are the Answer:** Whether baby boom or bust, the solution to shifting fertility rates lies in prioritising all people's reproductive health and rights.

## Stringent Nature of UAPA

### Why in News?

The death of **Father Stan Swamy**, a **Jesuit priest and tribal rights activist**, while in **judicial custody**, has brought to focus the law under which he was imprisoned.

- The stringent nature of the **Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA)**, which renders it difficult for one held **under it to obtain bail**, is being seen as one of the principal reasons for Fr. Swamy's death as a prisoner in a hospital.
- This has raised questions about the liberty of many others, including 15 others arrested in the **Elgar Parishad case** and incarcerated under the same law, which is also India's main anti-terrorism legislation.

### Origin of the UAPA:

The Union government considered to bring a **stringent law against calls for secession in the mid-1960s**. In **March 1967**, a **peasant uprising in Naxalbari** imparted a sense of urgency.

- On **June 17, 1966**, the **President had promulgated the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Ordinance** "to provide for the more effective prevention of unlawful activities of individuals and associations".
- Its stringency created a furore in Parliament when it was tabled, leading to the government dropping it.
- Instead, **the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967**, which was not identical to the ordinance, was passed.

### How has UAPA been expanded over the years?

- **Prior to the UAPA's enactment**, associations were being declared unlawful under the **Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 1952**.
- However, the **Supreme Court held that the provision on bans was unlawful** because there was no judicial mechanism to scrutinise the validity of any ban.
- Therefore, the **UAPA included provisions for a Tribunal which has to confirm within six months the notification declaring an outfit unlawful**.
- **The ban on organisations was initially for two years**, but from **2013**, the period of proscription has been **extended to five years**.
- After the **Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA), 2002**, was repealed, the UAPA was expanded to include what would have been terrorist acts in earlier laws.
- In **2012**, there was a set of amendments was notified, seeking to bring the UAPA in line with various requirements of the Financial Action Task Force, to combat money laundering and terrorism financing.
- In **2019**, the Act was amended to empower the government to designate individuals as terrorists.

### **Extent and Application of this Act:**

- It is **applicable across the entire country**.
- **Any Indian or foreign national charged under UAPA is liable for punishment under this Act, irrespective of the location of crime/offense committed.**
- UAPA will be applicable to the offenders in the same manner, even if the crime is committed on foreign land, outside India.
- The provisions of this Act apply also to citizens of India and abroad.
- Persons on ships and aircraft, registered in India, wherever they may be are also under the ambit of this act.

### **Definition of the Unlawful Activity in India:**

**“Unlawful activity”** refers to any action taken by individual or association (whether by committing an act or by words, either spoken or written or by signs to questions, disclaims, disrupts, or is intended to disrupt the territorial integrity and sovereignty of India.

### **How do UAPA provisions differ from regular criminal law?**

**Just like other special laws dealing with narcotic drugs and the now-defunct laws on terrorism, the UAPA also modifies the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) to give it more teeth.**

- A remand order can be for 30 days instead of the usual 15, and the maximum period of judicial custody before the filing of a chargesheet is extendable from the usual 90 days to 180 days.
- This extension, however, depends on the Public Prosecutor filing a report on the progress in the investigation and giving reasons for seeking another 90 days to complete
- The law also makes it more difficult to obtain bail.

### **Controversy about its bail provisions:**

Under Section 43D (5) of the Act, bail cannot be granted to a suspect if the court is of the opinion that there are reasonable grounds to believe that the charges are prima facie true.

- A Supreme Court judgment on this has clarified that this meant that the court considering bail should not examine the evidence too deeply, but must go by the prosecution version based on broad probabilities.
- This means that the onus is on the accused to show that the case is false but without inviting the court to evaluate the available evidence.

## **Assam-Mizoram Border Dispute**

### **Why in news?**

The old boundary dispute between Assam and Mizoram exploded in violent clashes at a contested border point.

### **Cause of violence and clashes:**

- The violence highlights the long-standing inter-state boundary issues in the Northeast, particularly between Assam and the states that were carved out of it.
- **Mizoram borders Assam's Barak Valley. Both the States border Bangladesh.**



- **Status quo** should be maintained in **no man's land** in the border area. This was the **understanding according to an agreement between governments of Assam and Mizoram** some years ago. However, people from **Lailapur, Assam broke the status quo**.
- They allegedly constructed some **temporary huts**. People from **Mizoram side went and set fire on them**.
- Officials say that the **contested land belongs to Assam as per the state's records**.
- According to Mizoram officials, the land claimed by Assam has been **cultivated for a long time by residents of Mizoram**.
- On the other hand, Mizoram's civil society groups blame **"illegal Bangladeshis" (alleged migrants from Bangladesh) on the Assam side for the disturbances**.

#### Origin of the boundary dispute:

- The boundary between present-day Assam and Mizoram is 165 km long.
- **The heart of the dispute dates back to the colonial era**. Back then, **Mizoram was known as Lushai Hills, a district of Assam**.
- The dispute stems from a **notification of 1875** that **differentiated the Lushai Hills from the plains of Cachar**. [This was derived from the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation (BEFR) Act, 1873.]
- **Another notification of 1933** demarcates a boundary between the **Lushai Hills and Manipur**.
- The **Mizo society was not consulted prior to the 1933 notification**. So, **Mizoram believes the boundary should be demarcated on the basis of the 1875 notification**. But the **Assam government follows the 1933 demarcation**. This is the **point of conflict between the two states**.

#### Reasons behind two differing notifications:

- **British tea plantations surfaced in the Cachar plains during the mid-19th century**. [It covers the **Barak Valley** - now comprises the districts of Cachar, Hailakandi and Karimganj.]
- Their expansion led to problems with the Mizos whose home was the Lushai Hills.
- **In August 1875, the southern boundary of Cachar district was issued in the Assam Gazette**. The Mizos say this was the fifth time the British had drawn the boundary between the Lushai Hills and the Cachar plains. But this was the only time when it was done in consultation with Mizo chiefs.
- This demarcation also became the basis for the **Inner Line Reserve Forest demarcation** in the Gazette two years later.
- But in **1933, the boundary between Lushai Hills and the then princely state of Manipur was demarcated**.
- **This notification said the Manipur boundary began from the trijunction of Lushai Hills, Cachar district of Assam and Manipur state**.
- **The Mizos do not accept this demarcation, and point to the 1875 boundary** which was drawn in consultation with their chiefs.
- In the decades after Independence, many states and UTs were carved out of Assam:
  - **Nagaland (1963)**
  - **Arunachal Pradesh (UT 1972, formerly NEFA)**
  - **Meghalaya (UT 1972)**
  - **Mizoram (UT 1972)**
- Now, **with different interpretations of the border question, clashes erupt often**. The earlier one was in October 2020.
- In the current clashes, **at least six Assam Police personnel were killed**.

# Challenge to Restitution of Conjugal Rights

## Why in News?

The **Supreme Court (SC)** is going to hear a fresh challenge to the provision allowing restitution (recovery) of conjugal rights under Hindu personal laws (**Hindu Marriage act 1955**).

## About Conjugal Rights:

- They are rights **created by marriage**, i.e. the right of the husband or the wife to the society of the other spouse.
- The law recognises these rights— **both in personal laws dealing with marriage, divorce, etc and in criminal law requiring payment of maintenance and alimony to a spouse.**
- The **concept of restitution of conjugal rights is codified in Hindu personal law** now, but has colonial origins and has genesis in ecclesiastical law.
- **Similar provisions exist in Muslim personal law as well** as the Divorce Act, 1869, which governs Christian family law.
- Incidentally, in 1970, the United Kingdom repealed the law on restitution of conjugal rights.

## Provisions under challenge:

- **Section 9 of the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955**, deals with restitution of conjugal rights and is under challenge.
- It states that when **either the husband or the wife has withdrawn from the company of the other without a reasonable cause, then the aggrieved party may apply for restitution of conjugal rights.** This provision requires a person to cohabit with another against their will.
- A petition for restitution can be filed in district court. The court, after being satisfied with the truth of such a petition or absence of legal ground to forbid restitution, may decree restitution of conjugal rights accordingly.
- **Normally, when a spouse files for divorce unilaterally**, the other spouse files for restitution of conjugal rights if he or she is not in agreement with the divorce. The provision is seen to be an intervention through legislation to strike a conciliatory note between sparring spouses.

## Why has the law been challenged?

- **Section 9 violates the fundamental right to privacy** which is now a **fundamental right under article 21** of the constitution.
- Further, **court-mandated restitution of conjugal rights amounted to a “coercive act”** on the part of the state, which violates one’s sexual and decisional autonomy.
- Although the law is gender-neutral since it allows both wife and husband to seek restitution of conjugal rights, the provision disproportionately affects women.
- **Women are often called back to marital homes** under the provision and given that **marital rape is not a crime**, leaves them susceptible to such coerced cohabitation.

## Court earlier observation:

- **In 1983, the Andhra Pradesh High Court (HC) and the Delhi HC delivered opposite judgments** on the restitution of conjugal rights.
  - The Andhra HC struck down the provision in the case of **T Sareetha v T Venkatasubbaiah** and declared it null and void.

- The Court said it violated privacy rights and recognised that compelling “**sexual cohabitation**” would have “grave consequences for women”.
- However, the Delhi HC upheld the provision in the case of **Harvinder Kaur v Harmander Singh Chaudhry**.
- The court said it is in **the interests of the State that family life should be maintained** and that homes should not be broken up by the dissolution of the marriage of parents.
- **Later, in 1984, the Supreme Court upheld Section 9 of the Hindu Marriage Act in the case of Saroj Rani v Sudarshan Kumar Chadha.** It said that the provision “serves a social purpose as an aid to the prevention of break-up of marriage”.
- Thus, the Supreme Court upheld the **Delhi High Court view and overruled the Andhra Pradesh High Court verdict.**

#### Way Forward:

Although the provision of restitution of conjugal rights has been upheld in the past, **legal experts have pointed out that the landmark verdict in the privacy case has set the stage for potential challenges to several laws.** This includes criminalisation of homosexuality, marital rape, restitution of conjugal rights, the two-finger test in rape investigations, and others.



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## Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme

### Why in News?

Recently, the **Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs** has approved a **Reforms-based and Results-linked, Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme** worth **Rs. 3.03 trillion** wherein the Centre's share will be **Rs. 97,631 crore**.

### Key Highlights:

- It is a **reforms-based and results-linked scheme**.
- It seeks to improve the **operational efficiencies and financial sustainability** of all DISCOMs/Power Departments **excluding Private Sector DISCOMs**.
- The scheme envisages the provision of **conditional financial assistance to DISCOMs** for strengthening supply infrastructure.
- The assistance will be based on **meeting pre-qualifying criteria** as well as upon the achievement of basic minimum benchmarks by the DISCOM.
- The scheme involves a **compulsory smart metering ecosystem across the distribution sector**—starting from electricity feeders to the consumer level, including in about 250 million households.
- Scheme also focuses on funding for **feeder segregation for unsegregated feeders**.
- The Scheme has a major focus on improving electricity supply for the farmers and for **providing daytime electricity to them through solarization of agricultural feeders**.

### Implementation:

- Existing power sector reforms schemes such as **Integrated Power Development Scheme, Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojana, and Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana** will be merged into this umbrella program.
- Each state would have its own action plan for implementation of the scheme rather than a 'one-size-fits-all' approach.
- **Nodal agencies** for the scheme's implementation are **Rural Electrification Corporation (REC) Limited and Power Finance Corporation (PFC)**.

### Objectives of the scheme:

- **Reduction of average aggregate technical and commercial loss** to pan-India levels of 12-15% by 2024-25.
- **Narrow the deficit between the cost of electricity and the price** at which it is supplied to zero by 2024-25.
- Developing **institutional capabilities for modern DISCOMs**.
- **Improvement in the quality, reliability, and affordability of power supply to consumers** through a financially sustainable and operationally efficient distribution sector.

## World Bank Support to India's Informal Working Class

### Why in News?

World Bank has approved a **USD 500 million (about Rs 3,717.28 crore)** loan programme to support **India's informal working class** to overcome the **current pandemic distress**.



## About the World Bank's Financial Support

- Of the USD 500 million commitment, USD 112.50 million will be financed by its concessionary lending arm International Development Association (IDA) and the rest will be a loan from International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD).
- States can now access flexible funding from disaster response funds to design and implement appropriate social protection responses.
- The funds will be utilised in social protection programmes for urban informal workers, gig-workers, and migrants.
- Investments at the municipal level will promote National Digital Urban Mission that will create a shared digital infrastructure for people living in urban areas and will scale up urban safety nets and social insurance for informal workers.
- The programme will give street vendors access to affordable working capital loans of up to Rs 10,000.

### Informal Sector Worker:

- The informal sector is the part of any economy that is **neither taxed nor monitored by any form of government.**
  - The workers who indulge in the informal sector are informal sector workers or informal workers.
- The informal sector provides **critical economic opportunities for the poor.**
- It is largely characterized by **skills gained outside of a formal education, easy entry, a lack of stable employer-employee relationships, and a small scale of operations.**
- Unlike the formal economy, **the informal sector's components are not included in GDP computations.**

### Need to Protect Informal Workforce:

India's estimated 450 million informal workers comprise **90% of its total workforce**, with 5-10 million workers added annually.

- Further, **according to Oxfam's latest global report**, out of the **total 122 million who lost their jobs in 2020, 75% were lost in the informal sector.**
- **Job loss and further increasing informalisation** due to the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdown has **resulted in lack of social protection to poors.**
- Moreover, in the **financial year 2020-21, the economy contracted by 7.7%.** So, there is an **urgent need to revive the economy by generating employment and the informal sector is more labour intensive.**

## Financial Stability Report: RBI

### Why in News?

The Reserve Bank of India recently released its latest Financial Stability Report (FSR).

### About FSR:

- The Financial Stability Report (FSR) is **published twice each year by the RBI.**
- It presents an **assessment of the health of the financial system.**
- The FSR primarily looks at questions like the following:
  - **Do Indian banks** (both public and private) **have enough capital to run their operations?**
  - Are the **levels of bad loans** (or non-performing assets) **within manageable limits?**
  - Are **different sectors of the economy able to get credit (or new loans) for economic activity?**

## Significance of the FSR

- The data and information in the FSR allows the RBI to assess the state of the domestic economy.
- The FSR also allows the RBI to assess the macro-financial risks in the economy.
- As part of the FSR, the RBI also conducts “stress tests.”
- This is to figure out what might happen to the health of the banking system if the broader economy worsens.
- Similarly, it also tries to assess how factors outside India might affect the domestic economy.
- E.g. the crude oil prices or the interest rates prevailing in other countries
- Each FSR also contains the results of something called the Systemic Risk Surveys.

## Highlights of the recent report:

- **GNPAs** - In June 2020, the FSR had noted that Gross NPAs (GNPAs) could rise from 8.5% (of gross loans and advances) at the end of March 2020 to a two-decade high of 14.7% by March 2021.
- The recent FSR has found that the actual level of bad loans as of March 2021 is just 7.5%.
- However, the GNPA ratio of Scheduled Commercial Banks may increase from 7.48% in March 2021 to 9.80% by March 2022 under the baseline scenario.
- Under a severe stress scenario, it could increase to 11.22%, as shown by “macro-stress tests” for credit risk.
- So, the relief provided by the RBI in 2020 has contained the number of Indian firms that openly defaulted on their loan repayment.
- But things could get worse, especially for the small firms (or MSMEs).
- [The relief measures include cheap credit, moratoriums and facilities to restructure existing loans]
- **Regulatory relief and NPA** - A clear picture of NPAs will emerge only when the regulatory relief provided by the RBI is taken away.
- But it is not always clear when a central bank should pull back such regulatory relief.
- Historical experience shows that credit losses remain elevated for several years after recessions end.
- Indeed, in EMEs [Emerging Market Economies], NPAs typically peak 6 to 8 quarters after the onset of a severe recession.
- The longer the blanket support is continued, the higher the risk.
- Because providing excess regulatory relief might help inherently inefficient firms too.
- On the other hand, banks need sufficient buffers to absorb losses along the entire path to full recovery.
- So, support measures cannot be phased out before firms’ cash flows recover.
- **Credit growth** - At less than 6%, the overall rate of credit growth in commercial banks is quite dismal.
- What is particularly worrisome is the negligible growth rate in wholesale credit [refers to loans worth Rs 5 crore or more].
- The rate of growth for retail loans (loans to individuals) had become much better in comparison.
- Notably, there was a sharp fall in credit growth much before the Covid pandemic hit India.
- It points to a considerable weakness in demand even before the pandemic.
- This, in turn, suggests that recovery in credit growth may take longer than usual.
- **Systemic Risk Survey (SRS)** - The FSR also published the results of the latest round (April 2021) of the Systemic Risk Survey (SRS).
- It reflects upon the major risks faced by the Indian financial system.
- The risks are broadly classified into five categories - global, macroeconomic, financial market, institutional and general.
- The overall risk perception is “medium.”

- However, there were several factors on which experts expected a worrying picture than the one provided in the January 2021 FSR.

#### Non-Performing Asset

- NPA refers to a **classification for loans or advances that are in default** or are in arrears on scheduled payments of principal or interest.
- In most cases, debt is classified as non-performing, **when the loan payments have not been made for a minimum period of 90 days.**
- **Gross non-performing assets** are the sum of all the loans that have been defaulted by the individuals who have acquired loans from the financial institution.
- **Net non-performing assets** are the amount that is realized after provision amount has been deducted from the gross non-performing assets.

#### Capital Adequacy Ratio

- It is the ratio of a **bank's capital in relation to its risk weighted assets and current liabilities.** It is also known as **Capital-to-Risk Weighted Asset Ratio (CRAR).**
- It is decided by central banks to prevent commercial banks from taking excess leverage and becoming insolvent in the process.

## Authorised Economic Operators Programme

### Why in News?

The **Central Board of Indirect Taxes & Customs (CBIC)** has inaugurated the online filing of **Authorised Economic Operators (AEO) applications.** The web application is designed to **ensure continuous real-time and digital monitoring of physically filed AEO applications for timely intervention and expedience.**

### About Authorised Economic Operators:

- The AEO concept is one of the **main building blocks within the WCO SAFE Framework of Standards (SAFE).**
- The latter is part of the future international Customs model set out to **support secure trade.**
- The growth of global trade and increasing security threats to the international movement of goods have forced customs administrations to shift their focus more and more to securing the international trade flow and away from the traditional task of collecting customs duties.
- Recognizing these developments, the **World Customs Organization, drafted the WCO Framework of Standards to Secure and Facilitate global trade (SAFE).**
- In the framework, several standards are included that can assist Customs administrations in meeting these new challenges.
- Developing an Authorized Economic Operator programme is a core part of SAFE.

### AEOs in India

- AEO is a **voluntary programme.**
- It enables Indian Customs to **enhance and streamline cargo security** through **close cooperation with the principal stakeholders** of the international supply chain viz. importers, exporters, logistics providers, custodians or terminal operators, customs brokers and warehouse operators.

#### World Customs Organisation

- The World Customs Organization (WCO), **established in 1952** as the Customs Co-operation Council (CCC) is an **independent intergovernmental body** whose mission is to **enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of**

#### **Customs administrations.**

- At present, it **represents 183 Customs administrations** across the globe that collectively process approximately **98% of world trade**.
- India had become the vice-chair (regional head) of the Asia Pacific region of the WCO for a period of two years to June, 2020.
- It is the **only international organization with competence in Customs matters** and which can rightly call itself the voice of the international Customs community.
- It has its **headquarters in Brussels, Belgium**.

#### **SAFE Framework**

- In June 2005 the WCO Council adopted the **Framework of Standards to Secure and Facilitate Global Trade (SAFE Framework)** that would act as a deterrent to international terrorism, to secure revenue collections and to promote trade facilitation worldwide.
- The SAFE Framework has emerged as the **global Customs community's concerted response to threats to supply chain security, equally supporting facilitation of legitimate and secure businesses**.
- It prescribes **baseline standards** that have been tested and are working well around the globe.

## **Matsya Setu**

### **Why in News?**

Recently, the **Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying** has launched the Online Course Mobile App "**Matsya Setu**" for fish farmers.

### **About Matsya Setu**

- It is **Online Course Mobile App**.
- It is developed by the **ICAR-Central Institute of Freshwater Aquaculture (ICAR-CIFA), Bhubaneswar**, with the funding support of the **National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB), Hyderabad**.
- It **aims to disseminate the latest freshwater aquaculture technologies** to the aqua farmers of the country.
- It has **species-wise/ subject-wise self-learning online course modules**, where renowned aquaculture experts explain the basic concepts and practical demonstrations on breeding, seed production and grow-out culture of commercially important fishes.

### **Significance of Matsya Setu**

- It will be helpful for the farmers **to learn the advancements in the technologies and Better Management Practices at their convenience**.
- It will be an important tool to disseminate the latest information on different schemes among the stakeholders, especially fishers, fish farmers, youth and entrepreneurs across the country, assist them and facilitate ease of doing business.
- It will conduct **quizzes/tests for self-assessment** in order to motivate the learners and provide a lively learning experience.

### **Need for Matsya Setu App**

- The **capacity building of fish farmers** is a very vital part of spearheading the Technology-led Aquaculture Development in the country.



- **The training for farmers should be provided on various activities** including ornamental fisheries, seaweed culture, module on feed preparation, post-harvest value addition.

## Agriculture Infrastructure Fund

### Why in News?

Recently, the Union Cabinet approved some modifications in the **Central Sector Scheme of Financing Facility under 'Agriculture Infrastructure Fund'**.

### About Agriculture Infrastructure Fund:

- It is a **Central Sector Scheme**.
- The scheme provides a **medium – long term debt financing facility** for investment in viable projects for post-harvest management Infrastructure and community farming assets through interest subvention and financial support.

### Intended Beneficiaries of Agriculture Infrastructure Fund

Under the scheme, **Rs. One Lakh Crore will be provided by banks and financial institutions as loans to –**

- Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS),
- Marketing Cooperative Societies,
- Farmer Producers Organizations (FPOs),
- Self Help Group (SHG),
- Farmers,
- Joint Liability Groups (JLG),
- Multipurpose Cooperative Societies,
- Agri-entrepreneurs,
- Startups,
- Aggregation Infrastructure Providers and
- Public-Private Partnership Projects sponsored by Central/State agency or a Local Body.

### Details of Agriculture Infrastructure Fund Scheme

- All loans under this financing facility will have **interest subvention of 3% per annum up to a limit of Rs. 2 crores**. This subvention will be available for a maximum period of **seven years**.
- Further, **credit guarantee coverage will be available for eligible borrowers from this financing facility under the Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises (CGTMSE) scheme** for a loan up to **Rs. 2 crores**. The fee for this coverage will be paid by the Government.
- In the case of FPOs, the credit guarantee may be availed from **the facility created under FPO promotion scheme of Department of Agriculture, Cooperation & Farmers Welfare (DACFW)**.
- The moratorium for repayment under this financing facility may vary subject to a minimum of **6 months and maximum of 2 years**.

### The duration of the scheme

The duration of the Scheme shall be **from FY2020 to FY2029 (10 years)**.

## Management:

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

- The National, State and District level monitoring committees will be set up to ensure real-time monitoring and effective feed-back.

## External Benchmarks Lending Rate

### Why in News?

According to a recent **RBI** report on 'Monetary transmission in India', the share of outstanding loans linked to **External Benchmarks Lending Rate (EBLR)**- like repo rate), increased from as low as 2.4% during September 2019 to 28.5% during March 2021.

- This increase in EBLR linked lending will contribute to **significant improvement in monetary policy transmission**.
- **However, still 71.5% of outstanding loans are Internal Benchmark Lending Rate (IBLR)**- like base rate and MCLR) linked loans, which continues to impede the monetary policy transmission.

### About Internal Benchmark Lending rate (IBLR)

- Lenders usually have an **internal rate**, which is the benchmark rate. Interest rates on all loans are linked to it.
- For example, a lender's benchmark rate is 6%.
  - It would offer an auto loan 2% higher than the benchmark rate, which will be 8%.
  - Similarly, it may provide personal loans at 8% higher than the benchmark rate or at 14%.
- Initially, **RBI focused on making the benchmark rate transparent**. It introduced different ways to calculate the benchmark rates which are as follows

<b>Benchmark Prime Lending Rate (BPLR)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• It was used as a benchmark rate by banks for lending till June 2010.</li><li>• Under it, bank loans were priced on the actual cost of funds.</li></ul>
<b>Base Rate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Loans taken between June 2010 and April 2016 from banks were on base rate.</li><li>• Base rate was the minimum interest rate at which commercial banks could lend to customers.</li><li>• Base rate is calculated on three parameters — the cost of funds, unallocated cost of resources and return on net worth.</li><li>• Hence, the rate depended on individual banks and they changed it whenever the parameters changed.</li></ul>
<b>Marginal Cost of Lending Rate (MCLR):</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• It came into effect in April 2016.</li><li>• It is a benchmark lending rate for floating-rate loans.</li><li>• This is the minimum interest rate at which commercial banks can lend.</li><li>• This rate is based on four components—the marginal cost of funds, negative carry on account of cash reserve ratio, operating costs and tenor premium.</li><li>• MCLR is linked to the actual deposit rates. Hence, when deposit rates rise, MCLR rises and lending rates increases.</li></ul>

## Issues related to Internal Benchmark Lending Rates

- **The problem with the IBLR regime was that** when RBI cut the repo and reverse repo rates, banks did not pass the full benefits to borrowers.
  - Repo rate is the rate at which the RBI lends money to the banks for a short term. Here, the central bank purchases security.
- In the IBLR Linked Loans, the interest rate has many internal variables of Bank which prevented the smooth transmission of RBI's Monetary Policy changes.

## External Benchmark Lending Rate (EBLR)

- RBI mandated the banks to adopt a uniform external benchmark within a loan category, effective 1st October, 2019.
- 4 external benchmarking mechanisms:
  - **The RBI repo rate**
  - **The 91-day T-bill yield**
  - **The 182-day T-bill yield**
  - **Any other benchmark market interest rate as developed by the Financial Benchmarks India Pvt. Ltd.**
- Banks are free to decide the spread over the external benchmark. However, the interest rate must be reset as per the external benchmark at least once every three months.
- **Significance:** Faster Monetary Transmission + Transparency in Interest rates + Standardisation of fixing interest rate.

## Concerns

- 28.5% of outstanding loans were linked to EBLR during March 2021.
- However, still 71.5% of outstanding loans are Internal Benchmark Lending Rate (IBLR- like base rate and MCLR) linked loans, which continues to impede the monetary policy transmission.

## Indian Labour Conference (ILC)

### Why in News?

Recently, the **Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh (labour union)** wrote to the Prime Minister asking him to convene the Indian Labour Conference (ILC). It argued that **since Indian Parliament has ratified Convention No 144 of the International Labour Organisation**, it is now **India's legal obligation to hold the ILC in order to strengthen the tripartite mechanism**.

### About ILC:

- The Indian Labour Conference (ILC) is the **apex level tripartite consultative committee in the Ministry of Labour & Employment to advise the Government** on the issues concerning working class of the country.
- **All the 12 Central Trade Union Organisations, Central Organisations of employers, all State Governments and Union Territories and Central Ministries/Departments concerned with the agenda items, are the members of the ILC.**
- The **first meeting of the Indian Labour Conference (then called Tripartite National Labour Conference) was held in 1942** and so far a **total of 46 Sessions have been held**.

## Significance:

Indian Labour Conference **discusses and deliberates on significant issues** aimed at improving the welfare of the workers. **Notable contributions** have been emanated by this forum including the **Minimum wage fixing methodology and standing orders for employment**.

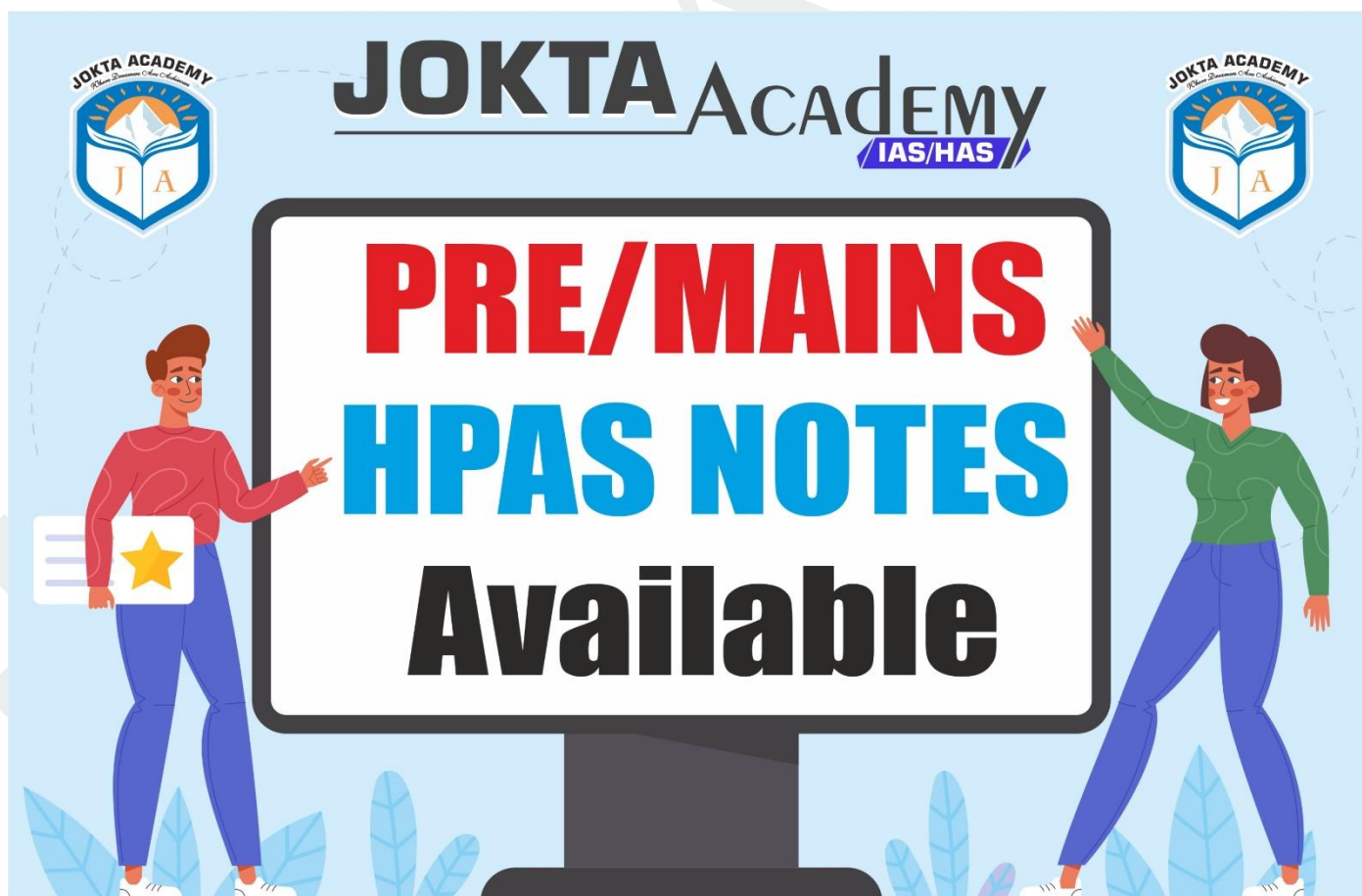
### International Labour Organisation

It is the **only tripartite United Nation (UN) agency**. It brings together governments, employers and workers of **187 member States** (India is a member), to set labour standards, develop policies and devise programmes promoting decent work for all women and men.

- Received the **Nobel Peace Prize in 1969**.
- **Established in 1919** by the **Treaty of Versailles** as an affiliated agency of the **League of Nations**.
- Became the **first affiliated specialized agency of the UN in 1946**.
- Headquarters: **Geneva, Switzerland**

### Convention No 144 of the ILO

- Convention 144 of the year **1976** which is also known as the **Convention on Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards)**, promotes application of an essential principle on which the International Labour Organization (ILO) was founded which is:
  - **Tripartite social dialogue** in the **development and implementation of international labour standards**.
- Tripartism in respect to international labour standards **promotes a national culture of social dialogue on wider social and economic issues**.





## 7th Edition of Indian Ocean Naval Symposium

### Why in News?

Recently, the 7th edition of Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) was **hosted by the French Navy at Réunion island**.

### About Indian Ocean Naval Symposium(IONS):

- **Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS)** is a **biennial forum** conceived by the **Indian Navy in 2008**.
- **Purpose:** It is a voluntary initiative that seeks to increase maritime cooperation among navies of the littoral states of the Indian Ocean Region. It provides an open and inclusive forum for discussion of regionally relevant maritime issues.
- **Chairmanship:** The chairmanship of IONS has been held by India (2008-10), UAE (2010-12), South Africa (2012-14), Australia (2014-16), Bangladesh (2016-18), and the Islamic Republic of Iran (2018-21).
  - **Currently**, France has assumed Chairmanship for two-year tenure.

**Members of IONS:** IONS includes 24 nations that hold territory within the Indian Ocean and 8 observer nations:

- **South Asian Littorals:** Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Pakistan, Seychelles, Sri Lanka, and United Kingdom (British Indian Ocean Territory)
- **West Asian Littorals:** Iran, Oman, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates
- **East African Littorals:** France (Reunion), Kenya, Mauritius, Mozambique, South Africa, and Tanzania.
- **Southeast Asian and Australian Littorals:** Australia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand, and Timor-Leste.
- **Observers:** China, Germany, Italy, Japan, Madagascar, the Netherlands, Russia, and Spain.

### Significance For India:

- IONS fits into **India's three-fold ambitions in the region**:
  - **Strengthening and deepening the relations** with the **Indian Ocean littoral states**;
  - **Establishing its leadership potential and aspirations** of being a **net-security provider**; and
  - **Fulfilling India's vision of a rules-based and stable maritime order** in the IOR.
- It will help India to consolidate its **sphere of influence from the Straits of Malacca to Hormuz**.
- IONS can be used to **counter-balance the increasing presence of China in the region**.

## Trafficking in Persons Report

### Why in News?

According to the **Trafficking in Persons report 2021**, released by the **US State Department**, the **Covid-19 pandemic** has resulted in an increase in vulnerability to human trafficking and interrupted existing anti-traffic efforts

### Key Findings of report

- According to the report, **India did not meet minimum standards of eliminating trafficking**. However, government made significant efforts, though these were inadequate especially with respect to bonded labour.

- **Chinese government was engaged in forced labour**, including through mass arbitrary detention of Uyghurs, ethnic Kazakhs, ethnic Kyrgyz, and other Muslims.
- Concurrence of increased number of individuals at risk, traffickers' ability to capitalise on competing crises, and diversion of resources to Covid-19 pandemic response efforts made ideal environment for human trafficking.
- **Countries were not categorised on the basis of magnitude of country's trafficking problem but on the basis of efforts they made to meet minimum standards of eliminating of human trafficking.**

### Three-tier system

Countries were designated on the basis of **three-tier system**:

- **Tier 1 countries**- Countries where governments completely comply with minimum standards of Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA). TVPA is US's law on human trafficking. USA, UK, Australia, Bahrain and South Korea are tier 1 countries.
- **Tier 2 countries**- Countries whose governments do not comply with TVPA's minimum standards completely. However, they are making efforts to comply with those standards. India is in this category.
- **Tier 3 countries**- Countries where governments do not comply with minimum standards of TVPA and are not making significant efforts for same. Afghanistan, China, Burma, North Korea, Cuba, Eritrea, South Sudan, Iran, Russia, Syria and Turkmenistan are under this category.
- **Special Case**- There are some "Special Cases" like Yemen where civil conflict and humanitarian crisis makes it difficult to gain information.

## UN Food Systems Summit 2021

### Why in News?

Recently, the United Nations Secretary General has called for **the first ever UN Food Systems Summit** to be held in September 2021.

### Need for UN Food Systems Summit

- The world needs the game changing ideas from the experiences through the National, Sub-national (State) and independent consultation for the five Action Tracks related to:
  - Safe and nutritious food;
  - Sustainable consumption patterns;
  - Nature-positive production;
  - Advance equitable livelihoods; and
  - Resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress
- The COVID-19 pandemic led **vulnerability and challenges faced by the humanity in food and related system** has further added to the need for reorienting our actions and strategies.

### About UN Food Systems Summit

- It will be convened **as part of the Decade of Action to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030.**
- The Summit will launch bold new actions to deliver progress on **all 17 SDGs**, each of which relies to some degree on healthier, more sustainable and equitable food systems.

- It will bring together **key players from the worlds of science, business, policy, healthcare and academia, as well as farmers, indigenous people, youth organizations, environmental activists, and other key stakeholders.**

### India at UN Food Systems Summit

- India has volunteered, but not limited to, to the **Action Track 4: Advance Equitable Livelihoods for the UN Food System Summit 2021.**
- The Government of India has constituted a **high level Interdepartmental Group under the Chairmanship of Prof. Ramesh Chand** in order to work towards five Action Tracks of UN.
- The group's primary objective is to conduct National Dialogues with all the stakeholders of agri-food systems for exploring national pathways towards creating sustainable and equitable food systems in India.
- The State Governments have also been requested to conduct the state-level dialogues with all the stakeholders involved directly or indirectly in the agri-food systems in India.

### Objectives of UN Food Systems Summit

- **Generate significant action and measurable progress towards the 2030 Agenda** for Sustainable Development.
- **Raise awareness and elevate public discussion** about how reforming our food systems can help us all to achieve the SDGs.
- Develop principles to guide governments and other stakeholders looking to leverage their food systems to support the SDGs.
- Create a system of follow-up and review to ensure that the Summit's outcomes continue to drive new actions and progress.

### Significance of UN Food Systems Summit

- It will be conducted with an aim to strategize the actions for positive change in Agri-food systems in the World to realize the vision of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- The Summit will focus on levers and pathways to shape food systems nationally and globally to accelerate progress in the SDGs.
- The grass root dialogues offer a unique opportunity to various stakeholders to involve and provide inputs for sustainable food systems in India.
- The Summit will awaken the world to the fact that we all must work together to transform the way the world produces, consumes and thinks about food.

## India-Nepal Rail Services Agreement (RSA)

### Why in News?

India and Nepal have signed a **Letter of Exchange (LoE) to the India-Nepal Rail Services Agreement (RSA) 2004.**

- The revised agreement will **facilitate the import and export of goods through the Indian railway freight services** and will come into force from **9th July 2021.**
- The revised pact **permits all types of cargo train operators** (public, private, special freight, automobile) authorized by the Indian Railways (IR) to use the Indian Railway Network for carrying Nepal's container and freight – both bilateral between India & Nepal or Third country from Indian ports to Nepal.

### About Rail Services Agreement (RSA), 2004:

- The Rail Services Agreement was **executed in 2004 between the Ministry of Railways, Government of India and the Ministry of Commerce, the Govt. of Nepal** for introduction of freight train services between these two countries to and from **Birgunj (Nepal) via Raxaul (India)**.
- The agreement guides movement between India and Nepal by rail.
- The Agreement shall be **reviewed every five years** and may be modified (through Letters of Exchange) by the Contracting Parties by mutual consent.
- In the past, **there have been amendments to RSA through LoE on three occasions**.
  - First such amendment was in **2004**.
  - **Second LoE was signed in 2008** at the time of introduction of bilateral cargo between the two countries which required introduction of new customs procedures.
  - **Third LoE was signed in 2016** enabling rail transit traffic to/from Visakhapatnam Port in addition to existing provision of rail transportation through Kolkata/Haldia Port.

### Significance

- The revised agreement aims to increase the **efficiency, and cost-competitiveness of the rail freight sector**.
- It is seen as a step by India to **enhance regional connectivity under the 'Neighbourhood First' policy**.
- **It will reduce transportation costs** for automobiles and certain other products whose carriage takes place in special wagons.

### India-Nepal Relations

- India and Nepal share a **unique relationship of friendship and cooperation** characterized by open borders and deep-rooted people-to-people contacts of kinship and culture.
- **Economic Cooperation:** India has been a key development partner of Nepal. Following the massive earthquakes in Nepal in April and May 2015, India promptly offered to help hands.
  - **About 150 Indian ventures operating in Nepal** in manufacturing, services (banking, insurance, dry port, education and telecom), power sector and tourism industries.
  - **Integrated check-posts** have been proposed at four points on the Indo-Nepal border namely **(i) Raxaul-Birganj, (completed and operationalised from April 2018) (ii) Sunauli-Bhairahawa, (iii) Jogbani-Biratnagar and (iv) Nepalganj Road-Nepalgunj**.
- **Trade and Transit:** The partnership with India in the areas of trade and transit is a matter of utmost importance to Nepal. India is Nepal's largest trading partner. India has provided a transit facility to Nepal for the third country trade. Both the public and private sectors of India have invested in Nepal.
- **Defence Cooperation:** India has assisted the Nepalese Army (NA) in its modernization through the provision of equipment and training and cooperation in areas of disaster management.
- **Multilateral and Regional Fora:** Both Nepal and India have a common approach to regional and multilateral institutions and hence, work in tandem in the United Nations, Non-aligned Movement and other international fora on most of the important international issues.
  - Furthermore, both the countries have been deeply engaged in the regional and sub-regional frameworks of SAARC, BIMSTEC and BBIN for enhancing cooperation for greater economic integration by harnessing collectively the potentials and complementarities available in the region.
- **Education:** Several scholarships are provided to the Nepali nationals annually.
- **Culture:** Both nations promote people-to-people contacts, organize cultural programmes, and conferences and seminars.

- India and Nepal have also signed three sister-city agreements for the twinning of Kathmandu-Varanasi, Lumbini-Bodhgaya and Janakpur-Ayodhya.

## Assassination of Haiti's President

### Why in News?

Recently, **Jovenel Moïse, Haiti's 53-year-old President**, was assassinated at his private residence in **Port-au-Prince** early by unidentified gunmen.

- This incident has pushed the Caribbean nation, already battered by months-long protests, economic miseries and the COVID-19 outbreak, into further chaos.
- **Haiti's interim Prime Minister Joseph Claude Joseph** said some of the attackers spoke Spanish, indicating that foreign mercenaries were involved.
- Haiti is a French- and Creole-speaking country.

### About Haiti:

- Haiti is a country in the **Caribbean Sea** that includes the **western third of the island of Hispaniola** and such smaller islands as **Gonâve, Tortue (Tortuga), Grande Caye, and Vache**. The capital is **Port-au-Prince**.
- Its **population** is almost entirely **descended from African slaves**, won **independence from France in 1804**, making it the **second country in the Americas, after the United States, to free itself from colonial rule**.
  - It is the **world's first independent Black-led republic**.
  - The nation underwent about two centuries of Spanish colonial rule and more than a century of French rule.
- Over the centuries, however, **economic, political, and social difficulties as well as a number of natural disasters** have beset Haiti with **chronic poverty and other serious problems**.
- It is the **Western Hemisphere's poorest country**, has a **painful history of foreign interventions, economic exploitation and dictatorial rule**.

### Who was Jovenel Moïse?

- Jovenel Moïse was a 48-year-old businessman and political neophyte when he was sworn in as president of Haiti in February 2017.
- The former banana producer inherited a nation in turmoil — one that had gone a year without an elected leader in place.
- Moïse promised a new beginning by strengthening institutions and ending corruption, and won the election in the first round itself.
- But under his administration, the political and economic situation in Haiti further deteriorated.





## What is the situation in Haiti?

- Haiti, the world's first independent Black-led republic, after slaves successfully revolted against Napoleon Bonaparte's forces in 1803, has a long, **painful history of foreign interventions, coups, dictatorships and not-so-successful democratic experiments.**
- In 2010, the country was battered by a devastating earthquake that killed at least 300,000 people.
- The country has struggled with political instability — along with dire poverty and crime — since the end of the brutal dictatorships of Francois and Jean-Claude Duvalier from 1957 to 1986.
- Criminal gangs this year have driven thousands of people from their homes, protesters demanding Moïse's ouster in 2019 shut down much of the economy.
- The country has **yet to begin vaccinating its 11 million people against the new coronavirus**, which is surging.

## India- Haiti Relations

### Political:

- India's relations with Haiti have been **friendly**, though interaction between the two countries has been limited.
- India established **diplomatic relations with Haiti in September 1996**. Haiti appointed a Honorary Consul in New Delhi in October 2014.
- India had sent a **140 member Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) troop to Haiti** on a **peace mission** under the auspices of the United Nations (UN) in August 1995.
- **In October 2008**, a 140-member Formed Police Unit (FPU) from India joined the **UN's Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH)** to help with international efforts to ensure a safe environment in Haiti.
- The last units of FPU stationed in Haiti left in July 2019 on completion of assignment.
- At the multilateral level, the Government of **Haiti has supported Indian candidatures in the elections for various international organizations, including elections for International Court of Justice (ICJ), UNESCO, International Maritime Organization and World Customs Organization (WCO)** in the recent past.

### Commerce:

- India's trade with Haiti is **small but Indian exports to the country have been growing** in recent years.
- Two way trade between the two countries was at **USD 93.10 million by the end of 2018-19.**
- The main items of **exports to Haiti are pharmaceutical goods, textiles, rubber products, cosmetics, and plastic and linoleum products.**
- India has granted **duty free access to Haitian products** as a **special gesture to a Least Development Country.**

### Educational:

- India has been offering assistance to Haiti under **Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) programme.**
  - The ITEC programme provides for organizing training courses in India, deputation of Indian experts abroad, aid for disaster relief, gifting of equipment, study tours and feasibility studies/consultancy services.
- **Haitian diplomats have also been taking advantage of Professional Course for Foreign Diplomats (PCFD)** courses at regular intervals.
  - PCFD affirms the commitment of India to its friendly countries in sharing the knowledge and expertise acquired in the field of diplomats' training.
- Haitian illiterate women received training at the Barefoot College in Rajasthan in harvesting solar power.

### Disaster Relief:

- **India donated medicines worth USD 50,000/-** as humanitarian assistance to Haiti for the damage caused by Hurricane Noel in November 2007.
- Another USD 5 million relief assistance was given in January 2010. A relief of USD 5,00,000 annually for three years till 2011 was also provided.
- India also provided emergency financial aid of USD 2,50,000 to Haiti in the aftermath of Hurricane Mathew in October 2016.

### Indian Community:

- **Indian community in Haiti is small.** It comprises approximately 70 members. Almost all of them are Indian passport holders.
- Several of them are professionals, – **doctors, engineers, technicians. Some are into private businesses.**

## Vietnam's First Honorary Consul General in India

### Why in News?

Vietnam has appointed **Honorary Consul General** of Vietnam in Bangalore **to promote trade, economics, investment, tourism, educational and cultural cooperation between Vietnam and the State of Karnataka.** Industrialist **N.S. Srinivasa** Murthy based in Bengaluru has been appointed as Honorary Consul General of Vietnam for Karnataka.

### Key Highlights:

- He is **the first Honorary Consul-General of Vietnam from India** and the 19th across the world.
- He is the third Consul-General to be appointed globally this year.
- **Term of Appointment:**
  - Three years.
- Mr. Murthy is the owner and managing partner of **N. K. Subbiah Setty & Sons**, which has been manufacturing agarbattis (incense sticks) since 1932.
- In a telephonic conversation Prime Minister Modi expressed confidence that the **India-Vietnam Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP) will continue to become stronger under the newly elected Vietnamese PM able guidance.**
  - PM Modi welcomed the fact that both countries share a similar vision of:
  - An open, inclusive, peaceful and rules-based Indian Ocean Region.
  - Hence the India-Vietnam CSP can contribute to promote regional stability, prosperity and development.

## Violence in South Africa

### Why in News?

Recently, Riots and looting in South Africa have left more than 70 people dead, hurt thousands of businesses and damaged major infrastructure. It is the worst civil unrest since the end of white minority rule in 1994.

### Reason for Recent Violence

- Protests began over calls for release of former president Jacob Zuma, who served the country from 2009-18 and is facing corruption charges.

- While the violence may have been spurred on by the imprisonment of Jacob Zuma, it's being fanned by underlying problems of unemployment and poverty amid a raging pandemic and failing economy.

### India- South Africa Relations

- India's links with the struggle for freedom and justice in South Africa date back to the period during which **Mahatma Gandhi** started his Satyagraha movement in South Africa over a century ago.
- India was at the **forefront of the international community in its support to the anti-apartheid movement.**
- it was the first country to **sever trade relations with the apartheid Government (in 1946)** and subsequently imposed a complete -- diplomatic, commercial, cultural and sports -embargo on South Africa.



### Political Relations:

- After South Africa achieved **democracy in 1994**, it was the **Red Fort Declaration on Strategic Partnership between India and South Africa, signed in March 1997** which set the **parameters for a rekindled relationship.**
- **The Strategic Partnership between the two countries was again reaffirmed in the Tshwane Declaration (October 2006).**
  - Both these declarations have been instrumental mechanisms that have contributed in the past to both South Africa and India for achieving their respective national objectives.
- India and South Africa have a **long history of working together by coordinating their views and efforts in institutions of global governance/multilateral fora**, in order to achieve greater autonomy and ensure that the agenda of 'South' is prioritised.
  - **For Example: BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa), IBSA (India, Brazil, and South Africa), G20 , Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) and World Trade Organisation (WTO).**

### Economic:

- **India is South Africa's fifth-largest export destination, and fourth-largest import origin and is the second-largest trading partner in Asia.**
  - Both countries are working to boost trade volumes in the coming years. Bilateral trade between India and South Africa currently stands at USD 10 billion.
- **In 2016 both the countries agreed to collaborate in the defence sector**, especially in terms of the opportunities available for South African private sector under '**Make in India**' initiative, **energy sector, agro-processing, human resource development, and infrastructure development.**

### Science & Technology:

- The Department of Science and Technology of both countries have collaborated, especially in **the Square Kilometer Array (SKA) project**.

#### Culture:

- With the help of the **Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR)**, an intensive programme of cultural exchanges is organised throughout South Africa including **scholarships for South African nationals**.
- **The 9th World Hindi Conference** was held in **September 2012** at **Johannesburg**.

#### Indian Community:

- **The major part of the Indian origin community** came to South Africa from **1860 onwards** as **farm labour to serve as field hands and mill operatives in the sugar and other agricultural plantations**.
- South Africa is home to the **highest number of Indian Diaspora in the African continent**, with a total strength of **1,218,000** thereby constituting **3% of South Africa's total population**.
  - Since 2003 onwards, India has celebrated **Pravasi Bhartiya Divas (PBD)** each year on **9th January** (the day **Mahatma Gandhi returned from South Africa to India**).

#### Way Forward

- India-South Africa partnership is **progressive and forward looking**. Their rich culture and people-to-people contacts lends character and quality to India-South Africa ties.
- It is natural that **South Africa needs other partners in Asia just as India is engaged in forging other partnerships in Africa**. However, both **India and South Africa will need to keep in mind constantly that their own bilateral relationship deserves priority and has immense potential that is yet to be realized**.

### Fit for 55 Package: EU

#### Why in News?

Recently, the **European Union (EU)** released a **new climate proposal, the Fit for 55 package**. The EU in December 2020 submitted a **revised Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC)** under the **Paris Agreement**.

#### About Fit for 55 Package:

- It calls for 27 member states of European Commission to **cut their output of greenhouse gases by 55% by 2030, compared with 1990 levels**.
- **Its target is more aggressive than that of the United States**, which committed to reduce emissions by 40% to 43% over the same period, but behind Britain, which pledged a 68% reduction.
- It includes a **contentious plan called "Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism"** which would impose tariffs on imported products based on the greenhouse gas emissions associated with them.

#### Impact of 'Fit for 55' Package

- The European Union's **plan to cut its greenhouse gas emissions by more than half by the end of the decade will touch almost every industry in the trade bloc**.
- The **transition will be painful** for some consumers and companies by **raising the cost of a wide variety of goods and services**.

- The proposals could reshape polluting industries like **steelmaking, which directly employs 330,000 people in the European Union.**

#### Impact on Automakers

- Most automakers have announced plans to **shift to electric vehicles, but many have resisted putting an expiration date on the fossil-fuel powered vehicles**, which still generate the most profits.
- The European Commission plan would effectively require **all new cars to be emissions-free by 2035**, removing any flexibility for companies to continue selling some gasoline or diesel vehicles.
- The public funds will be used to help **build charging stations every 60 kilometers, or 36 miles**, on major highways.
- The commission will help **finance a network of hydrogen fueling stations**, benefiting companies that are planning to build long-haul trucks that run on fuel cells that convert hydrogen to electricity.

#### Impact on Airline

- The aircrafts are **major producers of carbon dioxide emissions** but also difficult to convert to emission-free operation.
- Under the new proposal, the **airlines would be compelled to begin mixing synthetic fuel with the fossil fuels they now use**, and they will no longer receive tax breaks on fossil fuels.

#### Impact on Shipping

- The deal singles out companies that ship cargos by water, making them **pay more for the emissions** they generate to encourage their transition to cleaner energy.
- The shipping industry lobbyists have already complained that it was unclear how the plan would be applied and which shipping routes would be affected.

#### Impact on Heavy Industry

- The plan would raise the cost of polluting by tightening the **European Trading System**, which compels companies to effectively pay for the dangerous carbon dioxide they release.
- The anticipation of the changes has already helped drive up the price of credits by about 50%.
- **The steelmakers have warned that the proposals could further erode their competitive advantage over producers in China** and discourage the investment needed to shift to lower emissions.

#### Impact on Energy

- The electricity producers will be pushed to **speed up the switch to wind, solar and hydropower from coal.**
- The goal is to **raise the figure electricity generation by renewables to 40% by 2030**, largely by increasing the penalty that utility companies pay for power generated by fossil fuels.



# Environment

## Why in News?

According to the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), hydrogen will make up 12% of the energy mix by 2050.

- Recently, IRENA has released the 'World Energy Transitions Outlook' Report.

## About Green Hydrogen

- Hydrogen, when produced by electrolysis using renewable energy is known as Green Hydrogen which has no carbon footprint.
- This gives hydrogen the edge over other fuels to unlock various avenues of green usage.

## Applications of green hydrogen

- Green hydrogen has innumerable applications.
- Green Chemicals like ammonia and methanol can directly be utilized in existing applications like fertilizers, mobility, power, chemicals, shipping among others.
- Green Hydrogen blending up to 10 percent may be adopted in CGD networks to gain widespread acceptance.
- Further scaling up with greening of hard to abate sectors like steel and cement through hydrogen is to be explored.
- Many countries have brought out their strategies and defined targets and roadmaps based on their resources and strengths.

## Key Highlights of the 'World Energy Transitions Outlook' Report

### Current Status Worldwide:

- **Less than 1% of hydrogen produced is green hydrogen.**
- Manufacturing and deployment of electrolyzers will have to increase at an unprecedented rate by 2050 from the **current capacity of 0.3 gigawatts to almost 5,000 gigawatts.**

### Indian Scenario:

- **Consumption of Hydrogen:** India consumes **about six million tonnes of hydrogen every year** for the production of ammonia and methanol in industrial sectors, including fertilisers and refineries.
  - **This could increase to 28 million tonnes by 2050**, principally due to the rising demand from the industry, but also due to the expansion of transport and power sectors.
- **Cost of Green Hydrogen:** By 2030, the cost of green hydrogen is expected to compete with that of hydrocarbon fuels (coal, Crude Oil, natural gas).
  - The price will decrease further as production and sales increase. It is also projected that India's hydrogen demand will increase five-fold by 2050, with 80% of it being green.

- **Exporter of Green Hydrogen:** India will become a net exporter of green hydrogen by 2030 due to its cheap renewable energy tariffs.

#### Benefits of Using Green Hydrogen for India:

- **Green hydrogen can drive India's transition to clean energy, combat climate change.**
- **Under the Paris Climate Agreement,** India pledged to reduce the emission intensity of its economy by 33-35% from 2005 levels by 2030.
- It will **reduce import dependency on fossil fuels.**
- **The localisation of electrolyser production and the development of green hydrogen projects can create a new green technologies market in India worth \$18-20 billion and thousands of jobs.**

#### Potential:

- **India has a favourable geographic location and abundance of sunlight and wind** for the production of green hydrogen.
- **Green hydrogen technologies are being promoted in sectors where direct electrification isn't feasible.**
  - Heavy duty, long-range transport, some industrial sectors and long-term storage in the power sector are some of these sectors.
- **The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE)** has circulated a draft cabinet note to establish a hydrogen ecosystem in the country.
- **The nascent stage of this industry allows for the creation of regional hubs** that export high-value green products and engineering, procurement and construction services.

#### Challenges:

- **Economic Sustainability:** One of the biggest challenges faced by the industry for using hydrogen commercially is the economic sustainability of extracting green hydrogen.
  - For transportation fuel cells, hydrogen must be cost-competitive with conventional fuels and technologies on a per-mile basis.

#### High Costs and Lack of Supporting Infrastructure:

- Fuel cells which convert hydrogen fuel to usable energy for cars, are still expensive.
- The hydrogen station infrastructure needed to refuel hydrogen fuel cell cars is still widely underdeveloped.

#### Way Forward

- **Set a national target for green hydrogen and electrolyser capacity:** A phased manufacturing programme should be used to build a vibrant hydrogen products export industry in India such as green steel (commercial hydrogen steel plant).
- **Implement complementary solutions that create virtuous cycles:** For example hydrogen infrastructure can be set up for refueling, heating and generating electricity at airports.
- **Decentralised Production:** Decentralised hydrogen production must be promoted through open access of renewable power to an electrolyser (which splits water to form H<sub>2</sub> and O<sub>2</sub> using electricity).
- **Providing Finance:** Policymakers must facilitate investments in early-stage piloting and the research and development needed to advance the technology for use in India.

# Heat Dome

## Why in News?

Recently, the **Pacific Northwest and some parts of Canada** recorded temperatures around **47 degrees**, causing a **"historic" heat wave**.

## About Heat Dome

- As per the **National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)** of the US Department of Commerce, a **heat dome occurs when the atmosphere traps hot ocean air like a lid or a cap**.
- The **phenomenon of Heat dome starts** when **there is a strong change (or gradient) in the ocean temperatures**. In the process called convection, the gradient causes more warm air, heated by the ocean surface, to rise over the ocean surface.
- The NOAA further added that as the **prevailing winds move the hot air east, the northern shifts of the jet stream trap the air and move it toward the land, where it sinks and results in heatwaves**.

## How long heat wave lasts

- Many weather scientists and the research organisations such as the National Oceanic and Atmospheric studied these climatic changes and have arrived at the conclusion that a **heat dome typically lasts a week**.
- According to scientists and researchers, the formation becomes too big to keep standing and falls over, releasing the trapped air and ending the swelter.

## Effects of heat dome

- The **people living without an air conditioner see the temperatures of the homes rising unbearably high which leads to sudden fatalities** like those being reported in parts of the United States and Canada.
- According to the weather experts, **the trappings of the heat can also damage crops, dry out vegetation and result in droughts**.
- The heatwave also leads to the **rise in energy demands**, particularly the electricity, leading to pushing up the rates.
- The **heat domes act as fuels to the wildfires**, which is responsible for destroying a lot of land area in the United States every year.

## Are heat domes result of climate change?

- **Weather scientists** all over the world have been **highlighting the effects of rising temperatures (climate change) on the more extreme heatwaves**.
- According to the NOAA Survey in 2017, the average US temperatures have increased since the last 19th century.
- **Scientists who have been studying the climate tend to agree** that the **heat waves occurring today are more likely the result of climate change for which humans are responsible**.
- The climate scientists, in the decades to come, **expect more days of a severe heatwave**. Apart from the United States, the cities as far north as the Arctic circle broke heat records this week.

## Conservation Plans for Cities along Rivers

### Why in News?

A policy document from **National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG)** has proposed that cities situated on river banks should **incorporate river conservation plans** when **they prepare their Master Plans**. The recommendations are currently

for towns that are on the main stem of the river Ganga which are in five States — **Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal.**

#### **Key Guidelines of the Policy:**

- The cities situated on the river banks will have to incorporate river conservation plans when they prepare their Master Plans.
- These **river-sensitive plans** must be **practical and consider questions of land ownership** such as restrictions on the **Floor Area Ratio, ground coverage, and setting limits on the maximum permissible heights of buildings.**
- The plan should include a **systematic and alternate livelihood rehabilitation plan** for encroaching entities.
- The Master Plan should **not mandate specific technologies.** But it can create an environment for facilitating the use of state-of-the-art technologies for river management.
  - These include **satellite-based monitoring of water quality; artificial intelligence for riverine biodiversity mapping; big data and citizen science for river-health monitoring and unmanned aerial vehicles for floodplain mapping.**
- The cities with an ongoing Master Plan should conduct an **immediate analysis of the extent to which these river guidelines could have been adopted.**

#### **The National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG):**

- It was **registered as a society on 12th August 2011** under the **Societies Registration Act 1860.**
- It acted as the **implementation arm of National Ganga River Basin Authority(NGRBA)** which was constituted under the provisions of the Environment (Protection) Act (EPA),1986.
- **NGRBA was dissolved with effect from the 7th October 2016,** consequent to the **constitution of the National Council for Rejuvenation, Protection and Management of River Ganga (referred as National Ganga Council).**

## **Lemru Elephant Reserve: Chhattisgarh**

### **Why in News?**

Recently, the **Chhattisgarh government** has proposed to **reduce the area of Lemru Elephant Reserve from 1,995 sq km to 450 sq km.**

### **About Lemru Elephant Reserve**

- The proposal for the reserve, in **Korba district,** was passed unanimously by the **Assembly in 2005** and got **central approval in 2007.**
- Lemru is **one of two elephant reserves planned to prevent human-animal conflict in the region,** with elephants moving into Chhattisgarh from Odisha and Jharkhand.
- Its area was then proposed to be **450 sq km.**

### **Why does the government want to reduce the size of the reserve?**

- The area proposed under the reserve is part of the **Hasdeo Aranya forests, a very diverse biozone that is also rich in coal deposits.**
- Of **22 coal blocks** in the area, seven have already been allotted with mines running in three, and in the process of being established in the other four.

- Under the **'No-Go Area' policy from the UPA area**, the **entire area was considered out of bounds for mines**, but in 2020, five coal blocks from the region were put on the auction list.

#### Reserve importance:

- North Chhattisgarh alone is home to over 240 elephants.
- **Elephants in Chhattisgarh are relatively new**; they started moving into undivided Madhya Pradesh in 1990.
- **Since these animals were relatively new, the human-animal conflict started** once elephants started straying into inhabited areas, looking for food.

#### Protected Areas in Chhattisgarh:

- Achanakmar Tiger Reserve.
- Indravati Tiger Reserve.
- Sitanadi-Udanti Tiger Reserve
- Kanger Valley National Park
- Badakhhol Tamor Pingla Elephant Reserve.

The advertisement features a large central monitor displaying the text: **PRE/MAINS** (in red), **HPAS MAINS** (in blue), **TEST SERIES 2021** (in green), and **Available** (in black). On the left, a man in a red shirt and blue pants holds a white card with a yellow star. On the right, a woman in a green shirt and blue pants stands with her hand on the monitor. The background is light blue with stylized plants. The JOKTA Academy logo, which includes a book and the letters 'JA', is in the top corners. The text 'JOKTA Academy' is at the top center, with 'IAS/HAS' in a purple box below it.



# Science and technology

## Anti-Methanogenic Feed Supplement: Harit Dhara

### Why in News?

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

### About Harit Dhara

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

### It's Significance:

- Belching cattle, buffaloes, sheep and goats in India emit an estimated 9.25 million tonnes (mt) to 14.2 mt of methane annually, out of a global total of 90 mt-plus from livestock.
- And given methane's global warming potential – 25 times of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) over 100 years, making it a more potent greenhouse gas – that's cause for concern.
- An average lactating cow or buffalo in India emits around 200 litres of methane per day, while it is 85-95 litres for young growing heifers and 20-25 litres for adult sheep.
- Feeding Harit Dhara can reduce these by a fifth.

### How is methane produced by the cattles?

- Methane is produced by animals having rumen, the first of their four stomachs where the plant material they eat – cellulose, fibre, starch and sugars – gets fermented or broken down by microorganisms prior to further digestion and nutrient absorption.
- Carbohydrate fermentation leads to the production of CO<sub>2</sub> and hydrogen.
- These are used as substrate by archaea – microbes in the rumen with structure similar to bacteria – to produce methane, which the animals then expel through burping.
- Harit Dhara acts by decreasing the population of protozoa microbes in the rumen, responsible for hydrogen production and making it available to the archaea for reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> to methane.
- Tropical plants containing tannins – bitter and astringent chemical compounds – are known to suppress or remove protozoa from the rumen.

## Project BOLD: KVIC

### Why in News?

The Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) has launched the unique Project Bamboo Oasis on Lands in Drought (BOLD) in Rajasthan.

## About Project BOLD

- The project is the **first of its kind exercise in India**, launched from the **tribal village NichlaMandwa in Udaipur, Rajasthan**.
  - Under the project, **special bamboo species such as Bambusa Tulda and Bambusa Polymorpha (specially brought from Assam) have been planted over the vacant arid Gram Panchayat land**.
  - KVIC has created a **world record of planting the highest number of bamboo saplings on a single day** at one location.
- Project BOLD seeks to **create bamboo-based green patches in arid and semi-arid land zones**.
- It is aligned with the efforts for **reducing land degradation and preventing desertification in the country**.
- The initiative has been launched as part of KVIC's "**Khadi Bamboo Festival**" to **celebrate 75 years of independence "AzadikaAmritMahotsav"**.
- KVIC is set to **replicate** the Project at **Village Dholera in Ahmedabad district in Gujarat and Leh-Ladakh region by August this year**.

## Why Bamboo?

- KVIC has judiciously chosen bamboo for developing green patches.
- **Bamboos grow very fast and in about three years' time**, they could be harvested.
- Bamboos are also known for **conserving water and reducing evaporation of water from the land surface**, which is an important feature in arid and drought-prone regions.

## Significance of the move

- The project will help in reducing the **land degradation percentage of the country**, while on the other hand, they will be havens of sustainable development and food security.
- The bamboo plantation program will **boost self-employment in the region**.
- It will benefit **a large number of women and unemployed youths in the region** by **connecting them to skill development programs**.

## Methane in the Moons of Saturn

### Why in News?

NASA's Cassini spacecraft has detected an **unusually high concentration of methane** along with **carbon dioxide and dihydrogen in the moons of Saturn**.

- The spacecraft has found that Titan has methane in its atmosphere and **Enceladus has a liquid ocean with erupting plumes of gas and water**.

### Methane on Earth

- Most of the methane on Earth has a **biological origin**.
- Microorganisms called **methanogens** are capable of generating methane as a metabolic byproduct.
- They do not require oxygen to live and are widely distributed in nature.
- They are found in **swamps, dead organic matter, and even in the human gut**.
- They are known to survive in high temperatures and simulation studies have shown that they can live in Martian conditions.
- Methanogens have been widely studied to understand if they can be a **contributor to global warming**.

### Possible Reasons for Methane on Enceladus:

- A large amount of methane found on Enceladus is likely coming from activity at **hydrothermal vents present on Enceladus's interior seafloor.**
- **These vents could be very similar to those found in Earth's oceans,** where microorganisms live, feed on the energy from the vents, and produce methane in a process called methanogenesis.

### About Cassini Mission:

- **The Cassini-Huygens mission** is a collaboration between NASA, ESA (European Space Agency), and the Italian Space Agency.
- **The mission was launched in 1997.** The spacecraft arrived in the Saturn system in 2004 and ended its mission in 2017.
- **Significance:** Cassini-Huygens was a mission of firsts. First to orbit Saturn. First landing in the outer solar system. Also, first to sample an extraterrestrial ocean.

### About Titan:

- **Titan is the largest moon of Saturn** and the second-largest natural satellite in the Solar System.
- **It is the only moon known to have a dense atmosphere** and the only known body in space, other than Earth, where clear evidence of stable bodies of surface liquid has been found.

### About Enceladus:

- **Enceladus** is the sixth-largest moon of Saturn. It is about a tenth of that of Saturn's largest moon, Titan.
- **Enceladus** is an active moon that hides a global ocean of liquid salty water beneath its crust.

## Right to Repair Movement

### Why in News?

- In recent years, **countries around the world** have been **attempting to pass effective 'right to repair' laws.** The **movement traces its roots back to the very dawn of the computer era in the 1950s.**
- The goal of the movement is to **get companies to make spare parts, tools and information on how to repair devices available to customers and repair shops to increase the lifespan of products** and to keep them from ending up in landfills.

### About Right to Repair:

- The Right to Repair electronics refers to **government legislation that is intended to allow consumers the ability to repair and modify their own consumer electronic devices,** where otherwise the manufacturer of such devices require the consumer to use only their offered services.
- The idea originally **originated from the USA** where the Motor Vehicle Owners' **Right to Repair Act 2012,** required the manufacturers to provide the necessary documents and information to allow anyone to repair their vehicles.

### Benefits of the Repair Movement:

- Right to repair would be **helpful in boosting the business for small repair shops.** This in turn would help run the local economies.

- In case a **manufacturer has monopoly on repairs**, then the prices rise and quality drops. The right to repair would help **reduce such monopolistic attitudes**.
- **Price would be lessened** on repairs in future.

#### What is expected of the companies?

- Repair information, including manuals or guides
- Information about the products that can be repaired
- Parts that can be used to repair the products

#### Electronic Manufacturers oppose this movement:

- Large tech companies like **Apple, Microsoft, Amazon, Tesla** etc did not like the idea of the right to repair.
- They argue that this would result in them **opening up their intellectual property rights to third party repair services** which would result in loss for them and would **compromise the security of their devices**.
- **Tesla openly says** that such things may hamper their **data security systems** and create a **loophole in cyber security**.
- However, only the **Apple co-founder Steve Wozniak** supported this cause saying that he **wouldn't have been able to build this empire had he not have had open technology rights**. Its time that will tell now where the movement would go.

#### Way Forward

- Right to Repair law could be **especially valuable in a country like India**, where service networks are often spotty and authorised workshops are few and far between in the hinterland.
- **India's informal repair sector does a good job with jugaad**. But the **quality of repair and maintenance services** could improve substantially if such legislation was adopted.

### New Solar Projects: NTPC

#### Why in News?

Recently, **National Thermal Power Corporation Limited (NTPC) Renewable Energy Ltd (REL)** signed a **Memorandum of Understanding with the Union Territory of Ladakh** to set up the country's **first Green Hydrogen Mobility project**.

#### About the Green Hydrogen Mobility Project

- It is a step to ensure a **carbon-free economy based on renewable sources and green hydrogen**.
- **Leh** is soon to become **India's first city to implement a green hydrogen-based mobility project with zero-emission**.
- MoU will enable NTPC to help Ladakh develop a carbon-free economy based on renewable sources and green hydrogen.
- The signing of the MoU was also marked with the **inauguration of NTPC's first solar installations in Leh in form of solar trees and a solar carport**.
- NTPC has planned to **ply 5 hydrogen buses**, to start with, in the region and the company will be setting up a solar plant and a green hydrogen generation unit in Leh towards this end.
- This would be **zero-emission mobility** in the true sense.

## Green Hydrogen

- 'Green hydrogen' is **pure hydrogen produced using renewable energy sources such as wind or solar power.**
- There are **no natural hydrogen deposits on earth**, it has to be **extracted from other compounds by a chemical process.**
- If renewable energy (e.g. from Solar panels) is used to **generate electricity for the electrolysis of water then the green hydrogen can be generated without any harmful emissions.**

## NTPC role in green hydrogen project

- NTPC has been **aggressively pushing for greening its portfolio and the green hydrogen project** is another step towards achieving a low carbon footprint.
- NTPC has also been promoting the usage of **green hydrogen-based solutions in sectors like mobility, energy, chemical, fertilizer, steel, etc.**
- NTPC has recently revised its target of **achieving 60GW renewables capacity by 2032**, almost doubling the earlier target.
- NTPC has commissioned **India's largest floating solar project of 10MW at Vishakhapatnam.**
- NTPC Ltd, India's largest energy integrated company aims to build 60 GW Renewable Energy Capacity by 2032.
- Currently, the state-owned power major has an installed capacity of 66 GW across 70 power projects with an additional 18 GW under construction.

## National Thermal Power Corporation Limited

- NTPC Ltd. is a **central Public Sector Undertaking (PSU) under the Ministry of Power.**
  - NTPC REL is a **100% subsidiary of NTPC.**
- It is **India's largest energy conglomerate with roots planted way back in 1975** to accelerate power development in India.
- It aims to provide **reliable power and related solutions in an economical, efficient and environment-friendly manner**, driven by innovation and agility.
  - NTPC has also been promoting usage of **green hydrogen based solutions in sectors like mobility, energy, chemical, fertilizer, steel etc.**
- It became a **Maharatna company in May 2010.**
- It is located in **New Delhi.**

## Kisan Sarathi

### Why in News?

Recently, the **Indian Council of Agriculture Research (ICAR)** celebrated its 93rd foundation day and on the occasion, the Kisan Sarathi platform was launched.

### About Kisan Sarathi

- This digital platform **empowers farmers with the technological interventions** to reach farmers in remote areas.
- Through this platform, **the farmers can interact and avail personalized advisories on agriculture and allied areas directly from the respective scientists of Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVKs).**



- Using this platform, farmers can **get information about crop and crop production**, among other things that will help them in improving the quantity of their produce.
- Farmers will be able to **get information about good crop practices, the right amount of products and many other basic things**.

#### Indian Council of Agriculture Research

- It is an **autonomous organisation under the Department of Agricultural Research and Education (DARE)**, Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare.
- It was established in July **1929** and was formerly known as the Imperial Council of Agricultural Research.
- It is headquartered at **New Delhi**.
- **It is the apex body for coordinating, guiding and managing research and education in agriculture including horticulture, fisheries and animal sciences** in the entire country.

## Pegasus Spyware

### Why in News?

Recently, it has been reported that **Pegasus**, the malicious software, has allegedly been used to secretly monitor and spy on an extensive host of public figures in India.

### About Pegasus:

- Pegasus is the name of a **spyware developed by Israeli firm NSO**. It can be introduced surreptitiously into mobile devices and can suck up all data and meta-data on the infected device as well as monitor conversations, chats and browsing.
- Pegasus, is perhaps **the most powerful spyware ever created**. It is **designed to infiltrate smartphones — Android and iOS — and turn them into surveillance devices**.
- The Israeli company, however, markets it as a **tool to track criminals and terrorists** — for targeted spying and not mass surveillance.

### THE PEGASUS PROJECT

➤ Paris-based media nonprofit **Forbidden Stories** and **Amnesty International** accessed a leaked database of thousands of phone numbers across the world targeted by a spyware called **Pegasus**

➤ They shared the data with global media organisations as part of a collaborative investigation called **Pegasus Project**

➤ An Israeli

company called **NSO Group** makes **Pegasus**, a spyware capable of extracting data from a phone

➤ According to the report, at least 2 Union Cabinet ministers, 3 opposition leaders, a Constitutional authority, government officials, scientists and over 40 journalists in India were targeted



### Who can buy Pegasus?

- NSO claims it will only sell the software to **verified government agencies**, with a contractual clause that the spyware can only be used in cases of suspected crime or terrorist activity.
- In practice, the clause is unenforceable -- any buyer can then use it as they please.

- However, it is possible for NSO to verify potential buyers and check whether they are official agencies, though it refuses to release its client list.
- **NSO claims it has 60 clients in 40 countries.** NSO also says the spyware is mainly used by law enforcement and intelligence agencies as well as the military.

### Why Pegasus is s unique?

- It is a very **sophisticated spyware**, which can remotely infect a very wide range of devices, without any action on the target's part.
- Most mobile spyware **is installed by getting hold of the physical device or via phishing.**
- For instance a text message/WhatsApp/e-mail with a malicious link is sent, and the target gets infected when he or she clicks on that link. Pegasus can be transmitted this way.
- More importantly, **Pegasus can infect mobiles by sending malicious WhatsApp messages**, without any actions being necessary on the target's part.
- NSO has, in fact, been sued by WhatsApp for exploiting this vulnerability.
- Pegasus can also be **spiked into the target's phone from a nearby base transceiver station (BTS).** BTS is standard equipment used by telecom service companies to route and re-route signals.

### What can Pegasus do?

- Once installed, the spyware takes a wide range of permissions, allowing it to monitor location, e-mails, grab contact lists, take screenshots, grab media, grab instant messages and SMS, access browser history, take control of the phone's mike and cameras, etcetera.
- Pegasus can also be deleted remotely. It is very hard to detect and once it is deleted, leaves few traces.
- It can also be used to plant messages/mails, etcetera, which is why there are theories it may have been used to plant fake evidence to implicate activists in the Bhima Koregaon case.

### Figuring out if Pegasus is infecting the mobile

- It is close to impossible to figure out if a phone has been infected with Pegasus. It doesn't cause slowdown or hanging.
- It is slightly easier to detect Pegasus on an iPhone because iPhones keep more detailed logs of activity, and cybersecurity experts can see if data has been exchanged with suspicious Web sites.

### Pros and cons of public surveillance

#### Pros

- **Increase Public Safety:** Just like surveillance on our private property improves our home security, public surveillance increases public safety.
- **Reduce Crime Rate:** It can keep an eye out for crimes as well as act as a deterrent.
- **Captures "precrime" data**
- **Helps Catch Criminals**
- **It helps authorities to track criminals down.**
- **Encourages good behavior**

- **Provide Evidence & Gather Clues**
- **Acts as reassurance**
- **Convenience**

#### Cons

- **Easily Abused:** Unfortunately, this technology can be easily abused. For example, information collected can potentially be used as a form of blackmail. Another example is voyeurism and stalking. To combat these issues, strict regulations on public surveillance must be put into place.
- **Reduces personal privacy**
- **Reduces personal freedom**
- **Freezes free speech**
- **Creates a "Big Brother" society**
- **Creates a "nanny state"**
- **Brings into disrepute the role of government**
- **Blurs moral and legal boundaries**
- **Undermines the rule of law**
- **Increases societal "paranoia"**
- **Narrows choices through creation of algorithmic "echo chambers"**
- **Increases supply side manipulation**
- **Information asymmetry (supply side high, demand side low)**
- **Doubts about Effectiveness**
- **Expensive:** High maintenance and costs of these systems is not justified by their limited results..

## NASA's New Spacecraft: NEA Scout

### Why in News?

NASA has announced that its new spacecraft, NEA Scout, has successfully undergone all the required tests and has now been safely tucked inside the **Space Launch System (SLS) rocket**.

### About NEA Scout

- NEA Scout is **among one of several payloads that will hitch a ride on Artemis I, which is expected to be launched in November**.
- Near-Earth Asteroid Scout (NEA Scout) is a **small spacecraft which is not bigger than a big shoebox**.
- NEA Scout's primary mission is to **collect data from a near-Earth asteroid**. This will be America's first interplanetary mission that will be using special solar sail propulsion.
- This spacecraft has been made using stainless steel alloy booms and will deploy an aluminium-coated sail which is of 925 square feet.
- This spacecraft will take around **two years to reach the targeted asteroid** and will nearly 93 million miles away from the Earth during its encounter with the asteroid.

### How will NEA Scout study the asteroid?

- The spacecraft is equipped with **high-grade scientific special cameras** that can take pictures from ranges of 10 cm/pixels to 50 cm/pixels.

- Post taking the images it can also process them and reduce their file sizes before using its medium-gain antenna to send them to the **earth-based Deep Space Network**.

### **Artemis programme**

- **Artemis I is a crew-less test flight of the SLS rocket and Orion spacecraft.** Under **NASA's Artemis programme**, the space agency has aimed to land **the first woman on the Moon in the year 2024** and also to establish **sustainable lunar exploration programs by the year 2030**.

## **Geospatial Technologies for the Water Sector in India**

### **Why in News?**

Recently, the **Association of Geospatial Industries released a report titled "Potential of Geospatial Technologies for the Water Sector in India"**. The report mentions opportunities in the Water sector that can benefit from the use of Geospatial technologies.

### **Major Highlights from the Report**

- As a fast developing and second most populous country in the world, India is facing a severe water crisis that is becoming a critical issue.
- Home to about 17% of the world population, and around 20% of world's livestock population, India has access to only about 4% of the world's freshwater reserves.

### **Key Concerns or Indian Water Sector**

#### **Rain water and Glaciers:**

- India receives 3,000 billion cubic metres of water every year through rainfall or other sources such as glaciers; of this, only 8% is collected.

#### **Ground Water:**

- Rate of extraction of Groundwater in India is higher than Rate of filling the aquifers.
- 89% of India's water resources are used for agriculture, out of which 65% is withdrawn from under the ground.
- Industry too obtains around 80% of their water requirements from underground sources. Thus, one of India's biggest challenges is to conserve groundwater.

#### **Water Storage Capacities:**

- India also has insufficient water storage capacities.
- While some countries have capacities up to 5000 mt cube per person storage infrastructure, India only has about 200 mtr cube per person.
- This results in droughts even in years that experience good monsoons.

#### **Water Quality:**

- Even the water that is available is not fit for direct consumption. Groundwater in one-third of India's 600 districts is contaminated mainly through fluoride and arsenic.

- India's economic burden through water borne diseases is approximately USD 600 million a year.
- Less than 50 percent of India's population has access to safe managed drinking water, and that too is inequitable.

#### **Water Resources Management:**

- The science in water resources management is very complex and dynamic.
- The implication of an applied strategy is not known in the short run.
- The gestation period for any quantifiable change is upwards of a decade, hence adoption of appropriate technology tools and analytics to assess the situation and simulate various possibilities is critical
- for sustainable development in the water sector.

#### **GeoSpatial Technologies in India**

- Geospatial Technologies are **tools that enable us to present the spatial context of phenomena and provide a platform for developing an understanding of 'what-if' scenarios** by integrating various other datasets.
- The term '**geospatial**' **refers not to one single technology, but a sleuth of technologies that help to collect, analyse, store, manage, distribute, integrate, and present geographic information.**
- It consists of the following technologies:

#### **Remote Sensing:**

- This technology allows us to remotely capture features of Earth's surface by using various sensors that are typically mounted on satellites or airborne vehicles.
- Remote Sensing sensors record earth's reflectance in different wavelengths, and these received reflectance values are processed to create a separate image for each wavelength.
- The reflectance value is stored for different wavelengths in different layers, which are also called bands present in that satellite image.
- A sensor can record several wavelengths simultaneously. In general, there are three wavelengths from visible i.e. blue wavelength, green wavelength and red wavelength, whereas infrared can be further defined as near infrared, mid infrared, far infrared and thermal infrared.
- Multispectral satellite data for the water sector is extremely useful as it helps extract detailed information and facilitates more accurate interpretation and classified thematic maps.
- It helps in:
  - assessing depth,
  - water turbidity,
  - understanding aqua culture,
  - assessing water levels,
  - river movement,
  - understanding water-related disaster scenarios,
  - overview of population spread etc.

#### **Surveying:**

- This technology is used to make relatively large-scale, accurate measurements of the Earth's surface.
- Surveying has two similar but opposite functions:
  - The determination of existing relative horizontal and vertical position, such as that used for the process of mapping, and



- The establishment of marks to control construction or to indicate land/water boundaries.
- Survey equipment include theodolite, total station, 3D scanners, LiDAR etc.

### **Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS):**

- Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS) provides precise position or geographic location of people, equipment or things that are attached to a device that includes a GNSS chip.
- Data about the location is gathered from a constellation of navigation satellites that cover the entire globe.
- Common applications include navigation, and routing.
- GNSS is also used in high precision construction.

### **Geographic Information System (GIS):**

- A Geographic Information System (GIS) is a conceptualized framework that provides the ability to capture and analyse spatial and geographic data.
- GIS helps integrate different data layers for enabling spatial based decision making for a variety of users from local governments, transport/logistics, insurance, environment monitoring, telecommunications etc.

### **Geospatial Technologies in Relation to Digital Technologies**

- The fourth industrial revolution is marked by the advent of new-age technologies that are revolutionizing the way we live, work, and relate to each other.
- These technologies include:

### **Artificial Intelligence:**

- Artificial intelligence (AI) is the ability of a digital computer or computer-controlled robot to perform tasks commonly associated with intelligent beings.
- AI simulates human intelligence in machines that are programmed to think like humans and mimic their actions.
- GeoAI can help professionals in the water sector to automatically detect terrain features, densely distributed building footprints, extract information from scanned historical maps, cleanse data in subterranean utility networks, interpretation of utility drawings and asset recognition in images.
- GIS combined with AI is also useful for developing and maintaining decision-making processes like smart water grids, smart sewage systems, and smart waste management systems.

### **Big Data Analytics:**

- Geospatial data has always been characterised as big data.
- Geospatial data is being captured from a variety of sources, right from satellites, UAV mounted sensors, other sensors measuring and monitoring water/air quality, traffic patterns, cell phone data etc.
- **For the water sector**, big data analytics can address issues of data scarcity by consolidating data available from different sources, both traditional and unconventional.
- Big data analytics can transform data into usable information that can support groundwater management, especially at a local scale.
- Big data analytics techniques and methods provide benefits beyond traditional analytics, when dealing with large heterogeneous datasets and are particularly useful when performing data-driven modelling.
- For the water sector, big geospatial data analytics can help develop algorithms for predictive scenarios used for dam construction, water resource management, river linking projects etc.

### Internet of Things:

- The network of physical objects embedded with sensors/software, exchanging data with other devices is called the Internet of Things.
- These sensors measure with high precision the state of the physical world such as temperature, humidity, radiation, electromagnetism, noise, chemicals, etc.
- Data collected through IoT when combined with geospatial data provides rich knowledge and analytics about the real world and helps deliver better outcomes.
- IoT sensors when combined with GIS technology can be an effective tool for:
  - Generating flooding models,
  - Calculating the expected excess rainwater,
  - Identifying groundwater potential zones in hard rock terrain,
  - monitoring the seasonal variation of physicochemical parameters of an urban water stream,
  - Generating high-risk flood plain maps,
  - Delineating groundwater potential zones in hard rock terrain,
  - assessing the spatial variation of groundwater quality
  - Producing salinity hazard maps.

### Robotics:

- Robotic mapping has significantly contributed to the field of localization and mapping, by increasingly becoming independent and automated.
- Low-cost robots for remote surface data collection support water balance computations and hydrologic understanding where water availability data is sparse

### Digital Twin:

- A Digital Twin is a virtual replica of the physical world, its dynamics, and processes, which allow us to simulate real life situations and analyse its impact.
- Digital twins are composed of three parts -
  - the physical entities in the physical world,
  - the virtual models in the virtual world, and
  - the connected data that tie the two worlds.
- Digital Twins not only integrate the digital representation of physical assets, like physical systems of pipes, pumps, valves, and tanks, but also include historical data sets such as weather records and realtime dynamic interactions, which allow them to be used for multiple analyses.

### 5G:

- The 5G or fifth generation technology standard for broadband cellular networks is set to be about 100 times faster than the currently available 4G networks.
- 5G enabled IoT devices will provide precise location about water supply, sanitation, incidents related to leaks or emergencies on a real-time basis.
- As 5G will enable faster machine-to-machine communications, these incoming data from various sensors can be integrated in a GIS based control centre that will process location
- information in real time and AI systems will analyse and trigger actions, thereby enhancing the ability of decision makers to better monitor and manage water related assets and resources.

## Ongoing Water Projects in India

- Recognising the water crisis in India, the government of India formed a single ministry i.e **Ministry of Jal Shakti**.
- Previously, water was a subject which was dealt with by almost nine Ministries.
- Projects are:
  - Jal Jeevan Mission
  - Dam Rehabilitation and Improvement Project (DRIP)
  - Namami Gange
  - National River Linking Project (NRLP)
  - Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT)
  - National Hydrology Programme
  - Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayi Yojana (PMKSY)
  - National Aquifer Mapping and Management Programme (NAQUIM)
  - River Basin Management
  - Atal Bhujal Yojana (ABHY)
  - National Water Mission

## Suggestions

- **Long-term Geospatial Vision:** In order to derive maximum benefit from geospatial technology implementation in various programmes, user departments need to build a long-term vision of the outcomes of geospatial implementation. This will ensure a sustainable infrastructure and human resource investments, as well as better programme outcomes.
- **Integrated geospatial platform:** Even when a lot of data and technology is used by various agencies at central and state level, they are still functioning in silos. An integrated collaborative platform to connect the data and technology used by various organizations need to be developed for seamless access to information both locally and nationally and enable decision making.
- **Data and system integration:** various datasets including demography, socio-cultural, economic, and other parameters need to be integrated with spatial and non-spatial data related to water, like soil moisture, annual rainfall, rivers, aquifer, groundwater levels, water quality etc.
- **Improving water use efficiency:** Agriculture sector is the largest user of water resources in our country. They use 80-85% of water resources, while have only about 30-35% efficiency of water use. Geospatial technologies can be used for increasing water use efficiency, so that this can be increased to at least 50%.
- **Sharing of best practices:** A lot of knowledge exists that can help stakeholders to leverage from and not reinvent the wheel. A central repository of such knowledge base, in the form of a Knowledge Portal can be created and maintained by the Ministry of Jal Shakti that includes case studies, best practices, tools, information on data sources etc. that can be used by....

## Way Forward:

- It is critical to use the latest and best digital and spatial technologies to make data-based informed decisions.
- There is a need for collaborating with stakeholders in the entire ecosystem such as Geospatial organizations, academics, Policy makers, funding agencies.

### Himachal Pradesh Electric Vehicle Policy 2021

#### Why in News?

A high level virtual stakeholder's meeting was organized NITI Ayog in association with Rocky Mountain Institute of California for finalizing the draft electric vehicle policy for Himachal Pradesh.

#### Key Highlights:

- During the meeting it was decided to **present the draft policy for approval** of the **State Government in the month of August**.
- **All the major industry players in EV segment participated** in the meeting and offered their observations on various challenges for implementation of EV policy in the State.
- **Rajan Kapur, Professor IIT Mandi** participated in the meeting and **briefed about the work undertaken by IIT Mandi in the field of innovation of electric vehicles especially in three wheeler segment**.
- Various stakeholder departments of the State Government also joined the virtual meeting along with Director Transport Anupam Kashyap and MD HRTC Sandeep Kumar.
- On behalf of NITI **Ayog Sudendhu Sinha**, Advisor was present.
- Representatives of Mahindra & Mahindra, Tata automobile, Amazon, Flipkart, Hero Electric, EVS motors, Swiggy, Olla and Bajaj automobiles also participated in the meeting.

#### Advantages of Electric Vehicles:

##### Environment/Health:

- Vehicles with Internal combustion (IC) engines cause half of the pollution in the cities as they emit harmful gases like Carbon Monoxide, Nitrogen Oxides, Sulphur Dioxide, Hydrocarbons, etc. = **Air pollution & Global warming**.
- The air pollution induces deadly diseases particularly for elderly people, pregnant women, and children.
- IC engines also cause noise pollution in cities.
- On the other hand, **Electric Vehicles are 100% environment-friendly** as they do not emit toxic gases or smoke in the environment which leads to global warming + they also operate quietly compared to conventional vehicles.
- It will help India in its commitment to the **Paris Climate Agreement**.
- Thus Electric vehicles provide the possibility of not only eliminating the pollution from cities but also improve the health and the environment as a whole.

##### Economy:

- **Oil Imports:** India is the 5th largest importer of oil, importing more than 2.2 million barrels a day to satisfy around 70% of demand in the country. Most of the consumption of oil is in the transport sector. Therefore electric vehicles can significantly reduce India's oil imports = **reduce Current Account Deficit**.
- **Cost-Effective:** With the advent of advanced technology and dedicated R&D, the cost and maintenance of electric vehicles have gone down. The government is also incentivizing the use of electric vehicles by providing subsidies and lower motor taxes on EVs.
- **Less Maintenance:** Less Fluids (for oil and transmission) to change + **Less Moving Parts in EVs = Less Maintenance**.

## Challenges for EV Industry in India

- **Lack of a stable policy for EV production:** EV production is capital intensive sector requiring long term planning to break even and profit realization, uncertainty in government policies related to EV production discourages investment in the industry.
- **Technological challenges:** India is technologically deficient in the production of electronics that form the backbone of EV industry, such as batteries, semiconductors, controllers, etc.
- **Lack of associated infrastructural support:** The lack of clarity over AC versus DC charging stations, grid stability and range anxiety (fear that battery will soon run out of power) are other factors that hinder the growth of EV industry.
- **Lack of availability of materials for domestic production:** Battery is single most important component of EVs. India does not have any known reserve of lithium and cobalt which are required for battery production. India is dependent on countries like Japan and China for the import of lithium-ion batteries.
- **Lack of skilled workers:** EVs have higher servicing costs and higher levels of skills is needed for servicing. India lacks dedicated training courses for such skill development.

## Government Initiatives

- Government has set a **target of electric vehicles making up 30 % of new sales of cars and two-wheelers by 2030 from less than 1% today.**
- To build a sustainable EV ecosystem initiatives like – **National Electric Mobility Mission Plan (NEMMP)** and **Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of (Hybrid &) Electric vehicles in India (FAME India)** have been launched by India.

## FAME II

- The Phase-II of FAME seeks to give a push to EVs in public transport and seeks to encourage adoption of EVs by way of market creation and demand aggregation.
- It envisages the holistic growth of EV industry, including providing for charging infrastructure, research and development of EV technologies and push towards greater indigenization.
- Establishment of Charging stations are also proposed on major highways connecting major city clusters on both sides of the road at an interval of about 25 km each.
- The scheme with **total outlay of Rs 10,000 Crores** over the period of three years will be implemented with effect from **1st April 2019.**
- FAME 2 will offer incentives to manufacturers, who invest in developing electric vehicles and its components, including lithium-ion batteries and electric motors.
- The centre has asked states to frame their EV policy and provide additional fiscal and non-fiscal incentives to manufacturers and buyers.

## National Mission on Transformative Mobility and Battery Storage

- To promote clean, connected, shared, sustainable and holistic mobility initiatives.
- The Mission will drive mobility solutions that will bring in significant benefits to the industry, economy and country.

## Phased Manufacturing Programme



- **Valid for 5 years till 2024** to support setting up of a few large-scale, export-competitive integrated batteries and cell-manufacturing Giga plants in India.
- **Creation of a PMP valid for 5 years till 2024** to localize production across the entire Electric Vehicles value chain.

## H.P. Cabinet decisions

### Why in News?

The Meeting of State Cabinet held **7th July** under the chairmanship of Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur reviewed the Covid-19 situation in the State.

### Key Highlights:

- The Cabinet has decided **to increase the limit of gathering in all social/academic/entertainment/cultural/political and other congregations including marriage celebrations** and functions would be permitted with **50 percent with maximum of 200 persons** in indoor built up/covered area whereas in open space gathering has been allowed with 50 percent capacity of the ground.
- The Cabinet has also decided that **Covid appropriate behaviour would be ensured by the Deputy Commissioners and Superintendents of Police at prominent tourist places.**
- The Cabinet also decided to recommend the Governor to convene the Monsoon Session of H.P. Vidhan Sabha from **2nd August to 13 August, 2021.**
- The Cabinet gave its consent to **bring children who have lost their both parents due to covid-19 under the ambit of Mukhya Mantri Bal Uddhar Yojna** to provide them additional monthly financial assistance of **Rs. 1500 per month.**
- It also gave its consent to increase the **additional honorarium being provided by the State Government from existing Rs. 2000 to Rs. 2750 per month to ASHA workers.**
- The Cabinet decided that **in order to implement New Education Policy, question papers for class three, class five and class eight will be set by HP Board of School Education and their marking and results would be declared at cluster, block and district level respectively.** The Cabinet granted six weeks exemption in school internship in respect of Diploma in Elementary Education for batch 2018-2020.
- It also decided that **schools would remain closed for students till further orders** and online study would continue as usual.
- The Cabinet decided **to promote first year and second year students to next higher class.** New and renewal admissions would start in colleges in the last week of July this year and new academic year for UG classes would commence from 16th August, 2021.
- The Cabinet appreciated the **progress of vaccination status of teaching and non-teaching staff.** It was informed that about **90 percent teaching and non-teaching staff have been vaccinated as on 30 June, 2021.** It was also informed that about 25000 college students were vaccinated on 28 and 29 June, 2021. It was also informed that about 80 percent college students of final year stood vaccinated on 30 June, 2021.
- The Cabinet decided to create **one post of Medical Superintendent in 200 bedded Civil Hospital Nurpur in Kangra district** for proper management of this hospital.
- The Cabinet decided to **bring orphaned children and senior citizens above 70 years under the fold of HIMCARE Scheme without any premium.** This would benefit about 1500 orphaned children besides 16304 senior citizens above the age of 70 years.

- It decided to set up **MRI machine worth Rs. 12.50 crore in Dr. Rajendra Prasad Government Medical College Tanda in Kangra district** to facilitate the people of the area.
- The Cabinet gave its approval to create and fill up **two post of Radiographers in Radiotherapy department of Dr. Rajendra Prasad Government Medical College Tanda.**
- It also gave its consent to fill up one post each of Assistant Professor, Medical Social Worker and Psychologist, two posts of medical officers and five posts of staff nurse in Palliative Care Services, one post of Assistant Professor in Medical Oncology services and one post of Assistant Professor in General Surgery in Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri Government Medical College and Hospital, Nerchowk in Mandi district.
- The Cabinet gave its approval to **upgrade Primary Health Centre Mari in Chamba district to Community Health Centre** alongwith creation and filling up of five posts of different categories for its smooth functioning.
- The Cabinet gave its approval to **create and fill up one post of Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology in Indira Gandhi Medical College Shimla.**
- It decided to create **one post of Additional/Joint Director in Fisheries Department in headquarter Bilaspur to be filled amongst HAS officer.**

## Sh. Virbhadra Singh

### In News:

- The state government has declared state mourning for three days from 8th July to 10th July, 2021 as a mark of respect to Sh. Virbhadra Singh former Chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh, who passed away in the early hours of 8 July, 2021.
- There shall be no official entertainment during this period.
- All state government offices including Boards, Corporations and Autonomous Institutions except the offices dealing with the essential services shall remain closed on 8th of July, 2021.

### About Sh. Virbhadra Singh:

- Virbhadra Singh was a **stalwart leader**, who ensured **unprecedented contribution in development of Himachal Pradesh.**
- He was a **nine-time MLA and five-time member of Parliament**, was **Himachal Pradesh's chief minister for six terms since 1983.** Singh also remained the leader of Opposition from March **1998 to March 2003.**
- He represented **Arki constituency in Solan district** in the present state assembly.

Virbhadra Singh would **always be remembered and respected by the people of the country for his simplicity, humanity and benevolence.** The services and contributions made by him for the State as a politician and Chief Minister will always be remembered.

## Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar

### In News:

Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar will swear-in as the **28th Governor of Himachal Pradesh on 13 July, 2021.**

## Digital Saathi-Bacchon ka Sahara Phone Hamara programme

### Why in News?

Recently, Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur, has Addressed the launching of **Digital Saathi-Bacchon Ka Sahara, Phone Hamara programme.**

- The Digital India Campaign launched by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi in **2014** has helped the country in ensuring that the pace of life does not hamper because of lockdown due to pandemic.

#### Key Highlights:

- The new technology has proved a **boon to the students during the lockdown due to Corona pandemic** as they were able to continue their studies through online mode.
- The State Government has started Har Ghar Pathshala programme **to facilitate the students during the pandemic**. About 80 percent students were covered under this programme and now the endeavour of the Government was to cover cent percent students.
- The Digital Saathi-Bacchon Ka Sahara, Phone Hamara campaign **launched by the Education Department would facilitate the students belonging to weaker sections of the society to get a smart phone so that they could continue their online classes without any hindrance**.
- **Govind Singh Thakur launched Digital Saathi-Bacchon Ka Sahara, Phone Hamara campaign under Samgra Shiksha Abhiyan**.
- Under this campaign **people would donate mobile phones to needy children**.
- Govind Singh Thakur also inaugurated the **Digital Saathi Portal**. Through this portal people and other stakeholders could donate mobiles.
- To establish communication of teachers with **students and parents**, programmes like e-PTM were conducted.
- Govind Singh Thakur thanked **actress Yami Gautam for being part of this campaign**.

#### Sriniwas Shrikant

##### In News:

- Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur has condoled the sad demise **of senior poet, litterateur and critic Srinivas Shrikant**
- He was 83 years old.

#### Rs. 2.28 crore in Balichowki

##### In News:

- Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur has dedicated various development projects worth Rs. 2.28 crore in Balichowki of Siraj constituency area of district Mandi.

#### HP State Council for Child Welfare

##### In News:

- Himachal Pradesh State Council for Child Welfare has been **declared as Specialized Adoption Agency (SAA) in the state as per provision of the Adoption Regulations-2017 of Central Adoption Resources Authority (CARA)** for the next five years from **18th July, 2021**.

#### Wazir Singh Degree College Dehri

##### In News:

Chief Minister has announced the **up-gradation of Wazir Singh Degree College Dehri to PG College**.

## Defence

- India's first indigenous drone defence dome called **"Indrajaal"**, has been developed by **Hyderabad-based** technology **R&D firm Grene Robotics**.
- **Israel's Rafael** Advanced Defense Systems has introduced a fifth-generation long-range autonomous precision-guided missile system called **Sea Breaker**, designed to destroy maritime and land-based targets from stand-off ranges of up to 300km.
- The **Central Government** launched 6 technology innovation platforms that will focus on the development of technologies for globally competitive manufacturing in India.
- A regular **MTech** programme in Defence Technology has been launched by **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** and **All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE)**.
- **Indian Naval Ship Tabar** participated in a military exercise with a frontline frigate of the Italian Navy.
- **Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL)** signed a contract worth about Rs 499 crore with the Ministry of Defence for the manufacture and supply of Akash missiles to the Indian Air Force (IAF).
- The **Indian Navy** received the 10th anti-submarine warfare aircraft P-8I from the US-based aerospace company Boeing.
- To strengthen India-US defence relationship, the Indian Navy received the first two MH-60R Multi Role Helicopters (MRH) from the United States Navy at Naval Air Station in North Island, San Diego.
- **India, Sri Lanka and Maldives** conduct 'Exercise Shield' trilateral tabletop exercise **TTX-2021** on maritime security
- **INS Tabar**, on completion of port visit to Brest, France undertook maritime partnership exercise with **FNS Aquitaine**, a French naval Frigate in the Bay of Biscay
- **Ordnance Factory of Tiruchirappalli (OFT)** handed over the locally assembled **12.7mm stabilised remote control gun (SRCG)** system to the Indian Navy and Indian Coast Guard for enhanced surveillance and warfare.
- A reference was received from the State Government of Karnataka to the central government for setting up of a **Sainik School in Shivamogga district** of Karnataka.
- The Government has taken several policy initiatives and brought in reforms to promote indigenisation and self-reliance in defence manufacturing, under **AatmaNirbhar Bharat Mission** in the defence sector
- In line with **Government of India's** initiative of '**Atmanirbhar Bharat**', it has been decided to earmark an amount

of Rs 71,438.36 crore for domestic capital procurement out of the total allocation of Rs 1,11,463.21 crore for Capital Acquisition.

- Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO) successfully flight-tested the **New Generation Akash Missile (Akash-NG)**, a surface-to-air Missile from Integrated Test Range (ITR) off the coast of Odisha
- In a major boost towards **Atma Nirbhar Bharat and strengthening of Indian Army**, Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) successfully flight-tested indigenously developed low weight, fire and forget **Man Portable Anti Tank Guided Missile (MPATGM)**
- **The last blast of the escape tube of under-construction Sela Tunnel** was conducted by **Director General Border Roads (DGBR)** Lt Gen Rajeev Chaudhry through video conferencing from New Delhi
- **Indian Navy** participated in a two-day bilateral **Passage Exercise (PASSEX)** with Royal Navy Carrier Strike Group (CSG)-21 led by **HMS Queen Elizabeth** in the Bay of Bengal
- **Indian Naval Ship Talwar** is participating in Exercise Cutlass Express 2021 along the East Coast of Africa.
- **INS Tabar** reached **St Petersburg, Russia** on 22 July to participate in the **325th Navy Day** celebrations of the Russian Navy.
- **12th Edition of Indo-Russia joint military Exercise INDRA 2021** will be held at **Volgograd, Russia**
- The Indian Air Force formally inducted Rafale aircraft into **No. 101 Squadron** at **Air Force Station Hasimara in Eastern Air Command (EAC)**
- The **Department of Defence Production** has given its approval for a central sector scheme named '**Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX)**' and gave a budgetary support of Rs. 498.80 crore for the next 5 years starting from 2021-22 to the year 2025-26.
- Indian Naval Ship (INS) Saryu, an indigenously built **Offshore Patrol Vessel** is undertaking coordinated patrol (CORPAT) with **Indonesian Naval Ship KRI Bung Tomo**
- The 12th edition of exercise **INDRA NAVY**, a biennial (Every Two Years) bilateral maritime exercise between Indian Navy and Russian Navy was held in the **Baltic Sea**

## Sports

- **National Olympic Committee of New Zealand (NZOC)** nominated the **weightlifter Laurel Hubbard** for the **New Zealand Olympic team** to compete in the **women's 87-kilogram category**. She is the **first ever transgender athlete** picked to compete at an Olympics.
- **Madhya Pradesh all-rounder Anshula Rao** became the **first women cricketer to be handed a four-year ban**

after failing the dope test.

- **International Cricket Council (ICC)** announced, the **venue for ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2021** has been shifted to the **United Arab Emirates and Oman**.
- **12-year-old Indian origin boy, Abhimanyu Mishra** became the **youngest-ever Grandmaster** in chess.
- **17 year old Nihal Sarin** won the **gold medal** in the **Silver Lake Open chess tournament** held in **Serbia**.
- **25-year-old Naval sailor from Kerala, MP Jabir** qualified for the **Tokyo Olympics in 400m hurdles**. Jabir would be the **first Indian male athlete to participate in the 400m hurdles in Olympics**.
- **Indian wrestler Sumit Malik** who qualified for the **Tokyo Olympics within the 125kg freestyle class**, has been **banned for two years** by the world wrestling governing body **United World Wrestling (UWW)**
- **The Ministry of Youth affairs & Sports** has **b WAKO India Kickboxing Federation as National Sports Federation (NSF)** for promotion and development of the Kickboxing sport in India.
- **Norwegian star Karsten Warholm** broke the **400m men's hurdles world record**, by **clocking 46.7 seconds** at the **Bislett Games in Oslo**.
- **Red Bull's Max Verstappen (Belgium)** won the **2021 Austrian Grand Prix**.
- **Top para high-jumper Mariyappan Thangavelu** was named the **flag-bearer of the Indian contingent** in the **Tokyo Paralympics**.
- **Indian Olympic Association (IOA)** announced **Mary Kom**, the **six-time world boxing champion**, and **Manpreet Singh**, the **men's hockey team skipper**, will be **India's flag-bearers** at the **opening ceremony of the Tokyo Olympics**.
- **Grand Master Hou Yifan** won the **FIDE Chess.com Women's Speed Chess Championship**.
- **Armenian grandmaster Levon Aronian** became the **winner of the Goldmoney Asian Rapid chess tournament** held in **virtually**.
- **2022 AFC Women's Asian Cup** to be held in **Mumbai and Pune**
- **Germany's World Cup-winning midfielder Toni Kroos** announced **retirement from international football**.
- **Wimbledon 2021: Men's Single – Novak Djokovic (Serbia)** defeated **Matteo Berrettini (Italy)**  
**Women's Single – Ashleigh Barty (Australia)** defeated **Karolína Plíšková (Czech Republic)**
- **Pawan Singh**, has been **selected as the first ever Indian juror** for the **upcoming Tokyo Olympic Games**. **Lionel Messi-led Argentina** beat **Neymar's Brazil 1-0** to win the **Copa America final match**, held at the **Maracana Stadium in Rio de Janeiro**.
- **The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI)** formed a **seven-member working group for domestic**



**cricket.**

- The **Haryana government** will **organise the Khelo India Youth Games 2021 in February 2022.**
- England left-arm spinner **Sophie Ecclestone** & New Zealand opening batsman **Devon Conway** have been **named as the ICC Players of the Month in June.**
- Bangladesh's **all-rounder Mahmudullah** announces retirement from Test Cricket
- Indo-American tennis player **Samir Banerjee** won the **Wimbledon boys' singles title 2021** against compatriot **Victor Lilov** at the **All England Club.**
- **Italy won the European Championship trophy defeating England 3-2** in penalty shoot-out in the **Euro2020 final** at **Wembley Stadium in London.**
- **Former India and Rajasthan pacer Pankaj Singh** announced **retirement from all forms of cricket.**
- The sport's global governing body, **BWF**, announced **India will host the World Badminton Championships in 2026.**
- **West Indies Cricketer Chris Gayle** becomes **1st batsman to score 14,000 runs in T20 cricket.**
- **Deepak Kabra** became the **first Indian to be selected for judging the gymnastics competition of the Olympic Games.**
- Union Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports **Anurag Thakur** launched Team **India's official cheer song 'Hindustani Way'** for the upcoming **Tokyo Olympics.**
- **Pakistan captain and star batsman Babar Azam** became the **fastest batsman to complete 14 ODI centuries** in his **81st ODI innings.**
- In **AFC Women's Club Championship 2020-21**, the **All India Football Federation (AIFF)** has **nominated the women's team of 'Gokulam Kerala FC'** to represent **India.**
- **LA Polo Delhi** in collaboration with **Himalayan sports and cultural development organization** and **Polo Promotion Committee Kargil** are working on a **promotional documentary in Ladakh.**
- **Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes-Great Britain)**, won the **British Grand Prix 2021** for a record-extending **eighth time at the Silverstone Circuit in the United Kingdom.**
- **India's GM Viswanathan Anand** defeated **Vladimir Kramnik of Russia** to win the **Sparkassen Trophy** in his **fourth and final round held in Dortmund, Germany.**
- The **International Cricket Council (ICC)** welcomed its **newest member countries Mongolia, Tajikistan and Switzerland** at the **ICC's 78th Annual General Meeting held.**
- The **International Olympic Committee** approved the **Australian city of Brisbane** as the **host city for the 2032**

### **Summer Olympics and Paralympic Games.**

- 21-year-old Madhya Pradesh shooter **Rubina Francis**, won **gold in the 10-metre air pistol parawomen's event at World shooting Para Sport Cup held in Lima, Peru**
- Young wrestlers **Aman Gulia (Sonepat wrestler) 48kg** and **Sagar Jaglan 80kg** were **crowned the new world champions in their respective categories at the Cadet World Championship in Budapest, Hungary.**
- Japanese Emperor **Naruhito** & IOC president **Thomas Bach** have officially opened the **32nd Summer Olympic Games** in the newly-built National Stadium **Tokyo.**
- India's ace weightlifter **Saikhom Mirabai Chanu** won a **silver medal in the Women's 49 kg category, at Tokyo 2020 Olympics.**
- The Advisory Committee of the **Indian Olympic Association (IOA)** has recommended cash awards for Indian athletes participating in the Tokyo Olympics. **Gold medals** will be awarded **₹75 lakh**, **Silver medal winners** will be given **₹40 lakh**, **Bronze medal winners** will receive **₹25 lakh.**
- **Momiji Nishiya**, a 13 years 330 days old Japanese skateboarder won the **gold medal at the Tokyo 2020 Olympics.**
- The **Tokyo Olympics** are introducing four new sports namely **skateboarding, surfing, karate and sport climbing.** With this, the Tokyo Games now has **339 medal events.**
- **Delhi's Vantika Agarwal** stunned a strong field to win the **National women online chess title.**
- 16-year-old **Indian Wrestler Priya Malik** clinched **gold** at the **2021 World Cadet Wrestling Championships in Budapest, Hungary.**
- Weightlifter **Polina Guryeva** won a **silver medal** by lifting a **total 217 kilograms** in the **59-kilogram category** wins first-ever Olympics medal for **Turkmenistan**
- 22-year-old **Yuto Horigome of Japan** won the **gold medal in skateboarding** with a score of 37.18 points at the Olympic Games held at **Ariake Urban Sports Center, in Tokyo.**
- 21-year-old **Chinese Shooter Yang Qian** won the first **gold medal** of the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games in **women's 10m air rifle** with a **score of 251.8.**

## Summits and Conferences

Summits	Venue	Aim/Theme
7th edition of Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS)	France	IONS is a series of biennial meetings, held between the littoral states of the Indian Ocean region.
CoWin Global Conclave virtual meet addressed by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi	India	To share India's learnings and experiences with regards to planning, strategizing and executing the world's largest vaccination drive through Co-WIN.
1st edition of The Indo Pacific Business Summit Organised by CII	Virtually	Theme of the Indo Pacific Business Summit is Developing a Road Map for Shared Prosperity.
BRICS Labour & Employment Ministers Meeting	India	Exchange views on the impact of Covid-19 on global labour market, enhance information sharing, discuss and agree upon specific areas of cooperation between BRICS Member countries.
World Universities Summit addressed by Vice-President Of India, M. Venkaiah Naidu	India	The theme of the summit was "Universities of the Future: Building Institutional Resilience, Social Responsibility and Community Impact".
Pre-Summit of United Nations Food System Summit 2021 addressed by Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Shri Narendra Singh Tomar	Virtually	The Minister emphasized the importance of Agriculture in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030 as 12 out of 17 SDGs are directly dependent on agriculture.
5th National Geo-research Scholars Meet (NGRSM)	Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology (WIHG), Dehradun	Theme "Earth Sciences for Sustainable development"

Central-South Asia conference 2021	Tashkent, Uzbekistan	The forum is aimed at strengthening historically close and friendly ties, trust and good-neighborliness between Central and South Asia in the interests of all peoples and countries of both regions.
G20 Environment Ministerial Meeting 2021	Naples, in Italy in virtual mode	The theme of the meeting is "People, Planet' and Prosperity".

## Ranks & Indices

- **ITU's Global Cybersecurity Index 2020** : US Ranks Tops & India ranked at 10th position
- **Global Startup Ecosystem Index Report 2021** : India Ranks 20<sup>th</sup> position, **US remains 1<sup>st</sup>** which was followed by UK, Israel, Canada and Germany
- **World Trade Organisation (WTO) report** : **India** ranked **ninth** with a **share of 3.1% in global agricultural exports. 1<sup>st</sup>** The European Union (EU) – 16.1% share

## Appointments

### List of Newly Appointed Governors:

Governor Name	State
P.S. Sreedharan Pillai	Goa
Satyadev Narayan Arya	Tripura
Ramesh Bais	Jharkhand
Bandaru Dattatraya	Haryana
Thaawarchand Gehlot	Karnataka
Hari Babu Kambhampati	Mizoram
Mangubhai Chhaganbhai Patel	Madhya Pradesh
Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar	Himachal Pradesh

Name of the person	Appointed as	Key points
Anil Kant (Senior IPS officer)	new chief of the state police Kerala	ant will succeed incumbent DGP Loknath Behera, who retired.
Atul Keshap	interim envoy to India	He took charge following the retirement of Ambassador Daniel Smith
Amitabh Kant	Niti Aayog Chief Executive Officer (CEO)	Amitabh Kant has been given one-year extension till June 2022
Vivek Ram Chaudhari (Air Marshal)	Vice Chief of the Air Staff	Lt. Gen. Sanjeev Kumar Sharma assumed office as Deputy Chief of the Army Staff
Prathmesh Mishra	Chairman Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB)	He takes over the role of RCB Chairman from Anand Kripalu.
Ashok Sonthalia	new chief financial officer (CFO) of Titan	
Swadesh Behera	chief people officer of Titan	
N Venudhar Reddy	Director General of All India Radio	
Mr. Nilotpal Gupta	Head of its Data Science Unit in ICICI Securities (I-Sec)	
Andy Palmer	Executive Vice Chairman and CEO of Ashok Leyland EV arm	He is a former Aston Martin chief
Satish Agnihotri	Managing Director of the National High Speed Rail Corporation Ltd (NHSRCL)	
Anand Kripalu	MD and Global CEO of EPL (formerly known as Essel Propack)	
Patrick Vieira	Crystal Palace Football club's new manager	
Kalyan Narayan Bhattacharjee	Lokayukta in Tripura	Bhattacharjee is the third Lokayukta in the state and the first to hold the post as a lawyer.
Harish Laddha	CEO of Airtel Business	Harish will report to Ajay Chitkara, Director and CEO, Airtel Business.
Gaganjot Singh	President of Michelin	He has appointed Gaganjot Singh as the President of Africa, India and the Middle East region.
Lt. Gen. Dr. Madhuri Kanitkar	Vice-Chancellor of the Maharashtra	

	University of Health Sciences (MUHS), Nashik.	
Nitin Gadkari (Minister of Road Transport and Highways and MSME)	“Brand Ambassador” of Khadi Prakritik Paint	
Neha Parikh	CEO of Waze	Crowd-sourced navigation app and a subsidiary of tech giant Google.
Jim Whitehurst	Step down as President of IBM	He will continue to work as senior advisor to Arvind Krishna, Chairman and CEO, IBM.
Shyam Srinivasan	MD and CEO for three years	RBI to re-appoint
Manu Sawhney	CEO of ICC (International Cricket Council)	Greg Barclay, ICC chairman.
Vinay Prakash	Resident Grievance officer for Twitter India	Twitter CEO: Jack Dorsey
Union minister Piyush Goyal	Leader of the house in Rajya Sabha	Goyal replaces Thawar Chand Gehlot
Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi (Union minister of minority affairs)	Deputy Leader of House in Rajya Sabha	Naqvi will be succeeding Union minister of commerce Piyush Goyal
Kamal Batra	Executive President and Head – Assets of Bandhan Bank	
Suman Mishra	CEO of Mahindra Electric Mobility	
Naveen Pandey	CEO of UNIBIC Foods	Pandey was formerly heading Marico India’s new foods’ business unit
Industrialist N.S.Srinivasa Murthy	Honorary Consul General of Vietnam	He is the first honorary consul general of Vietnam from India.
B Anand	Head polymer projects business, TCG Group	
Sudhanshu Vats	deputy managing director, Pidilite Industries	
Pragati Rana	Senior Vice President (SVP)- Strategy, Isobar India	Prior to this, Pragati was General Manager- Strategy & Operations at dentsu mcgarrybowen (dentsuMB) India.
Jean Lin	Global chief executive officer of creative services line of Dentsu International	Lin will advise and guide the development of dentsu Sustainable Business Solutions (dSBS)



Deepinder Goyal	Independent director of Magicpin Board	Goyal is the Zomato co-founder and Chief Executive Officer
Shiv Nadar	steps down as HCL Tech MD	Nadar will, however, continue to guide the company in the capacity of Chairman Emeritus and strategic advisor to the board for five years.
Kiko Ramírez	Head Coach of Odisha FC	Odisha FC President: Raj Athwal
B K Sinha	Security as well as Press Attache of India's Olympic contingent at Tokyo Olympic	Sinha is a former Haryana DGP and also a recipient of the President's Police Medal.
Rahul Saraf	Head of Investment Banking, India by Citi India	Rahul joined Citi India in June 2005
Aramane Giridhar (IAS) (Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) Secretary)	Chairman of the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI)	
Thippesha Dyamappa (former director of software development, international retail at Amazon)	Chief Technology Officer (CTO) of Upstox	Thippesha Dyamappa (former director of software development, international retail at Amazon)
Dr Sharad Kumar	Director of Chennai Airport	He succeeds Suneel Dutt, who will assume charge as Executive Director (Administration) at Corporate Headquarters, New Delhi.
Nasir Kamal	Director General of Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS) in the Ministry of Civil Aviation	Nasir Kamal is a 1986-batch Indian Police Service (IPS) officer of the Uttar Pradesh cadre.
Rakesh Asthana	Delhi Police Commissioner	He held the post of the special director in the investigative agency.
Weightlifter Saikhom Mirabai Chanu	Additional Superintendent of Police in Manipur	Weightlifter Saikhom Mirabai Chanu, who won Silver at the Tokyo Olympics
Ameya Velankar	Head of marketing for India, South Asia in UBER	
Abdulla Shahid (Foreign Minister of Maldives)	Presidency of the 76th Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)	
Sanjay Rai Sherpuria	Brand Ambassador for SDG Choupal	SDG Choupal, a collective community member of UN habitat, WHO, NITI

( Social Entrepreneur)		Ayog and MSME ministry
Noopur Chaturvedi	Chief executive officer of Bharat Bill Payment System	
Ramesh Nair	chief executive officer (CEO) for India and managing director, market development, for Asia in Colliers (Property consultant)	
M. Venkataramana (Former India off-spinner)	Tamil Nadu senior team coach	He replaced D. Vasu, who held the job for two years.
Basavaraj Bommai	Chief Minister of Karnataka	He replaces BS Yediyurappa

## Agreements and MoU

- Cabinet approves MoU between **India, Gambia** on Refurbishing Personnel Administration and Governance Reforms.
- **Reliance Industries (RIL)** and **Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC)** have signed an agreement to set up a new petrochemical complex in Ruwais, Abu Dhabi, to produce chlor-alkali, ethylene dichloride, and polyvinyl chloride (PVC).
- **Singapore** has signed an agreement with the **Royal Government of Bhutan** on the establishment of **Model Technical Training Centres (MTTC)** as part of growth between the two countries.
- Union Territory of **Ladakh** and **Himalayan Forest Research Institute (HFRI)** have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for forest cover development in the region.
- The **Central Reserve Police Force, CRPF** has signed a **MoU** with **Centre for Development of Advanced Computing C-DAC** to train the manpower of the force in advanced technologies and undertake joint projects.
- The **Ministry of Tourism** has signed a Memorandum of Understanding, **MoU** with **Yatra.Com** to strengthen the **Hospitality and Tourism Industry**.
- Agreement on **global digital tax** - to boost **India-US trade negotiations**
- MoU signed between **Institute of Teaching and Research in Ayurveda (ITRA)** and **Government of Gujarat** in due course, in the opening of new doors in the fields of education, research and medicine.
- **Axis Bank** signs **MOU with Indian Army** to offer a defence service salary package with best-in-class benefits and features under its '**Power Salute**' initiative.
- For harnessing exports potential of agricultural and processed food products of cooperatives as well

- **Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs), the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Ltd (NAFED).**
- **India and Nepal** sign MoU on 679 MW Arun Hydro Electric Project to **Satluj Jal Vidyut Nigam (SJVN)** Central Public Sector Enterprise in Nepal.
- The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between **India and Denmark in the field of health and Medicine.**
- **The Ladakh** administration has signed a **MoU with Sikkim State Organic Certification Agency (SOCCA)** to turn the Union Territory into an organic entity.
- **State-owned NTPC** signed a **memorandum of understanding (MoU)** with **UT of Ladakh and LAHDC** to set up the **country's first Green Hydrogen Mobility project**
- The **Indian Academy of Highway Engineers (IAHE)**, has signed an **Agreement** with **University of New South Wales (UNSW)**, Australia for setting up a **Centre for Advanced Transportation Technology and Systems (CATTS)** at IAHE, Noida.
- The **University of Rashtryaraksha (RRU)** in Gandhinagar, Gujarat has an **agreement with the Cambodian Police Academy (PAC)** to support police training and capacity building.
- The **Union Cabinet** approved a pact between **India and Russia** regarding **cooperation on coking coal**, a key steel making raw material, for which domestic players remain dependent on imports from a select group of countries.
- The **Indian Government** will soon sign a **memorandum of understanding (MoU)** with **Bangladesh** to export 10 lakh bales of cotton every year.
- The **Delhi Skill and Entrepreneurship University (DSEU)** has signed a **MoU to train and place students in Japan.**
- With an **objective to ensure women empowerment** and livelihood to **six lakh women on a permanent basis through the YSR Cheyutha scheme**, the **State government** exchanged **MoUs with 14 companies.**
- **Bank of Maharashtra** signed **MoU with NABARD** to spice up ongoing developmental initiatives linked to precedence sector lending in Maharashtra.
- **Web Werks** plans to build a **Rs.750 crore (\$100m)** data center in Bengaluru, India.
- **The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)** unveils map services in **UMANGApp through MoU with MapmyIndia**

- **The National Commission for Women** has signed an **MoU** with the **Bureau of Police Research and Development** for gender sensitization of police personnel across the country.
- **Prasar Bharati and IIT-Kanpur** signed MOU for NextGen Broadcasting Technology Center of Excellence
- Industrial and logistics real estate platform ESR India stated it has signed an **agreement** with
  - the Tamil Nadu government to **develop two industrial parks** with an **estimated investment of Rs 550 crore**.
- **Mineral Exploration Corporation Limited (MECL) (MoU) with Directorate of Mines & Geology (DMG), Government of Goa**, offering integrated mineral exploration and consultancy services.
- The **Indian Navy** has signed a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** with **Kotak Mahindra** for salary accounts of all its personnel - both serving and retired.
- **Chennai-headquartered Indian Bank** has signed an **agreement** with **IIT Guwahati Technology Incubation Centre (TIC)** for financing start-ups under Bank's loan product "IND SpringBoard".
- The **Arunachal government** has signed a **memorandum of understanding (MoU)** with **Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Centre for Policy Research and Analysis-IIM here in Meghalaya** for collaborating as a knowledge partner to build the capacity of the state government officers to set up a satellite centre of the IIM Shillong in Arunachal, and for necessary policy interventions.
- **Central Reserve Police Force** has signed a **Memorandum of Understanding** with **Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (CDAC)**-India's premier tech R&D to train the manpower of the force in advanced technologies and undertake joint projects.
- The **World Health Organization (WHO)** and the **International Paralympic Committee (IPC)** signed an agreement to work together to foster diversity and equity through global initiatives promoting health and sport for everybody, everywhere.
- The **Cabinet approved** a multilateral **MoU** signed between the **International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA)**, **International Organization of Securities Commissions (IOSCO)**, and **International Association of Insurance Supervisors (IAIS)**.
- **National Fertilisers Limited (NFL)** and **Rashtriya Chemicals and Fertilisers Ltd (RCF)** signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative Limited (IFFCO)** for 'transfer of technology' of a revolutionary and game changer fertiliser Nano Urea Liquid.
- **To create a new 'Airport in a Box' platform** that supports end-to-end travel experience for passengers at the **Kempegowda International Airport**, **IBM** has entered into a **10-year partnership with IBM and Kyndryl**.

## Awards & Honours

Name of the Person	Award/ Honour
Bisat hi Bharath	Diana Prize for his contributions to youth development
Dr. Rajendra Kishore Panda (Odia poet)	Kuvempu Rashtriya Puraskar
'Invest India'	2020 United Nations Investment Promotion Award by (UNCTAD)
Azhar Maqsusi (social activist initiative 'Hunger Has No Religion')	United Kingdom Commonwealth Points of Light Award
short film titled Monks on Mission (young monks at ISKCON Gurugram)	Tagore International Film Festival (TIFF)
South Korea's national flag carrier Korean Air	"2021 Airline of the Year" Award
Indian economist Kaushik Basu	Humboldt Research Award for Economics.
Zaila Avant-garde, 14-year-old from New Orleans, Louisiana	2021 Scripps National Spelling Bee honour
Omchery N N Pillai, Journalist and playwright	Bahrain Keraleeya Samajam (BKS)'s Literary Award for 2021.
Telangana State Cooperative Apex Bank (TSCAB)	Best state cooperative bank (SCB) in the country by NABARD
Director Payal Kapadia's A Night of Knowing Nothing	Best documentary at the 74th Cannes Film Festival
Muhammad Yunus (Bangladeshi Nobel Peace Prize winner)	Olympic Laurel at the Tokyo 2020
Sandesh Jhin (Senior India defender)	AIFF men's Footballer of the Year
Suresh Singh Wangjam (midfielder)	Emerging Player for 2020-21 season
Cachar district of Barak Valley in South Assam	National Silver SKOCH award under health category on the project called "Pushti Nirbhor"
Shibaji Banerjee (Former India Football goalkeeper)	Mohun Bagan Ratna posthumously
UST, a leading digital transformation solutions company	Country's first employee choice awards by AmbitionBox.com
Vice Admiral Vinay Badhwar (India's chief hydrographer)	Prestigious Alexander Dalrymple award
Asha Bhosle (legendary playback singer)	Maharashtra Bhushan Puraskar award
Vaidehi Dongre (a 25-year-old girl from Michigan)	Miss India USA 2021
Satpura Tiger Reserve of Madhya Pradesh	Natwest Group Earth Heroes Award in the Earth Guardian category for best management.

## Books & Authors

Book	Author	Published by / Released by
'Fiercely Female: The Dutee, Chand Story	Sundeep Misra	Westland Books On on 'SoftCover
Janaksuta Sut Shaurya	Janaksuta Sut Shaurya	Chief Minister Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan
Lady Doctors: The Untold Stories of India's First Women in Medicine	Kavitha Rao	Amazon-backed Westland Books
Nathuram Godse: The True Story of Gandhi's Assassin	Dhaval Kulkarni	Pan Macmillan India
India To The Rescue	Sushant Singh & Shruthi Rao	Juggernaut Books
Operation khukri - The True Story behind the Indian Army's Most Successful Mission as part of the United Nations	major general rajpal punia & damini punia	Penguin Random House India (PRHI)
The Light of Asia: The Poem that Defined the Buddha'	Former Union minister Jairam Ramesh	Penguin's 'Viking' imprint
Struggle Within: A Memoir of the Emergency by Ashok Chakravarti	Ashok Chakravarti	Harpercollins India
The Art of Conjuring Alternate Realities: How Information Warfare Shapes Your World	Shivam Shankar Singh and Anand Venkatanarayanan	Harpercollins India
The Ramayan of Shri Guru Gobind Singh Ji	Late Baljit Kaur Tulsi	Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA), New Delhi
'Pregnancy Bible	Kareena Kapoor Khan	Juggernaut Books
Terrace Garden: Midde Thota	Thummeti Raghothama Reddy	Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu
Urdu Poets and Writers – Gems of Deccan	senior journalist, J.S. Ifthekhar	Vice President M. Venkaih Naidu
The Great Big Lion	child prodigy Chryseis Knight	Penguin Random House India's Puffin' imprint
India Versus China: Why	Kanti Bajpa	Juggernaut publishers



They Are Not Friends		
'UNTOLD stories' of Haryana Police	DGP Haryana Manoj Yadava	Haryana CM Manohar Lal Khattar
The India Story	Former RBI governor Bimal Jalan	Rupa Publications
A Kashmiri Century - Portrait Of A Society In Flux	Khem Lata Wakhlu	Harper Collins India
SPACE. LIFE. MATTER : The Coming of Age of Indian Science	Science Journalist Hari Pulakkat	Hachette India
Bank with a Soul: Equitas	Dr. C K Garyali	Shri. Duvvuri Subbarao, Former Governor, RBI
The Stranger In The Mirror	Filmmaker Rakeysh Omprakash Mehra	Rupa Publications
An Ordinary Life: Portrait of an Indian Generation	Ashok Lavasa	

## Important Days & Themes

Date	Observed as	Aim/Theme
July 1	Foundation Day of State Bank of India	
July 1	National Doctors' Day	Birth and death anniversary of former Bengal's Chief Minister Dr Bidhan Chandra Roy
July 1	National Postal Worker Day	
July 1	Goods and Services Tax Day	
July 2	World UFO Day	Aim : to spread awareness about unidentified flying objects and aims to acknowledge the existence of UFOs.
July 2	World Sports Journalists Day	Aim : to support the work of sports

		journalists and encourage them to do better in their work.
July 3	International Co-operative Day (first Saturday in July)	Theme : 'Rebuild Better Together'
July 6	World Zoonoses Day	Theme : "Let's Break the Chain of Zoonotic Transmission"
July 7	World Chocolate Day	
July 10	The National Fish Farmers Day	
July 11	World Population Day	Theme: is "Rights and Choices are the Answer: Whether baby boom or bust, the solution to shifting fertility rates lies in prioritising all people's reproductive health and rights"
July 12	National Simplicity Day	
July 12	World Malala Day	
July 15	World Youth Skills Day	
July 16	World Snake Day	Aim: To increase awareness about the different species of snakes all around the world.
July 17	World Day for International Justice	Theme: social justice in the digital economy
July 17	World Emoji Day	Aim: promote the usage of emojis in our conversations.
July 18	Nelson Mandela International Day	Theme: One Hand Can Feed Another
July 20	International Chess Day	Motto: Teach someone how to play chess
July 20	Science Exploration Day	Objective: Tune them in to science
July 22	World Brain Day	Theme: Stop Multiple Sclerosis
July 23	National Broadcasting Day	The Indian Broadcasting Company (IBC) started organising radio broadcasting from Bombay station on this day in 1927.
July 24	Aaykar Diwas (Income Tax Day)	

July 25	World Drowning Day	Objective: The global organization dedicated this day for the global advocacy of drownin prevention
July 26	Kargil Vijay Diwas	Aim: Honour of the war heroes
July 26	International Day for the Conservation of the Mangrove Ecosystem	Aim: raise awareness of the importance of mangrove ecosystems as “a unique, special and vulnerable ecosystem” and to promote solutions for their sustainable management, conservation and uses.
July 27	Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) celebrated its 83rdRaising Day	
July 28	World Natural Conservation Day	Theme: Forests and Livelihoods: Sustaining People and Planet
July 28	World Hepatitis Day	Theme: Hepatitis can't wait
July 29	International Tiger Day	Theme: Their survival is in our hands
July 30	World Day Against Trafficking in Persons	Theme: Victims Voices Lead the Way
July 30	International Friendship Day	Theme: Sharing the human spirit through friendship
July 31	World Ranger Day	Aim: protect the world’s natural and cultural treasures.

## Obituaries

Name of the person	Field	Place / Points
K V Sampath Kumar	Sudharma Sanskrit Daily Editor	Mysore, Karnataka
Raj Kaushal	Bollywood film producer and Director	Mumbai, Maharastra
Donald Rumsfeld	former U.S. Defense Secretary	Taos, New Mexico
M Prasannan	Former Indian national Football team midfielder	Mumbai
Dilip Kumar	Bollywood actor	Mumbai
Richard Donner	Hollywood director and producer	New York City, U.S
Virbhadra Singh	Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister and senior Congress leader	Virbhadra Singh was popularly known as Raja Sahib.

Keshav Datt	Two-time Olympic gold medallist in hockey	Lahore.
Jovenel Moïse	The president of Haiti	Port-au-Prince, Haiti
Dr Panayambally Krishnakutty Warriar	Doyen of ayurveda medicine and managing trustee of Vaidyaratnam P S Varier's Arya Vaidya Sala	Kottakkal, Malappuram district in Kerala.
Moran Mar Baselios Marthoma Paulos II	Supreme Head of the Indian Orthodox church	Parumala, Kerala
Yashpal Sharma	Former Indian Cricketer	Punjab
Paul Orndorff	Former US WWE Wrestler	America
Shirley Fry Irvin	Tennis Hall of Famer & Grand Slam winner	Akron, Ohio, US
Mamnoon Hussain	Former president of Pakistan & Muslim League-Nawaz's central leader	Karachi, Pakistan
Surekha Sikri	Veteran actress	Mumbai
Danish Siddiqui	Pulitzer Prize-Winning Indian Photojournalist	
Gautam Benegal	National Award-winning writer, cartoonist, animation filmmaker	Kolkata
Gira Sarabhai	Co-founder of the renowned National Institute of Design (NID)	Ahmedabad, Gujarat
'Kalaimaamani' Sikkil Shri R Bhaskaran	Noted Carnatic Classical Violinist	Tamil Nadu
Bhageerathi Amma	Kerala's oldest women learner to take the equivalency exams	Kollam, Kerala
Urmil Kumar Thapliyal	Veteran theatre personality and litterateur	
Satish Kalsekar	Renowned Marathi poet	Raigad, Maharashtra
Jayanthi	Veteran multilingual actress	Bengalore, Karnataka
Fakir Alamgir	Folk music legend and freedom fighter	Dhaka, Bangladesh
Mike Hendrick	Former England and Derbyshire bowler (Cricket)	England
Nandu Natekar	Former Indian & Arjuna Award-winning badminton player	Maharashtra

# Nation and states Miscellaneous

## National

- **Digital India** completes 6th year as on 1st July 2021
- **“Enforcing Contracts Portal”** was inaugurated by **Shri Barun Mitra**, Secretary (Justice) at the Department of Justice, Delhi in the presence of senior officers of the Department of Justice.
- Union Minister of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare **Shri Narendra Singh Tomar** launched the **Crop Insurance Awareness Campaign** for **Fasal Bima Yojana** during the Crop Insurance Week as a part of Government's India@75 campaign **‘Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav’**, commemorating **75 years of India's Independence**.
- Union Education Minister, **Shri Ramesh Pokhriyal ‘Nishank’** released the Report on **United Information System for Education Plus (UDISE+) 2019-20** for School Education in India.
- Union Education Minister **Ramesh Pokhriyal ‘Nishank’** launched the **‘Financial Literacy Workbook’** for Class 6 students.
- **75th anniversary of its Independence**, Ministry of Defence (MoD) has initiated a project to create an **interactive virtual museum of the country's Gallantry award winners to honour the heroic deeds of the brave hearts of India**.
- **Minister of Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises Shri Prakash Javadekar** inaugurated (through virtual mode) **six Technology Innovation Platforms** which will focus on development of technologies for the globally competitive manufacturing in India.
- **President Ram Nath Kovind** laid the **foundation stone** for a **memorial and cultural centre dedicated to B.R. Ambedkar in Lucknow**.
- The **Rajasthan Cricket Academy** noted it will construct the **world's third-largest cricket stadium** in Jaipur with capacity for 75,000 spectators at **estimated cost of Rs.300 crore**.
- The **Department of School Education and Literacy, Ministry of Education** will launch the National Initiative for Proficiency in Reading with Understanding and Numeracy (**NIPUN Bharat**).
- **Ayush Ministry** to launch Ayurveda dataset on Clinical Trials Registry Portal
- **Union Health Ministry's National Telemedicine Service – eSanjeevani** has crossed another milestone by completing 7 million (70 lakh) consultations.
- **India joined the G20-OECD** inclusive framework deal that seeks to reform international tax rules and ensure that **multinational enterprises** pay their fair share wherever they operate.
- **The Health Ministry** has launched **COVID GuruKool**, an informational **video series on its social media platforms**.
- **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)**, Ministry of Commerce and Industry has initiated a project on **Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC)**.
- **KVIC project “Bamboo Oasis on Lands in Drought” (BOLD)** initiated to boost tribal income
- **Union Minister Prakash Javadekar** inaugurates Virtual India Pavilion at **74th Cannes Film Festival**
- **Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh** stated that a **Common Eligibility Test, CET** for job aspirants will be conducted across the country **from early 2022**.
- The Modi government announced a new **‘Ministry of Cooperation’** for strengthening the cooperative movement in the country.
- The **government** has decided to bring the **Department of Public Enterprises (DPE) under the finance ministry**.
- The government has set up a **25-member development council for the cement industry**, including **Dalmia Bharat Group CMD Puneet Dalmia and UltraTech Cement MD K C Jhanwar**, which will suggest ways to eliminate waste, obtain maximum production, improve quality, reduce costs and promote standardization of products.
- Central Board of Indirect Taxes & Customs (**CBIC**) **Chairman Shri M. Ajit Kumar** here inaugurated the **online filing of Authorised Economic Operators (AEO) T2 and T3 applications**.

- **Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC)** has recently secured trademark registrations in three countries – **Bhutan, UAE and Mexico** – a big stride towards protecting the identity of brand “**Khadi**” globally.
- **Uttar Pradesh: CM Yogi Adityanath unveils new population policy 2021-30** on the occasion of **World Population Day**
- **India’s first cryptogamic garden** with nearly 50 species of lichens, ferns, and fungi has been opened in **Uttarakhand’s Dehradun district**.
- India Aims to Target over **100 Billion “Blue Economy”**
- **India’s and Asia’s first National Dolphin Research Centre (NDRC)** will come up on the **bank of the Ganges in the premises of Patna University**
- **Ladakh: 1st UT to achieve 100% first dose coverage**
- **The IIT Madras Pravartak Technologies Foundation (IITM-PTF)** is **collaborating** with Sony India **Software Centre Pvt. Ltd.** to **conduct a National hackathon called ‘SAMVEDAN 2021 – Sensing Solutions for Bharat’** to inspire citizens to solve India-specific problems of societal interest using IoT sensor board.
- **Home Minister Amit Shah** inaugurated the **Centre of Excellence for Research and Analysis of Narcotics, Drugs and Psychotropic Substances** at National Forensic Science University at Gandhinagar in Gujarat.
- In order to launch Insurance Policy for Himalayan Yaks, the **National Research Centre on Yak (NRCY)** at Dirang in West Kameng district of Arunachal Pradesh has **tied up with the National Insurance Company Ltd. (NICL)**.
- **National Thermal Power Corporation, NTPC** will set up **India’s single largest solar park at Rann of Kutch in Khavada, Gujarat**.
- Cabinet approves continuation of the **Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS)** for Development of Infrastructure Facilities for Judiciary for further five years till March 2026
- Cabinet approves continuation of centrally sponsored scheme **National AYUSH Mission**
- **North Eastern Institute of Folk Medicine (NEIFM)** at Pasighat, Arunachal Pradesh renamed as **North Eastern Institute of Ayurveda and Folk Medicine Research (NEIAFMR)**.
- The **Union Cabinet** approved the continuation of the **National AYUSH Mission** as a Centrally- sponsored Scheme from **1st April 2021 to 31st March 2026** with financial implication of nearly four thousand 607 crore rupees.
- Union Cabinet approves hike in Dearness Allowance from **17% to 28%**
- **The Ministry of Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises, the parent ministry of DPE,** will now be called the **Ministry of Heavy Industries**.
- Cabinet approves scheme to promote India-owned ships. **A subsidy of Rs 1,624 crore** over five years will be given to domestic shipping companies in global tenders floated by Ministries and central PSEs.
- **Department of Biotechnology** signs Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) With **Ministry of Earth Sciences To Set up DBT MOES Polar Research Centre**.
- The Union Cabinet approved the extension of the Rebate of State and central taxes and levies (RoSCTL) for garments. The scheme will be applicable **until March 2024**
- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** will address the youth of the nation **on the occasion of World Youth Skills Day and 6th anniversary of Skill India Mission**.
- Government launched the digital platform **Kisan Sarathi** to facilitate farmers to get the right information at the right time in their desired language.
- **Bihar** had maximum deaths due to lightning strikes since 2019
- **Peace in border areas essential’: EAM S. Jaishankar** tells Chinese counterpart Wang Yi on the sidelines of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Foreign Ministers’ Meeting in Dushanbe
- The Centre asked the states to direct their police not to register cases under the **repealed Section 66A of the Information Technology Act, 2000** related to posting online comments.
- **Shri Arjun Munda, Minister of Tribal Affairs,** virtually launched the nationwide campaign “**COVID Teeka Sang Surakshit Van, Dhan aur Uddyam**” to accelerate the pace of COVID vaccination among tribals, in India.
- **Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan** and **Tribal Affairs Minister Arjun Munda** launched “**School**



**Innovation Ambassador Training Program**" for 50,000 school teachers.

- Government to set up a world-class '**Indian Institute of Heritage**' at **Noida** to focus on conservation and research in India's rich tangible heritage.
- 104 startups from different sectors such as **Food-Tech, Green energy, Defence, Ed-Tech, Health-Tech**, etc are currently on board on the Startup India Showcase platform.
- With a view to turn **the spotlight on the logistics sector**, the Government announced the launch of **National Logistics Excellence Awards**.
- **The 52nd International Film Festival of India (IFFI)** has announced a call for entries for Indian Panorama, 2021.
- **Chief Labour Commissioner of India** Shri DPS Negi reviewed the status of sensitization and implementation of labour laws in labour codes in various developmental projects in Srinagar.
- **Lower stunting** among children with mothers who had access to free school lunches, shows data from 1993-2016.
- Successful trial of movement of train between **Jaynagar in India and Kurtha in Nepal** undertaken on
- 34.5 km-long rail section
- The **Government of India** has extended the duration of '**Stand Up India Scheme**' up to the year 2025, **MoS for Social Justice and Empowerment** Sushri Pratima Bhoumik.
- **IIT-Hyderabad** develops affordable COVID-19 testing kit: **COVIHOME**
- Jurisdiction of Krishna & Godavari River boards notified in the states of **Andhra Pradesh and Telangana**
- **Chief Justice of India N.V. Ramana** launched a new scheme called '**FASTER**' or '**Fast and Secure Transmission of Electronic Records**'.
- **No specific expert / inter-ministerial committee / research study / policy / plan / strategy for studying, evaluating and preparing a "Day Zero" roadmap/policy for water scarce regions of the country** has been conducted.
- **Tertiary value addition centres** being set up in tribal areas of **Jagdalpur and Raigad under TRIFOOD**
- **MyGov platform** is hosting the **Online Competition** under **PM's Mentorship Scheme for Young Writers**, seeking participation of young and aspiring Indian writers from across the globe.
- **National Education Society for Tribal Students (NESTS)** (an autonomous body under this Ministry) has collaborated with **National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT)** for conduct of "**National Initiative of School Heads' and Teachers' Holistic Advancement**" (**NISHTHA**) **Capacity Building Program for EMRS teachers and Principals**.
- **Khelo India' centres** are being opened for nurturing of athletes at grassroots level and to strengthen sports ecosystem in the country
- **NSE Foundation, a subsidiary of the National Stock Exchange (NSE)**, in **partnership with the NITI Aayog and UNICEF** has launched a programme to spread awareness on COVID-19 vaccination in India.
- Union Cabinet approved the **Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme for specialty steel**. The duration of the scheme will be five years, **from 2023-24 to 2027-28**.
- The Union Cabinet has approved the establishment of **an Integrated Multi-purpose infrastructure Development Corporation** for the Union Territory of Ladakh.
- **Government receives 27 proposals** from private entities for undertaking **various space activities in India**
- Government has achieved its atomic energy generation target set for the current year. The target set for the current year 2021-22 is **41821 Million Units**.
- Union Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Minister Shri Narendra Singh Tomar **inaugurated the office of National Farmers Welfare Program Implementation Committee**.
- Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Shri Narendra Singh Tomar laid the foundation stone of the **Plant Authority building at Pusa, New Delhi**.
- Government is implementing **Bhartiya Prakritik Krishi Padhati (BPKP)** as a sub scheme of **Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY)** since 2020-21 for the **promotion of traditional indigenous practices**.
- **The Government of India** has been implementing a dedicated scheme of **Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY)**

since 2015-16 to promote chemical free organic farming in the country in cluster mode.

- Govt Setting up of **Mobile Labs for Soil Testing**
- **“Renewables Integration in India 2021”** report was jointly launched by Dr. Rakesh Sarwal, Additional Secretary, NITI Aayog & Mr. Keisuke Sadamori, Director of Energy Markets and Security, IEA
- Union Minister of State for Culture and Parliamentary Affairs, **Shri Arjun Ram Meghwal** inaugurated the exhibition **“Azad Ki Shaurya Gatha”** focused on the **life of immortal martyr ‘Chandrasekhar Azad’** as part of **“Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav”** at Indira Gandhi National Center for the Arts (IGNCA), New Delhi.
- India celebrated its **Buddhist heritage** with President Shri Ram Nath Kovind and Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi extending greetings of **Asadha Poornima** and **Guru Poornima** to Indians and the **global Buddhist community**.
- According to the **Findings of the Indian Council of Medical Research's (ICMR) fourth national serosurvey, 67.6 percent** Of India's population above the age of six, have developed antibodies against Covid-19 done between June 14 and July 6, announced by the Lok Sabha.
- Education Minister **Dharmendra Pradhan** stated that the Government proposes to **set up a National Research Foundation NRF to strengthen the research ecosystem** in the country.
- **The Ministry of AYUSH** has developed and launched the **AYUSH Sanjivani mobile application** to generate data on the acceptance and usage of Ayush advocacies and measures among the population and its impact in the prevention of COVID-19.
- Government taken initiative to identify effective medicines under **Ayush systems to cure patients with symptoms of COVID-19**
- Dr. Virendra Kumar virtually inaugurated the **“5th North-East India Traditional Fashion Week (NEIFW) 2021”**.
- A **33/11kV 10 MVA Substation** commissioned under the **IPDS scheme** of the Government of India was inaugurated in **Nusso, Bandipora, J & K**.
- **The Union Home Minister Shri Amit Shah** inaugurated the **Inter-State Bus Terminal at Maviyang**, Multipurpose Convention Centre and Exhibition Facility of the North Eastern Space Applications Centre (**NESAC**) in Shillong, Meghalaya
- The Ministry of Women and Child Development has launched the web based portal **pmcaresforchildren.in** to facilitate submission of applications, identification of children eligible to receive support under the **'PM CARES for Children' scheme** and processing of applications for securing benefits to them.
- As part of the ongoing AzadiKaAmritMahotsav, to celebrate the **75th Anniversary of Indian Independence**, the Hon'ble Ministers also released a report on Key Regulatory Parameters of Power Utilities.
- **KASEZ (Kandla SEZ) is the First Green SEZ to achieve the IGBC** (Indian Green Building Council) Green Cities Platinum Rating for Existing Cities.
- The **Indian Science Technology and Engineering Facilities Map (I-STEM)**, the **national web portal** for sharing **R&D facilities** was formally launched in January 2020 by the Honorable Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi.
- **Union Minister for Women and Child Development, Smt Smriti Zubin Irani** inaugurated the **National Commission for Women's 24/7 helpline number - 7827170170**.
- The **Union Government has decided to set up a National Centre of Excellence for Animation, Visual Effects, Gaming and Comics in collaboration with Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay**.
- Union Home Minister Shri Amit Shah launched the **Green Sohra Afforestation Campaign at Sohra (Cherrapunji) in Meghalaya**.
- Parliament has passed the **National Institutes of Food Technology, Entrepreneurship and Management Bill, 2021**.
- Union Agriculture Minister inaugurates **28th regional workshop** of Krishi Vigyan Kendras of **Madhya Pradesh-Chhattisgarh**
- In a major boost to agricultural produce exports from **Uttarakhand**, first consignment of vegetables including curry leaf, okra, pear and bitter gourd sourced from the farmers of Haridwar, was exported to **Dubai, United Arab Emirates**.
- **Coal India Ltd. (CIL)** has taken an out of box initiative to produce sand from overburden at a much cheaper

price.

- Union Minister of State for Earth Sciences, **Jitendra Singh** launched the **MoES-ESSDP** (Earth System Science Data Portal) during the **15th foundation day**.
- In a major boost to exports of Geographical Indications (GI) products from the north-eastern region, a **consignment of 'Raja Mircha'** also referred as king chilli from Nagaland was exported to London via **Guwahati by air for the first time**.
- Government plans to set up a **National Farmers Database by Using Digitized Land Records**
- The **Geological Survey of India (GSI)**, part of the **Ministry of Mines**, has taken up **seven projects for lithium exploration** across different states in India.
- The **Election Commission of India** held a **review meeting** on advance planning for forthcoming elections with the **Chief Electoral Officers** of the five states namely **Goa, Manipur, Punjab, Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh**, at Nirvachan Sadan.
- The **National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG)** and the **Centre for Science and Environment (CSE)** launched a capacity-building initiative on 'making water sensitive cities in Ganga basin', aimed at improving river health and flows.
- Periodic Labour Force Survey (**PLFS**) conducted by National Statistical Office (**NSO**) stated that **Unemployment rate for women fell to 4.2 per cent in 2019-20 from 5.1 per cent in 2018-19**.
- The **Marine Aids to Navigation Bill 2021** has been passed by the Parliament, which aims to **replace the over 90-year-old Lighthouse Act of 1927**.
- The Union Cabinet has cleared the **Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation (DICGC) Bill, 2021**, which will **allow depositors to withdraw up to Rs 5 lakh in 90 days**.
- The Lok Sabha passed the **Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (Amendment) Bill, 2021** which was introduced in the Lower House on July 26.
- Minister of State for Defence Ajay Bhatt stated that, The **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** will get **two per cent** royalty from **Dr Reddy's Laboratory (DRL)** on the sale of anti-Covid drug **2-DG**.
- **Union Minister for Social Justice & Empowerment Shri Thaawarchand Gehlot** e-launched a '**National Portal for Transgender Persons**' and e-inaugurated a '**Garima Greh: A Shelter Home for Transgender Persons**' in Vadodara, Gujarat.
- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** launched a new framework named **SAFAL (structured assessment for analyzing learning levels)** to assess students of the **Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE)**.
- Government is taking various steps to undertake the **large-scale production of COVID BEEP** India's first Physiological Parameters Monitoring System stated by the Union Minister **Dr Jitendra Singh**.
- **Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Amendment Bill** passed in **Rajya Sabha**
- The **government announced a 27-per cent quota for OBCs and 10 per cent reservation for the Economically Weaker Section (EWS) category** in the **All-India Quota (AIQ) scheme** for undergraduate and postgraduate medical and dental courses from the current academic year, 2021-22.
- **Minister of Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises Shri Prakash Javadekar** inaugurated **NATRAX-the High Speed Track(HST) in Indore** which is the longest such track in Asia.
- **The All India Council of Technical Education** is **creating a database of resources** to allow colleges to offer more programmes in regional languages and **developed a tool to translate engineering content into 11 languages**.
- The Centre announced **780 new air traffic routes** have been approved under the regional air connectivity scheme **UDAN**.

## States

- In the **Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir**, Lieutenant Governor **Manoj Sinha** rolled out '**Special Assistance Scheme for COVID Mortalities - SASCM**', by handing over the grant of Scholarship and Pension certificates to the children and the members of the families affected due to COVID-19.
- Government of **Jammu and Kashmir** took a proactive measure, via **Jammu & Kashmir Trade Promotion Organization (JKTPO)** under the aegis of Department of Industries of Commerce, with the **initiative** called

**“HAUSLA” for women entrepreneurs** of Jammu & Kashmir.

- **West Bengal** launched its **‘Student Credit Card’** Under the scheme, a **student** will be eligible for a **soft loan of up to Rs 10 lakh for higher studies**.
- **Chief Secretary, Arun Kumar Mehta**, inaugurated **SDRF first Battalion's 24x7 mental health helpline** (toll free number **1800-1807159**) 'SUKOON' at its headquarters.
- **Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy** launched the **'YSR Bima' scheme** with new guidelines, where the government itself will directly pay the **insurance amount to the family** of deceased to make the insurance claims easier.
- The **Assam cabinet** decided to grant **one-month compulsory leave every year to police personnel** from the rank of **constable to sub-inspector to visit their homes**.
- In Manipur, the **Chief Minister N. Biren Singh** announced that a **cash reward of Rs. 20 lakh** would be given to the first fully vaccinated assembly constituency.
- Two term MLA from **Khatima** in Uttarakhand, **Pushkar Singh Dhami** was sworn in as the **11th Chief Minister** of the State along with an 11-member cabinet, in Dehradun.
- In the **Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir**, Jammu and Kashmir Energy Development Agency (**JAKEDA**), is planning to install **5,000 Solar Power Pumps** under **Pradhan Mantri Kisan Urja Suraksha Evam Utthan Mahabhiyaan (PM-KUSUM)** scheme in J&K in the first phase out of which 2,500 pumps will be installed in the current fiscal.
- **Model Anti Rabies clinic (Animal Bite clinic)** has been made operational in Government Medical College, Doda, J&K for prevention and management under national Program for Rabies control (NRCP).
- **Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant** announced that the Government is now launching **Tika Utsav 1.2** from 5th July, which will emphasize on the administration of the **2nd dose of vaccine** to those who have completed **84 days**.
- J&K LG **Manoj Sinha** unveiled **Golf Training Academy in Srinagar**
- The **Maharashtra government** is planning to appoint **"Marathi language officers"** to increase use of **state language at the district level** to address complaints
- **J&K** introduced Geotagged photographs through 'PROOF' (**Photographic Record of On-site Facility**) mobile app
- **The Odisha Government** has approved **five major industrial projects** giving a big push to the steel production capacity of the state.
- **National Tiger Conservation Authority, NTCA**, has approved the conversion of the **Ramgarh Vishdhari Sanctuary in Rajasthan's Bundi district** into the fourth tiger reserve in the state.

- In the **Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir**, Lieutenant Governor **Manoj Sinha**, in order to provide a personal experience to the devotees of Shri Amarnathji, **launched various online services** of Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board.
- **Krantivira Sangolli Rayanna Railway Station** also known as **Bengaluru City Railway Station** has become the **first railway station in India with a movable freshwater tunnel aquarium**.
- The Ernakulam District Library Council's **initiative, 'Books at Doorstep'**, to revive reading habits among school children, has evoked enthusiastic response and is on course to exceed the target.
- The **Kerala State Film Development Corporation (KSFDC)** will soon prepare a detailed project report (DPR) for launching an **OTT platform** exclusively for Malayalam movies.
- **Karnataka's Revenue Minister R Ashoka** has mentioned that the **state government is planning to introduce the Model Tenancy Act in the state**, aimed at ending tenant-owner disputes.
- **Union Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari** inaugurated **the country's First Private LNG (Liquefied Natural Gas) plant** in Nagpur, Maharashtra
- **Manipur** now shown India's railway map as **first passenger train** Rajdhani Express from **Assam's Silchar railway station** - reached the Vaingachunpao railway station in Manipur
- **Karnataka** set up **46 Kempegowda heritage sites in Bengaluru** to boost tourism
- **Assam** government to set up **"department of indigenous faith and culture"** & the aim of this program is to **protect demography and indigenous culture**
- In a bid to **generate employment, bring down pollution and reduce dependence on private vehicles**, chief minister BS Yediyurappa unveiled the **Karnataka Electric Bike Taxi scheme-2021 in Bengaluru**.
- **Assam CM** Declared the state govt adopted **zero tolerance policy against drugs menace**
- **Haryana: India's first 'Grain ATM' open in Gurugram**
- The **Manduadih railway station in Uttar Pradesh** has been finally **renamed as Banaras** by the North eastern railways (NER).
- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** inaugurated the **Rudraksh International Cooperation and Convention centre** in his parliamentary constituency of Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh
- **India's 1<sup>st</sup> national dolphin research centre** unveiled soon in **Patna, Bihar**
- **Punjab Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh** has decided to waive loans worth Rs 590 crore under the **farm debt relief scheme** for farm labourers and the landless farming community.
- **Maharashtra state govt launches new EV Policy 2021** which is a revision of the 2018 policy.



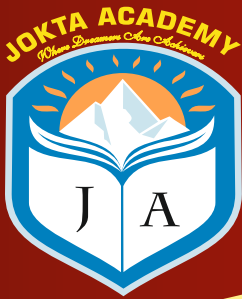
- **Karnataka CM** unveiled the event to mark **World Youth Skills Day**. The Chief Minister informed that an **MOU** was **signed with Tata Technologies** to upgrade 150 Government ITIs.
- The **Uttar Pradesh** government is all set to bring in '**pod taxis**' that will connect commuters from **Greater Noida to the Noida International Airport in Jewar** using the **driverless mode of transport**, popular in many western countries.
- **Farmers in Rajasthan** will get a monthly grant of **Rs 1,000** under the '**Kisan Mitra Urja Yojna**' which was launched by **Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot**.
- High Court UT of J&K and UT of Ladakh renamed as '**High Court of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh**'
- **Bonalu**, the **traditional folk festival of Telangana**, began at the **Jagadambika Temple** at the **Golconda Fort** in Hyderabad.
- **Andhra Pradesh** govt made 10% **economically weaker sections (EWS)** quota in employment, education, in accordance with the **Constitution 103 Amendment Act**.
- Deputy Chief Minister Dushyant Chautala **stated To encourage and promote small industries in the rural areas**, the Haryana government will soon introduce the '**One Block, One Product**' scheme.
- Meghalaya cabinet approved the **Meghalaya Youth Policy 2021**, a framework that envisages towards achieving the government's vision to create pathways for Meghalaya's youth
- Chief Minister of Assam **Himanta Biswa Sarma** stated that along with **Olympics, Asian and Commonwealth games medalists** the **medal winners in National Games** would also get government jobs.
- **India's largest oil firm IOC** will build the **nation's first 'green hydrogen' plant** at its Mathura refinery, **Uttar Pradesh**
- **Maharashtra** will be the **first state in the country** to issue educational documents using blockchain technology.
- The **Supreme Court** lifted a blanket **ban** imposed on **disc jockeys by the Allahabad High Court in Uttar Pradesh** two years in the past.
- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** inaugurated **projects worth over Rs 1,100 crore** in Gujarat. These **projects include three new attractions** in a state-of-the-art science city, a five-star hotel atop a railway station and several railway projects.
- The **Kunariya village of Kutch district in Gujarat** has come up with a unique idea of holding **Balika Panchayat**. The first-ever elections of this Balika Panchayat were successfully held.
- **Perumkulam** is named as **Kerala's first 'Book Village'**
- **Rajasthan govt** develops mobile app "**Raj Kisan Organic**" for purchase, sale of organic products



- **Chief Minister K Chandrashekhar Rao** took on the opposition for levelling allegations against him that the launch of **Telangana Dalit Bandhu scheme** aimed at benefitting Dalits was politically motivated.
- Uttar Pradesh Cabinet has decided to set up a panchayat secretariat in all panchayats of the state. The move is aimed at strengthening the rural democracy and providing employment to the rural youth.
- **Uttarakhand: Shravan Harela Festival celebrated to** marks the onset of the rainy season (Monsoon).
- In **Madhya Pradesh, Gwalior and Orchha** cities have been selected by **UNESCO** under '**Historic Urban Landscape Project**'
- **The Union Cabinet** approved the **setting up** of a **central university in the union territory of Ladakh**, while also giving its nod to an integrated multi-purpose infrastructure development corporation.
- To **manage hearing loss in newborn and young children**, **Punjab government** launched an **automated auditory brainstem response system (AABR)** under universal newborn hearing screening programme.
- The **United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)** inscribed the 13th- century Ramappa in Palampet, Telangana a '**World Heritage Site**'.
- **Union Home Minister Amit Shah** laid the foundation stone of **Tamulpur Medical College and Hospital** in Guwahati, Assam
- Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister **Yogi Adityanath** launched the '**MyGov-Meri Sarkar**' portal by this the government will receive feedback from the people and inform them about the various schemes of the government.
- **Assam Chief Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma** laid the **foundation of Bamboo Industrial Park** at Manderdisa in Dima Hasao implemented with **Rs.50 crores from DoNER Ministry**.
- **The Ministry of Science and Technology** will set up a first-of-its-kind **prestigious project for establishing the Centre for Bio-Resources and Sustainable Development as a Centre of Excellence** in the Northeast.
- The **Harappan city of Dholavira in Gujarat's Rann of Kutch** has found a place in UNESCO's World Heritage list, making it the **40th world heritage property in the country**.
- **Indore** has become the only city to be selected from India for the **International Clean Air Catalyst Programme**. The project will be operated for five years to purify the city's air.
- In order **to promote AYUSH in Madhya Pradesh** and to link it with employment, the government has made a '**Devaranya**' scheme. **CM Shivraj** launched the scheme.
- **Odisha's Puri** has become the **first city** in the state to have a **drink-from-tap facility**.
- **Department of MSME, Government of Uttar Pradesh**, signed an **MoU** with government advisory firm **Sapio Analytics**, to provide licenses of automation software Accloud, worth Rs. 72 crores, to 20,000 MSMEs of the

state.

- **Karnataka** became the **first state in India** to reserve jobs in public employment in favour of transgender persons.
- **Rajasthan** introduces '**Niryatak Bano**' mission to help local traders take businesses aboard
- The **Odisha government** has implemented the **one nation one ration card scheme**.
- On the occasion of **World Hepatitis Day 2021**, **Manipur Chief Minister N. Biren Singh** launched **Model Hepatitis B Treatment Centres** at two hospitals in Manipur.
- The **Kerala Police** has launched a new initiative called the "**Pink Protection**" project for the **protection of women in public, private and digital spaces**.
- The mini polyhouse [polyhouse is a type of greenhouse] is coming under '**Krishikarna**' project launched in **Kerala**, a joint initiative of State Agri Horticultural Society (SAHS), Sustainable Foundation and Qore3 Innovations.
- **Kerala Government** announced a financial package of **₹ 5,650 crore** in the state Assembly, to assist small-scale traders and farmers of the state.



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