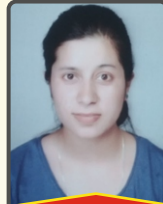# GENERAL
AWARENESS
JUNE 2021

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JOKTA Academy
IAS/HAS

Our Selection in Allied Services

Priyanka
Ex Inspector

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

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

Poonam Verma
Election Kanungo
(Deptt. of Election)

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

Poonam Verma
Election Kanungo
(Deptt. of Election)

Sunil Kumar
Ex Inspector

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

Dharmender Kumar
Inspector Audit

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

Deeply Greatful
Dharmender kumar
HPSAS-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
(HPSAS-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. Suresh 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
HPSAS-2019

Our Previous Year's Achievers

Somil Gautam
HPAS Rabk3 (SDM)

Mahender Pratap Singh
SDM

Vishwa M. Dev Chauhan
HAS (SDM)

Varun Gulati
HPAS Rank-12 (Tehsildar)

Rohit Kanwar
Tehsildar

Girija Mankotia
HAS (DTO)

Anurag Garg
HAS (ETO)

Manish Kapoor
RFO (H.P.F.)

VIKASH KUMAR
Allied Services
(T&E Inspector)

ANIL KUMAR
HPAS (B.D.O)

GAURAV CHAUHAN
HPAS (Assistant Registrar)

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Tehsildar

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Allied Services
(T&E Inspector)

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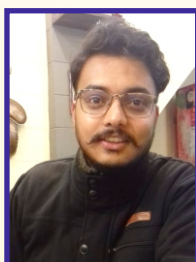
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Food and Civil
Supply Inspector (FCS&CA)

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Polity and Governance

Section 304B of IPC: Dowry Deaths

Why in News?

The Supreme Court (SC) has **widened the scope of section 304B of Indian Penal Code** (IPC) by indicating that there is no straightforward formula to determine the cruelty against women.

Dowry cases in India:

- Dowry deaths accounted for **40% to 50% homicides** in the country for almost a decade from **1999 to 2018**.
- The judgment pronounced by a three-judge Bench led by Chief Justice of India N.V. Ramana called dowry harassment a "**pestiferous**" **crime** where women are subjected to cruelty by **"covetous" husbands and in-laws.**
- **In 2019 alone, 7,115 cases** of dowry death were registered under Section 304-B of the Indian Penal Code.

Highlights of the Judgment:

- Section 304B of IPC **must be interpreted keeping in mind the legislative intent to curb the social evil** of bride burning and dowry demand.
- The court should use their **discretion to determine if the period between the cruelty or harassment and the death of the victim would come within the term "soon before".**
  - For such determination, an important factor is the establishment of a "**proximate and live link**" between the cruelty and the consequential death of the victim.
  - Over the years, courts had interpreted the phrase **'soon before' in Section 304B as 'immediately before'.** This interpretation would make it necessary for a woman to have been harassed moments before she died.
- Even the **spectrum of cruelty is quite varied**, as it can range from physical, verbal or even emotional. **No straitjacket formulae can therefore be laid down to define what exact the phrase 'soon before' entails.**
- Further, the phrase "**otherwise than under normal circumstances**" in the section calls for a liberal interpretation.

  - Section 304-B, IPC does not take a **pigeonhole approach in categorising death as homicidal or suicidal or accidental.**
- Also, the **examination of the accused** about the **incriminatory material against him should be done in a fair manner.**

  - However, there is a need **to balance other important considerations such as the right to a speedy trial.**

Section 304-B of IPC:

- To make out a case of dowry death, **a woman should have died of burns or other bodily injuries or "otherwise than under normal circumstances"** within seven years of her marriage.
- She should have **suffered cruelty or harassment from her husband or in-laws "soon before her death"** in connection with demand for dowry.

  - Over the years, courts had interpreted the phrase 'soon before' in Section 304-B as 'immediately before'.
  - This interpretation would make it necessary for a woman to have been harassed moments before she died.

> ➢ Such "absurd" interpretations should be avoided, the apex court noted.
- **Section 304-B, IPC does not take a pigeonhole approach in categorising death** as homicidal or suicidal or accidental.
- **The reason for such non-categorisation is due to the fact that death occurring in 'other than under normal circumstances' can,** in cases, be **homicidal or suicidal or accidental,"**

PM-CARES for Children Scheme

Why in News?

The Prime Minister has announced a **special PM-CARES for Children scheme.** The scheme includes a comprehensive financial aid package for children orphaned during the pandemic.

About the 'PM-CARES for Children' Scheme:

Eligibility:

- Children who have **lost both parents or their lone surviving parent or their legal guardian or adoptive parent** due to **Covid-19.**
- There are a total **577 Covid-19 orphans identified across the country**. Also, there has been a rise in cases of child trafficking.

Features of the PM-CARES for Children Scheme:

Fixed Deposit in the name of the child:

- PM CARES will create a corpus **of Rs 10 lakh for each child when s/he reaches 18 years of age.**
- **This corpus will be used to give monthly financial support from 18 years of age for the next five years.**
- **On reaching the age of 23 years**, he or she will get the corpus amount **as one lump sum for personal and professional use.**

School Education: For children under 10 years

- The child will be given **admission to the nearest Kendriya Vidyalaya** or in a private school as a day scholar.
- **If the child is admitted to a private school, the fees as per the Right to Education(RTE) norms will be given from the PM CARES.**

School Education: for children between 11-18 years:

- The child will be given **admission to any Central Government residential school such as Sainik School, Navodaya Vidyalaya etc.**
- In case the child is to be continued under the care of Guardian. Then s/he will be given admission to the nearest Kendriya Vidyalaya or in a private school as a day scholar.
- **If the child is admitted to a private school**, the **fees as per the Right to Education(RTE) norms will be given from the PM CARES.**

Support for Higher Education:

- The child will be **assisted in obtaining an education loan for Higher Education** in India as per the existing Education Loan norms. The interest on this loan will be paid by the PM CARES.

- As an alternative, there will be **a scholarship equivalent to the course fees for undergraduate courses,** It would be as per Government norms. And they will be provided to such children under Central or State Government Schemes.

Health Insurance

- All children will be enrolled as a beneficiary under Ayushman Bharat Scheme (PM-JAY) with a **health insurance cover of Rs. 5 lakhs.**
- The premium amount for these children till the age of **18 years will be paid by PM CARES.**

PM-CARES Fund
- The government has set up the **Prime Minister's Citizen Assistance and Relief in Emergency Situations Fund (PM-CARES Fund) to deal with** any kind of **emergency or distress situation** like posed by the Covid-19 pandemic.
- **The Fund is a public charitable trust** with the **Prime Minister as its Chairman**. Other Members include **Defence Minister, Home Minister and Finance Minister.**
- The Fund enables **micro-donations** as a result of which a large number of people will be able to contribute with the smallest of denominations.
- It will **strengthen disaster management capacities** and **encourage research on protecting citizens.**
- **Contribution to PM** - CARES Fund Qualifies as CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) Expenditure.

New Pension Rules for Civil Servants

 Why in News?

The Government has amended its pension rules putting new restrictions of officials of intelligence and security organisations after retirement.

About New Pension rules:

- The government has amended the **CCS (Central Civil Services) Pension Rules-1972.**
- **Amended Rule-8(3)(a)** talks about officials retired from any intelligence or security-related organisation included in the Second Schedule of the RTI Act.
- With the new provision, **they are barred from writing anything about their organisation without permission.**
- [The Second Schedule of the RTI Act covers 26 organisations.
- These include the **Intelligence Bureau, R&AW, Directorate of Revenue Intelligence, CBI, NCB, BSF, CRPF, ITBP and CISF.]**

Existing provisions after retirement:

- **Pension -** The pension of government servants is already subject to their good conduct after retirement.
- The appointing authority may, by order in writing, withhold or withdraw a pension or a part thereof.
- This applies if the pensioner is convicted of a serious crime or is found guilty of grave misconduct.
- The expression 'grave misconduct' includes the communication or disclosure of any sensitive information obtained while holding office.

- **Employment -** Rule 26, Death-cum-Benefits Rules, restricts a pensioner from any commercial employment for one year after retirement.
- This cooling-off period was 2 years until 2007, when an amendment reduced it to one year.
- Exceptions are allowed with previous sanction of the central government.
- Non-compliance may have implications on receiving pensions.

What are the restrictions while in service?

- The CCS (Central Civil Services) Conduct Rules deal with this.
- **Rule 7** restricts government servants from resorting to or abetting any form of strike or coercion.
- **Rule 8** restricts them, except with government sanction, from owning or participating in the editing or management of any newspaper.
- It applies to other periodical publication or electronic media as well.
- They can publish book or participate in public media.
- But, they shall at all such times clarify that the views expressed are their own and not that of the Government.
- Rule 9 restricts them from making statements or opinion that adversely criticize any current or recent policy or action of the Central Government or a State Government.
- **Rule 9** of the CCS Pension Rules deals with any government official committing any misconduct and retiring.
- In that case, he or she may face departmental proceedings only until 4 years of the date of committing that misconduct.

What about involvement in political activity?

- **While in service** - The Conduct Rules bars government servants from being associated with any political party or organisation.
- They can also not take part or assist any political activity.
- Every government employee shall at all times maintain political neutrality.
- **After retirement** - There is no rule to stop them from joining politics after retirement.
- In 2013, the Election Commission wrote to the DoPT and Law Ministry in this regard.
- It suggested a cooling-off period for bureaucrats joining politics after retirement.
- But this was rejected, saying "it may not stand the test of valid classification under Article 14 of the Constitution."

Why is the amendment now?

- Some high-profile retired officers had written books on their tenure as officials.
- Some of these had revealed some confidential information.
- The move was thus prompted by concerns arising out of these.
- The Committee of Secretaries recommended, and the amendment was in process for around 4 years.
- It was approved recently and notified on May 31, 2021.

Seniorcare Aging Growth Engine Initiative

Why in News?

The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has launched the SAGE (Seniorcare Aging Growth Engine) initiative and SAGE portal for elderly persons.

About SAGE Initiative:

- The SAGE will be a **"one-stop access"** of **elderly care products and services** by **credible start-ups.**
- The start-ups will be selected on the **basis of innovative products and services.**
- Their products should be **able to provide across sectors such as health, housing, care centers, apart from technological access linked to finances, food and wealth management, and legal guidance.**
- The start-ups who have applied will be selected by an independent screening committee of experts.
- A fund of **upto Rs.1 crore as one-time equity will be granted** to each selected start-up.

Why need such initiative?

- **India's elderly population** is on the **rise as per surveys.**
- The share of elders, as a percentage of the total population in the country, is expected to increase from around **7.5% in 2001 to almost 12.5% by 2026, and surpass 19.5% by 2050.**
- There is an urgent need to create a more robust eldercare ecosystem in India, **especially in the post-COVID phase.**

Other Government Initiatives for Elderly people:

Integrated Programme for Older Persons (IPOP):

- The main objective of the scheme is **to improve the quality of life of older persons** by providing basic amenities like shelter, food, medical care and entertainment opportunities, etc.

Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana (RVY):

- This is a **central sector scheme** funded from the Senior Citizens' Welfare Fund. The fund was notified in the year **2016.**
- **It aims to provide aids and assistive living devices to senior citizens** belonging to Below Poverty Line (BPL) category who suffer from age-related disabilities such as low vision, hearing impairment, loss of teeth and locomotor disabilities.

Pradhan Mantri Vaya Vandana Yojana (PMVVY):

- PMVVY was **launched in May 2017 to provide social security during old age.**
- It is a **pension scheme for senior citizens that comes with guaranteed returns on monthly, quarterly, half-yearly or on an annual basis for a period of 10 years**. It is exclusively available to those who are 60 years of age and above.

Vayoshreshtha Samman:

- Conferred as a National award, and given to **eminent senior citizens & institutions under various categories for their contributions on International day of older persons on 1st October.**

Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens (MWPSC) Act, 2007:

- To **ensure need-based maintenance** for Parents and Senior Citizens and their welfare.

Performance Grading Index (PGI)

Why in News?

The Union Education Minister has approved the release of **Performance Grading Index (PGI) 2019-20** for States and Union Territories.

> ➢ The PGI is a **tool to provide insights on the status of school education in States and UTs** including key levers that drive their performance and critical areas for improvement.

Key Highlights:

- **Objective:** This relatively new index measures the performance of states in school education. The objective is to help the states prioritise areas for intervention in school education
- **Multiple Data Sources**: It assesses states' performance in school education based on data drawn from several sources, including the Unified District Information System for Education Plus, National Achievement Survey, and Mid-Day Meal.
- **Parameters:** States are scored on a total of 1,000 points across 70 parameters, which are grouped under five broad categories:
  > ➢ **Access** (eg. enrolment ratio, transition rate and retention rate);
  > ➢ **Governance and management;**
  > ➢ **Infrastructure**
  > ➢ **Equity** (difference in performance between scheduled caste students and general category students)
  > ➢ **Learning outcomes** (average score in mathematics, science, languages and social science).
- **Grading & not ranking**: States are graded and not ranked to discourage the practice of one improving only at the cost of others, "thereby casting a stigma of underperformance on the latter".

About grading system

- The PGI grading system has 10 levels.
- Level 1 indicates top-notch performance and a score between 951 and 1,000 points.
- Level II, also known as Grade 1++, indicates a score between 901 and 950.
- Those with Grade 1+ (or Level III) have scored between 851 and 900.
- The lowest is Grade VII, and it means a score between 0 and 550 points.

States Performance:

- **None in first level:** In PGI 2019-20, no state or Union Territory could achieve the highest grade, that is Level I. Even in the 2017-18 and 2018-19 editions, no state had reached Level 1 and Grade 1++.
- **General Upward Shift:** A total of 33 States and UTs have improved their total PGI score in 2019-20 as compared to 2018-19, indicating a general upward shift. For some this improvement has been improvements in their data reporting mechanisms while for some others, the improvements have been in specific domains
- **Best Performing States:** Chandigarh, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Andaman and Nicobar and Kerala have scored more than 90% and obtained Grade 1++ (or Level II), which makes them the best performing states. This is the first time that any state has reached Level II.
- **Biggest Improvements:** The biggest improvement in PGI this year has been shown by Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Punjab, and Arunachal Pradesh. All three have improved their score by 20%.
- **Areas of Concern:** However, there are still 31 states and UTs placed in Level III (Grade 1) or lower, showing that they still have a lot of ground to cover

- Only the UT of Ladakh has been placed in the lowest grade, that is Grade VII, but that's because it was the first time it was assessed after it was carved out of Jammu and Kashmir in 2019.

Areas of Improvement:

- **The PGI accords the highest importance to Governance Domain** because compliance with the indicators here will lead to critical structural reforms
- According to the report, states and UTs mainly need to improve their performance **in terms of governance processes.** This domain carries several parameters, including
  - **Teacher availability:** monitoring the attendance of teachers
  - **Teachers training**
  - **Regular inspection**
  - **Availability of finances.**
- In the domain Governance Processes, there are **24 States/UTs which have scored less than 288 (80% of the maximum possible score)**
- The second area that requires attention is the **Domain for Infrastructure and facilities**. This is a cause for concern as a proper school building with adequate facilities is a must to improve the overall quality of school education

YUVA Scheme for Young Writers

Why in News?

Recently, the Indian Prime Minister announced the **'Young, Upcoming and Versatile Authors' (YUVA) scheme** - a mentorship programme to train young authors.

  - It is an Author Mentorship programme which will train young and budding **authors aged below 30 years** to in order to promote reading, writing and book culture in India. It will also project India and Indian writings worldwide.

About YUVA

- **YUVA stands for "Young, Upcoming and Versatile Authors"**. The scheme is in line with PM's vision of encouraging young writers to write about India's freedom struggle. Call on young generation to write about freedom fighters was taken in PM's Mann ki Baat in January 2021.
- **YUVA is a part of India@75 Project** which seeks to bring perspectives of young generation of writers on themes including Freedom Fighter, Unsung Heroes, Unknown and Forgotten Places etc.

Who will implement the scheme?

- Scheme will be implemented by **"National Book Trust of India"** under Ministry of Education. Books written under this scheme will be published by National Book Trust. Books will be translated into different languages to exchange culture and literature.

Numbers of Authors

- Under the YUVA scheme, **total of 75 authors** will be selected by an All-India Contest. Winners will be announced on **August 15, 2021**. Young winning authors will be trained by eminent authors to prepare manuscripts. Published books will be launched on in January 2022 on the occasion of National Youth Day.

About National Book Trust:
- **National Book Trust (NBT) is an Indian publishing house.** It was founded in **1957** as an **autonomous body under the Ministry of Education of the Government of India.**
- **Mandate: The** activities of the Trust include publishing, promotion of books and reading, promotion of Indian books abroad, assistance to authors and publishers, and promotion of children's literature.

Redefining Boundaries of UAPA: Delhi High Court

Why n News?

The Delhi High Court granted bail to three student activists accused in a **Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act related to the Delhi riots case.**

Court's Orders

- **Define Strictly & Narrowly:** Delhi HC held that- the Court must be careful in employing the definitional words and phrases used in Section 15 in their absolute literal sense which defines "terrorist act".
  ➤ The UAPA is a stringent anti-terror law, and thus, its provisions must be interpreted more strictly and narrowly, as compared to other conventional penal offences.
- **Different from Conventional Offences:** While reiterating the essence of terrorism as laid down by the Supreme Court in various judgments, the court held that terrorism can't be conflated with "law and order problems" or "violent protests".
  ➤ In Hitendra Vishnu Thakur case, while calling terrorism an "abnormal phenomenon", the Supreme Court said that the extent and reach of terrorist activity must travel beyond the effect of an ordinary crime and must not arise merely by causing disturbance of law and order or even public order.
  ➤ In PUCL v Union of India, the apex court termed terrorism as acts that challenge the whole nation. Terrorist acts are meant to destabilise the nation by challenging its sovereignty and integrity, razing the constitutional principles, and creating a psyche of fear.
- **Protests are NOT Terrorism:** The court has highlighted that when the protests turn violent, it would prima facie be seen as a "law and order" issue and not as terrorism. The court expressed its concern that the State has blurred the line between the constitutionally guaranteed 'right to protest' and 'terrorist activity'.
- **Called Out Alleged Misuse:** The three orders by the Delhi High Court are perhaps the first instance of a court calling out alleged misuse of the UAPA against individuals in cases that do not necessarily fall in the category of "terrorism" cases.
- **Quoted Earlier Judgments:** The bail orders also refer to how the Supreme Court itself, in the 1994 case of Kartar Singh v State of Punjab, flagged similar concerns against the misuse of another anti-terror law, the Terrorists and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act, 1987.

Unlawful Activities Prevention Act, 1967

- UAPA was passed in **1967**. It aims at effective prevention of unlawful activities associations in India.

  - ➢ **Unlawful activity refers to** any action taken by an individual or association intended to disrupt the territorial integrity and sovereignty of India.
- **The Act assigns absolute power to the central government,** by way of which if the Centre deems an activity as unlawful then it may, by way of an Official Gazette, declare it so.

  - ➢ It has **death penalty and life imprisonment** as highest punishments.
- **Under UAPA, both Indian and foreign nationals can be charged**. It will be applicable to the offenders in the same manner, even if crime is committed on a foreign land, outside India.
- Under the UAPA, **the investigating agency can file a charge sheet in maximum 180 da**ys after the arrests and the duration can be extended further after intimating the court.
- **The 2004 amendment added "terrorist act"** to the list of offences to ban organisations for terrorist activities, under which 34 outfits were banned.
  - ➢ **Till 2004, "unlawful" activities referred to** actions related to secession and cession of territory.
- In August, Parliament cleared the Unlawful **Activities (Prevention) Amendment Bill, 2019 to designate individuals as terrorists on certain grounds provided in the Act.**
  - ➢ The Act empowers the Director General of National Investigation Agency (NIA) to grant approval of seizure or attachment of property when the case is investigated by the said agency.
  - ➢ The Act empowers the officers of the NIA, of the rank of Inspector or above, to investigate cases of terrorism in addition to those conducted by the DSP or ACP or above rank officer in a state.

Issues with UAPA

- **Criminalizing Thoughts:** It criminalizes mere thoughts and political protests that cause "disaffection" with the state. It is an assault of citizens' right to expression which is also a collective right of groups and unions to disseminate their views.
- **Ignoring Fundamental Rights:** It can simply be used to bypass fundamental rights and procedures. For instance, those arrested under UAPA can be incarcerated up to 180 days without a charge sheet being filed. It thus directly violates Article 21 of the constitution.
- **Highly Discretionary:** It confers upon the government broad discretionary powers and also authorizes the creation of special courts with the ability to use secret witnesses and to hold closed-door hearings.
- **Hindering dissent:** It is being used to suppress dissent through intimidation and harassment thus threatening the very existence of public debate and freedom of press and criminalizing the performance of civil liberties.
- **Parliamentary Powers:** The issue still remains whether the Parliament under any circumstance can classify the individual as terrorist only because it believes him to be involved in terrorism without any trial or whatsoever.
- **Restricts Freedoms:** UAPA empowers the parliament to restrict the rights and freedoms of citizens to protect 'the sovereignty and integrity of India'.
- **Stringent Provision of bail:** The standard for bail under the UAPA is that it cannot be granted unless the court is of the view that the accused is innocent of the alleged offence. This is a prima facie standard, which means that the onus of proof of innocence, even for the purpose of obtaining bail, is effectively reversed. It is for the accused to show, for the purposes of bail, that he is innocent.
- **Sharp Rise in Use:** This caution is significant given the sharp surge in the state's use of this provision in a sweeping range of alleged offences - against tribals in Chhattisgarh, those using social media through proxy servers in Jammu and Kashmir; and journalists in Manipur among others.

Way Forward

- **A strong anti-terrorism law is needed in India**, but its enforcement will always result in some draconian anomalies like the arrests of activists.
- **The existing UAPA does have effective provisions** to **combat terrorism** (cognizable offence) but there are also **some defects and demerits which needs to be addressed properly** to make the law effective and efficient to prevent and combat terrorism.
- **The UAPA is a fairly harsh law drafted to deal with some harsh circumstances** and with people spending more than a decade in jail before being acquitted, its potential for misuse has been realised.
- UAPA, in relaxing timelines for the state to file chargesheets and its stringent conditions for bail, gives the state more powers compared to the Indian Penal Code.
- **The Act needs to be amended**, in order to ensure a constitutional functionary who is independent from the Executive, be in charge of sanctions for prosecutions and investigations under this Act. Maybe a High Court Judge could be designated for this purpose.
- **Terrorism and unlawful activities are ones that always create political issues.** If the Act has to work, its application must, at all times, look apolitical.

Inland Vessel Bill 2021

Why in News?

The Union Cabinet on **June 16, 2021,** approved the **Inland Vessel Bill 2021** that will **streamline and regulate inland vessels running in the country.**

About Inland Vessel Bill:

The Inland Vessel Bill, 2021 passed by the Union Cabinet will aid in streamlining and regulating inland vessels running across the inland waterways in the country. The Bill will ensure the **safety, security, and registration of inland vessels.**

Key features of the Bill:

- The Inland Vessel Bill, 2021, **will act as a unified law for the country in place of separate rules framed by the States.**
- **The Bill will aid in providing a central database** for keeping records of vessel registration, crew, and details of vessels on an electronic portal.
- The Bill will require **all non-mechanically propelled vessels to be registered as well at the district, taluk or panchayat, or village level.**
- **The Bill expands the scope of 'inland water'** by including national waterways and tidal water limit declared by the Central government.
- **The Bill will also create pollution control measures for Inland Vessels.** The Bill will aid the Government in creating a list of pollutants detailing substances, chemicals, etc.

Inland Water Transport in India

- As of now, **4,000 km of inland waterways are operational in the country.** There is about 14,500 km of navigable waterways including rivers, backwaters, canals, creeks, etc, in the country. 111 waterways have been declared as National Waterways as per the National Waterways Act, 2021.

- The Inland Water Transport (IWT) in the country is a **fuel-efficient and environment-friendly mode of moving around 55 million tonnes of cargo**. However, the IWT in India is highly underutilized as compared to developed countries.
- The operations of **IWT are limited to the deltaic regions of the Godavari-Krishna rivers, inland waters in Mumbai, backwaters in Kerala, rivers in Goa, and a few systems in the Ganga-Bhagirathi-Hooghly rivers, the Barak river, and the Brahmaputra river.**
- The Inland Waterways Transport in India can potentially help in **easing the load off the congested roadways** and overburdened railways.

Inland Waterways Authority of India

- The Inland Waterways Authority of India, based in **Noida, Uttar Pradesh**, oversees the regulation and development of inland waterways for navigation and shipping. The authority came into being on October 27, 1986.
- The primary task of the authority is to **oversee the development and maintenance of the infrastructure of Inland Water Transport (IWT) on national waterways** by utilizing grants issued by the Ministry of Shipping.

Delimitation in Jammu and Kashmir

Why in News?

Recently, the delimitation exercise has started in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K). **The completion of the delimitation exercise will mark** the **political process in the Union Territory (UT)** that has been **under Centre's rule since June 2018.**

About Delimitation:

- It is the act of fixing or redrawing the boundaries of territorial constituencies in a country or a province having a legislative body, as per the Election Commission.
- **The delimitation exercise is carried out by an independent high-powered panel known as the Delimitation Commission** whose orders have the force of law and cannot be questioned by any court.

Objective:

- To have **equal representation to equal segments of the population in order to ensure a fair division of geographical areas.**

Constitutional Basis for Delimitation

- **Article 82:** The Parliament enacts a Delimitation Act after every Census.
- **Article 170:** States also get divided into territorial constituencies as per Delimitation Act after every Census.

Delimitation Commission:

- The Delimitation Commission is appointed by the President of India.
- It works in collaboration with the Election Commission of India.

Composition:

- Retired Supreme Court judge

- Chief Election Commissioner
- Respective State Election Commissioners.

Recusal of Judges

Why in News?

Recently, **two Supreme Court (SC) judges have recused themselves** from **hearing cases relating to West Bengal.**

About Recusal of Judges:

- **Recusal is the removal of oneself as a judge or policymaker in a particular matter**, especially because of a conflict of interest.
- Recusal usually takes place when a judge has a **conflict of interest or has a prior association with the parties in the case.**
- For example, if the case pertains to a company in which the judge holds stakes, the apprehension would seem reasonable.
- Similarly, if the judge has, in the past, appeared for one of the parties involved in a case, the call for recusal may seem right.
- **A recusal inevitably leads to delay.** The case goes back to the Chief Justice, who has to constitute a fresh Bench.

Rules on Recusals

- There are **no written rules** on the recusal of judges from hearing cases listed before them in constitutional courts. It is left to the discretion of a judge.
- **The reasons for recusal are not disclosed in an order of the court.** Some judges orally convey to the lawyers involved in the case their reasons for recusal, many do not. Some explain the reasons in their order.
- **The decision rests on the conscience of the judge**. At times, parties involved raise apprehensions about a possible conflict of interest.

Issues with recusal

- Recusal is also regarded as the **abdication of duty**. Maintaining institutional civilities are distinct from the fiercely independent role of the judge as an adjudicator.
- **In his separate opinion in the NJAC judgment in 2015, Justice Kurian Joseph highlighted the need for judges to give reasons for recusal** as a **measure to build transparency.**
- **It is the constitutional duty**, as reflected in one's oath, to be transparent and accountable, and hence, a judge is required to indicate reasons for his recusal from a particular case, he ruled.

Economics

Model Tenancy Act

Why in News?

The Union Cabinet has approved the Model Tenancy Act to be sent to **the States and Union Territories to enact legislation or amend laws on rental properties.**

➢ The government had first released the draft of the act in **2019.**

➢ Model acts are **not binding on states**. **They merely suggest provisions that either can be accepted as it is by states or with modification.** States may also **completely ignore these acts**. Furthermore**, Land is a state subject and only states can legislate to regulate the housing market.**

Key Highlights of the Act

Independent Authority

• It proposed to **establish an independent authority in every state and UT** for registration of tenancy agreements and even a separate court to take up tenancy related disputes.

Limits the Tenant's Advance Security Deposit

• **It is limiting the tenant's advance security deposit** to a **maximum of two months' rent** and to a **maximum of six months for non-residential purposes.**

Model for urban & rural properties

• The Act provides a **model for urban & rural properties & templates for residential & commercial properties.**

Applicability

• It will apply to **future transactions & take people from informal to specific contract arrangement b/w landlord & tenant**

• The Act will apply to premises let out for **residential, commercial or educational use, but not for industrial use.**

• It also **won't cover hotels, lodging houses, inns, etc.**

• This model law will be applied prospectively and will **not affect existing tenancies.**

Increase in Rent

• The Act also tries to address **how a renter can legitimately increase the rent.**

• The Act states that rent can either be increased according to the terms and conditions mentioned in the agreement, or the landowner will have to give a notice in writing to the tenant, **three months before the revised rent comes into effect.**

➢ The Act also makes **it mandatory for there to be a written agreement between the property owner and the tenant.**

➢ A landowner **cannot cut power and water supply in case of a dispute with the tenant.**

➢ A landowner **cannot enter the rented premises without 24-hour prior notice to carry out repairs or replacement.**

Relevance

- It aims at creating a **vibrant, sustainable and inclusive rental housing market in the country.**
- It aims to **bridge the trust deficit between tenants and landlords** by clearly delineating their obligations.
- It will enable creation of **adequate rental housing stock** for all the income groups thereby addressing the issue of homelessness.
- It will **enable institutionalization of rental housing by gradually shifting it towards the formal market.**
- It will facilitate **unlocking of vacant houses for rental housing purposes.**
- It is expected to **give a fillip to private participation in rental housing as a business model for addressing the huge housing shortage**

SDG India Index 2020-21: NITI Aayog

Why in News?

Recently, the **third edition of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)** India Index and Dashboard 2020–21 was released by **NITI Aayog.**

About SDG India Index:

- The Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) India Index, constructed by NITI Aayog is an aggregate measure that provides a **holistic view of the performance of the States and Union Territories to the government, policymakers, businesses, and public.**
- The Index measures the performance of states and UTs on basis of **economic, social, and environmental parameters.**
- **The first edition of the SDG India Index was launched in 2018** that covered **13 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with 62 indicators.**
- The SDG India Index report ranks the States and Union Territories on a **score of 0 to 100.** There are four categories to group states on basis of their score: **Aspirant (0-49), Performer (50-64), Front-Runner (65-99), and Achiever (100).**

KERALA ON TOP AGAIN With a composite score of 75, Kerala topped the NITI Aayog's 2020 Index, based on the State's performance across 16 Sustainable Development Goals

A score of 100 implies that the State/UT has achieved the targets set for 2030. A score of 0 implies that it is at the bottom of the table

52 **2020 INDEX SCORE** 79

Goal	Top States
No poverty	Tamil Nadu
Zero hunger	Kerala
Good health and well-being	Gujarat
Quality education	Kerala
Gender equality	Chhattisgarh
Clean water and sanitation	Goa
Decent work and economic growth	Himachal Pradesh
Industry, innovation and infrastructure	Gujarat
Reduced inequality	Meghalaya
Sustainable cities and communities	Punjab
Responsible consumption and production	Tripura
Climate action	Odisha
Life below water	Odisha
Life on land	Arunachal Pradesh
Peace, justice and strong institutions	Uttarakhand

GOAL-WISE TOP STATES

The SDG India Index: Significance

- The SDG India Index is designed and developed by NITI Aayog with extensive consultations with the States and Union Territories, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI), UN agencies led by the United Nations in India, and the key Union Ministries.
- SDG India Index continues to be a rare **data-driven initiative** to rank our States and Union Territories by computing a composite index on the SDGs.
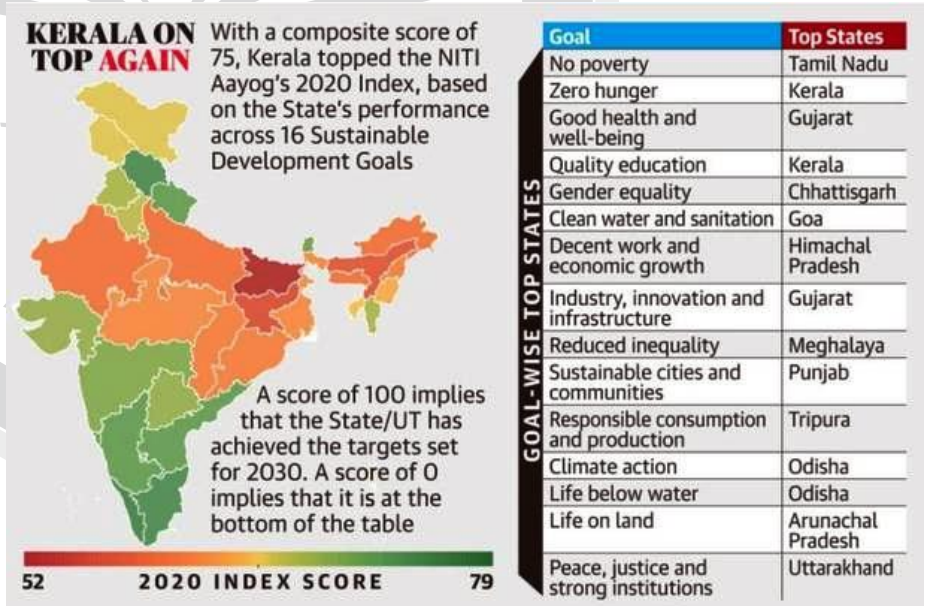
- During the launch of the event spokesperson of the NITI Aayog said, "Our effort of monitoring SDGs through the SDG India Index and Dashboard continues to be widely noticed and applauded around the world."

SDG India Index 2020-21: Kerala ranks top, Bihar worst

- **Kerala ranked as the top-performing state with a score of 75** while **Bihar was the worst performing state with a score of 52** in the NITI Aayog's SDG India Index 2020-21.

- **The top-performing states** in the NITI Aayog's SDG India Index 2020-21 **are Kerala at the first rank followed by Himachal Pradesh, Tamil Nadu at second, Andhra Pradesh, Goa, Karnataka, Uttarakhand at third, Sikkim at fourth, and Maharashtra at fifth rank.**

- **The worst performing states** in the NITI Aayog's SDG India Index 2020-21 are **Chhattisgarh, Nagaland, Odisha, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Assam, Jharkhand, and Bihar at the bottom.**

SDG India Index 2020-21: Third Edition

- The SDG India Index 2020-21 report tracked the progress of all Indian states and UTs on 115 indicators in alignment with the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI)'s National Indicator Framework (NIF). The first edition of the SDG India Index was launched in December 2018.

- SDG India Index 2020-21 evaluated the States and Union Territories on **16 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) on a scale of 0 to 100.** The SDG 2020-21 report mentioned that India's overall SDG score has improved by 6 points, from 60 in 2019 to 66 in 2020-21.

- The SDG India Index 2020-21 **ranked 15 states/UTs in the Performer category and 22 states/UTs in the Front-Runner category while no state or UT made it to the aspirant or achiever category**

- 12 more states and UTs - Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Haryana, Punjab, Mizoram, Uttarakhand, Gujarat, Lakshadweep, Maharashtra, Tripura, Jammu and Kashmir, Delhi, and Ladakh found themselves in the Front-runners category in the third edition of SDG India Index 2020-21. There were ten states and UTs in the front-runners' category in the 2019 edition.

- **The theme of SDG India Index 2020-21 focuses on the significance of partnerships**.

Global Minimum Corporate Tax Rate: G7

Why in News?

The Finance Ministers from the **Group of Seven (G7)** nations reached a landmark accord setting a Global Minimum Corporate Tax Rate (GMCTR).

- ➢ The agreement could form the **basis of a worldwide deal.** It will now be discussed in detail at a meeting of G20 financial ministers and central bank governors in July 2021.

➢ **G7 also agreed to** move towards making **companies declare their environmental impact in a more standard way** so investors can decide more easily whether to fund them.

About Global Minimum Corporate Tax:

- Major economies are aiming to discourage multinational companies from shifting profits – and tax revenues – to low-tax countries regardless of where their sales are made.
- Increasingly, income from intangible sources such as drug patents, software, and royalties on intellectual property has migrated to these jurisdictions.
- This has allowed companies to avoid paying higher taxes in their traditional home countries.
- With a broadly agreed global minimum tax, the Biden administration hopes to reduce such tax base erosion without putting American firms at a financial disadvantage.

Workability:

- The global minimum tax rate would apply to companies' overseas profits.
- Therefore, if countries agree on a global minimum, governments could still set whatever local corporate tax rate they want.
- But if companies pay lower rates in a particular country, their home governments could "top-up" their taxes to the agreed minimum rate, eliminating the advantage of shifting profits to a tax haven.
- The Biden administration has said it wants to deny exemptions for taxes paid to countries that don't agree to a minimum rate.

Why the USA is proposing it:

- **Hike in tax rates:** The plan seeks to increase the US corporate tax rate to 28 percent from 21 percent. The ex-US President had reduced the corporate tax rates from 35 percent to 21 percent.
- **Revitalization:** It aims to revitalize the transportation infrastructure, water systems with other goals.
- An increase in the tax rate and other measures to prevent the offshoring of profits will fund it.
- **More cooperation:** It will support integration instead of isolationism.
- **Tax evasion:** The plan will stop firms from shifting profits to tax haven countries.
- **Stability:** The bill aims to stabilize tax systems to raise enough revenue to invest in public welfare.

Significance

- This measure will **help close cross-border tax loopholes used by some of the world's biggest companies, thus will help limit base erosion and profit sharing (BEPS).**
- Increasingly, income from intangible sources such as drug patents, software and royalties on intellectual property has migrated to the low tax jurisdictions, allowing companies to avoid paying higher taxes in their traditional home countries.
  ➢ As per some estimates, countries are losing $427 billion every year to tax havens**. India suffers an annual loss of $10.3 billion from global tax abuse.**
- This agreement marks a much necessary reform of the global tax system to make it fit for the current global digital age where cross-border digital services are gaining prominence.
- The introduction of a global minimum corporate tax will contribute to ending the decades-long "race to the bottom on corporate tax rates", in which countries have resorted to ultra-low tax rates and tax exemptions to lure multinationals companies to invest.

- Such measures have cost such countries hundreds of billions of dollars whereas the corporate entities have only grown richer.
- This landmark agreement could form the basis of a worldwide deal.
- The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development has been coordinating tax negotiations among 140 countries on rules for taxing cross-border digital services and curbing tax base erosion, including a global corporate minimum tax. The OECD and G20 countries aim to reach consensus on both by mid-year.
- The agreement has committed to reaching an equitable solution on the allocation of taxing rights. It will focus on protecting the interest of the market countries by awarding such countries certain degree of taxing rights on the profits of the multinational enterprises.
- This will help ensure that MNCs would pay taxes where they operate and record their profits from based on the concept of 'Significant Economic Presence'.

International Stand

- The **Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)** has been coordinating tax negotiations among 140 countries for years on rules for taxing cross-border digital services and curbing tax **base erosion**, including a global corporate minimum tax.
- The International Monetary Fund has long favored the adoption of a global minimum tax on corporate profits as it would help in the reduction of current disparities in the national corporate tax rate.
- It would largely help in reducing tax shifting and tax avoidance.
- It would reduce the tax base on which governments could collect revenues for funding economic and social spending.

Criticism/ Challenges

- A global minimum rate would essentially take away a tool that countries use to push policies that suit them.
- For instance, in the backdrop of the pandemic, IMF and World Bank data suggest that developing countries with less ability to offer mega stimulus packages may experience a longer economic hangover than developed nations. A lower tax rate is a tool they can use to alternatively push economic activity.
- Also, a global minimum tax rate will do little to tackle tax evasion.
- The inclusion of investment funds and real estate investment trusts under such a system could also lead to some differences during the negotiations.
- Lack of consensus: Several countries have taken a different approach to the rate of global minimum tax.

India's Stand

- Indian Government has said that it is open to participate and engage in discussions about the Global Minimum corporate tax structure.
- It said that the government will look into the pros and cons of the new proposal and take a view thereafter.

How Global Minimum Tax would benefit India?

- The proposal, along with the increased tax bill for U.S. companies, may benefit the Indian revenue department.
- The State of Tax Justice report of 2020 notes that India loses over $10 billion in tax revenue due to the use of offshore structures, particularly through investments made by Indian residents through Mauritius, Singapore and the Netherlands.

- This is supported by the overseas direct investment (ODI) data from 2000 to 2021 published by the Reserve Bank of India.
- Start-ups and large Indian conglomerates commonly use offshore structures for conducting global operations.
- Revenue from such operations is often retained offshore and not repatriated to India.
- Tax advantages incentivise such structures, due to which taxes on such income are not paid in India.
- Once these proposals are implemented, Indian companies would have to pay additional taxes on their offshore structures to the extent that the effective rate of tax is lower than the global minimum tax rate.

Way Forward

- The agreement will be discussed in detail at a meeting of G20 finance ministers in July in Venice with an expectation to get broader support from countries that may lose investment due to the new policy.
- There is a need to support this effort by the US government to build a consensus among the G20 countries to increase the corporate tax rate and to end the race to reduce corporate tax in the world so that the pandemic ridden world is able to come out fast of its economic problems and efforts of development can be speeded up in all the countries of the world.
- Even though a lot more remains to be done to achieve parity in international financial relations and the advancement of the goals of global tax justice, the global corporate minimum tax could go a long way in the accomplishment of these aims.
- Countries like India should not be recalcitrant about signing on to this proposal, and should approach this idea with cautious optimism.

Global Economic Prospects: World Bank

Why in News?

Recently, the **World Bank** has released its June 2021 Global Economic Prospects where it has **forecast India's GDP growth to be 8.3% for the year 2021-22.**

Key Highlights of Global Economic Prospects Report related to India:

- The World Bank has reduced its growth forecast for India for the 2021-'22 financial year to **8.3% from 10.1% estimated in April.**
  - **Reason:** It has attributed it to the devastating second wave of the coronavirus pandemic that slowed down the economic revival in early 2021.
- Moreover, the report has said that the economic activity in India would likely follow a similar but less pronounced **'collapse and recovery'** trend seen during the first wave.

Key Global Highlights of Global Economic Prospects Report:

- The global economy is expected to **expand 5.6% in 2021.** This is the fastest post-recession pace in 80 years, largely due to strong rebounds from a few major economies.
- However, **many emerging markets and developing economies continue to struggle due to** the following reasons,
  - A resurgence of COVID-19 cases,
  - Lagging vaccination progress
  - The withdrawal of policy support in some instances.

- **Among major economies**, the growth of the US is projected to reach 6.8% this year. This is due to large-scale fiscal support and the easing of pandemic restrictions.
- **Among emerging markets** and developing economies, China is anticipated to rebound to 8.5% this year, reflecting an increase in demand.

Corporatization of Ordnance Factory Board

Why in News?

Recently, **the Centre's move to corporatise the Ordnance Factory Board (OFB) has been strongly opposed** by the federations of the workers from 41 ordnance factories and allied units across the country.

About Ordnance Factory Board (OFB)

- The OFB is an umbrella body for the ordnance factories and related institutions and is currently a **subordinate office of the Ministry of Defence.**
- The organisation dates back over 200 years and is **headquartered in Kolkata.**
- It is a conglomerate of 41 factories, nine training Institutes, three regional marketing centres and five regional controllers of safety.
- It provides a **major chunk of the weapon, ammunition and supplies for Indian armed forces, paramilitary forces and police forces.**
- **The products of OFB include** civilian and military-grade arms and ammunition, explosives, propellants and chemicals for missiles systems, military vehicles, armoured vehicles, optical devices, parachutes, support equipment, troop clothing and general store items.

The Working of Seven New Entities

While OFB will cease to exist, its 41 factories would be converted into seven government-owned corporate entities.

Ammunition and Explosives Group: To focus on production of ammunition of various calibre. Will have a huge export potential as well

Vehicles Group: To make combat vehicles such as tanks, trawls, mine-protected vehicles and armoured troop carriers

Weapons and Equipment Group: To make small, medium and large calibre guns for security forces

Troop Comfort Group: To engage in production of uniforms and specialised gear for troops

Others will be an Ancillary Group, OptoElectronics Group and Parachute Group

The Need For Revamp

The military had three major issues with the older OFB structure

The Biggest concern was poor quality of equipment and ammunition delivered, which has led to loss of confidence by the user and a 'lowering of morale of the troops on ground'

High cost of orders placed on the OFB is another worry as the organisation has been nominated for tenders worth thousands of crores without competitive biddings

Lack of adhering to timelines by the OFB was a big concern as it had an cascading effect on the combat readiness of the Army

Need for Corporatisation of the Ordnance Factory Board (OFB)

- The committees on Defence reforms set by the governments between 2000 and 2015 have recommended the corporatisation of OFB.
  - **T.K.A. Nair Committee, Dr. Vijay Kelkar Committee, Raman Puri Committee and the Shekatkar Committee** have **recommended corporatisation of the OFB.**
- **The lack of addressing the quality issues with serious delays of OFB** affects the preparedness or forcing the Army to look elsewhere.
- The present structure showcase several issues such as **monopoly supply, quality issues, high cost of incidentals and overheads, lack of innovation and low productivity.**

Significance of Corporatisation of the Ordnance Factory Board (OFB)

- The corporatisation will result in the **conversion of the OFB into one or more 100 per cent government-owned entities under the Companies Act, 2013** like other public sector undertakings.
- The proposed transformation of OFB from a government department to a public sector corporate entity will have such as:
  - **improvement of efficiency,**
  - **reducing import dependency for arms and ammunition,**
  - **enhanced combat efficiency of the armed forces,**
  - **ensuring customer satisfaction and**
  - **greater penetration in defence export market**
- The corporatised ordnance factories can **form strategic alliances with Indian and overseas companies** to develop new products and carve out a niche in the international armament industry.

Argument against Corporatisation of the Ordnance Factory Board (OFB)

- **Corporatisation leading to privatisation**: The main apprehension of the employees is that corporatisation would eventually lead to privatisation.
- **Unable to survive market environment for defence**: The corporate entities would not be able to survive the unique market environment of defence products that has very unstable demand and supply dynamics.
- It poses a risk to national security in case of the growth of private players in the event of possible failure of the proposed OFB corporatisation, resulting in disinvestment and even closure.
- **The ordnance factories cannot be run on a commercial basis** since a 'war reserve' has to be kept at par with the armed forces to maintain capacity to take care of surge in demands in a war-like situation.

Viewpoint of the Union government on Corporatisation of the Ordnance Factory Board (OFB)

- **The notion of corporatisation was listed as one of the 167 'transformative ideas'** to be implemented in the first 100 days of the Narendra Modi government's second term.
- The Union Finance has announced the decision of Corporatisation of OFB for '**improving autonomy, accountability and efficiency in ordnance suppliers'.**
- The government has constituted an **Empowered Group of Ministers (EGoM) for Corporatisation, under the chairmanship of Defence Minister** to oversee and guide the transition support and redeployment plan of employees while safeguarding their wages and retirement benefits.

Proposal to Ban 'Flash sales' on E-commerce Sites

Why in News?

The government proposed changes to the Consumer Protection (e-commerce) Rules 2020, banning all "flash sales" in order to monitor the deep discounts offered on e-commerce websites.

Key Highlights of the draft bill:

- **Sales** - The draft rules seek to ban "specific flash sales" by e-commerce entities.
- Conventional e-commerce flash sales are not banned.
- However, specific flash sales or back-to-back sales "which limit customer choice, increase prices and prevents a level playing field are not allowed".
- **Liability** - In several cases, when problems arise with goods purchased, e-commerce platforms direct the consumers to the respective sellers.

- The rules have introduced the concept of "fall-back liability."
- With fall-back liability, consumers will be able to reach out to the platform itself to solve the grievance.
- E-commerce firms will be held liable if their seller fails to deliver goods or services due to negligent conduct, which causes loss to the customer.
- **Preferential treatment -** The rules propose to restrict e-commerce companies from "manipulating search results or search indexes."
- This will address the long-standing demand from sellers and traders to prevent preferential treatment to certain platforms.
- **Privacy -** Without express and affirmative consent, e-commerce companies cannot make available to any person information pertaining to the consumer.
- No entity shall record consent automatically, including in the form of pre-ticked checkboxes.
- **Domestic goods** - The companies will have to provide domestic alternatives to imported goods.
- This adds to the government's push for made-in-India products.
- **Other rules** - Any online retailer will first have to register itself with the Department of Promotion for Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT).
- No logistics service provider of a marketplace e-commerce entity shall provide differentiated treatment between sellers of the same category.
- Parties and associated enterprises related to e-commerce companies will not be allowed to be enlisted as sellers on the respective platform.
- This follows from the DPIIT's foreign direct investment policy for e-commerce marketplaces.
- Any entity having 10% or more common ultimate beneficial ownership will be considered an "associated enterprise" of an e-commerce platform.
- The draft amendment also proposes to ask e-commerce firms to mandatorily become a part of the National Consumer Helpline.

What is similar to the IT intermediary rules?

- The IT intermediary rules were announced recently for social media companies.
- Similar to this, the Consumer Affairs Ministry has proposed to mandate e-commerce companies to make few appointments.
- These are a grievance officer, a chief compliance officer and a nodal contact person for 24×7 coordination with law enforcement agencies.
- E-commerce companies are also asked to share information with a government agency lawfully authorised for investigative or protective or cyber security activities.
- This is for the purposes of verification of identity or for any legal procedures or in relation with cyber security incidents.
- The information so sought will have to be produced by the e-commerce company within 72 hours of the receipt of an order from the said authority.

Reform Linked Borrowing

Why in News?

Indian states were able to borrow an extra **Rs. 1.06 lakh crore in 2020-21 (FY21)** due to the **Reform Linked Borrowing window.**

➢ This was announced to provide an additional leeway to states in order to cope with the adverse effects of Covid-19 pandemic on the economy.

Key Highlights:

- **The Finance Ministry has permitted additional borrowings of Rs 1.06 lakh crore as at March-end** to those states which have carried out some key institutional reforms. Last October, the Central government had linked permission for additional borrowing of 1 per cent of their GSDP (Gross State Domestic Product) to implementation of four critical reforms.
- **Additional borrowing limit of Rs 37,600 crore has been given to states** for implementing the '**One Nation One Ration Card' system,** while another Rs 39,521 of borrowing has been allowed to 20 states that implemented Ease of Doing Business reforms.
- **Eleven states that have implemented urban local body and utility reforms** have been given additional borrowing limits of **Rs 15,957 crore**. Another 17 states received borrowing limit of Rs 13,201 crore in lieu of power sector reforms.
- **In providing leeway for extra borrowings,** the **Centre had stressed on the need to push reforms in citizen-centric areas and processes.**

India and World

SCO Agreement on Mass Media Cooperation

Why in News?

The Union Government approved the **signing and ratification of an Agreement on 'Cooperation in the field of Mass Media'** between all the Member States of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).

> ➢ The Agreement was signed in **June 2019**. It will provide an opportunity for the Member States to **share new innovations and best practices** in the field of Mass Media.

Key Highlights:

- It aims to **promote equal and mutually beneficial cooperation** among associations in the field of mass media.
- The main areas of cooperation in the agreement are the **creation of favorable conditions** for the wide and mutual distribution of information through mass media in order to further deepen the knowledge about the lives of the peoples of their states.
- It will assist in broadcasting television and radio programmer and those, distributed legally within the territory of the state of the other side.

About SCO:

- **After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991**, the then **security and economic architecture in the Eurasian region dissolved** and **new structures had to come up.**
- The original Shanghai Five were **China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan.**
- The SCO was formed in 2001, with Uzbekistan included. **It expanded in 2017 to include India and Pakistan.**
- Since its formation, the SCO has **focused on regional non-traditional security, with counter-terrorism as a priority.**
- The fight against the **"three evils"** of **terrorism, separatism and extremism** has become its mantra. Today, areas of cooperation include themes such as economics and culture.

Joint Statement on Multilateralism: BRICS

Why in News?

The Foreign Ministers of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) have called for **reforming and re-invigorating multilateral forums** to strengthen their ability to tackle twenty-first century challenges.

Key Highlights

- The BRICS countries have laid out a **list of changes** that would make these **institutions examples of effective and representative multilateralism.**
- The ministers stressed upon the need to have **effective multilateralism as essential tool for ensuring successful governance of matters of everyday life.**
- The BRICS ministers stressed the **need to promote initiatives aimed at ensuring timely, affordable, and equitable access to, as well as the distribution of diagnostics, therapeutics, medicines and vaccines, and essential health products and technologies.**

- The Ministers reaffirmed the need to use **all relevant measures during the pandemic to make covid-19 vaccines available to all.**
- They reiterated the need for sharing of vaccine doses, transfer of technology, development of local production capacities and supply chains for medical products.
- They called for **exercise of due restraint in the implementation of measures that could hinder the flow of vaccines,** health products and essential inputs.

BRICS Joint Statement on Strengthening and Reforming the Multilateral System

- It should make instruments of **global governance more inclusive, representative and participatory to facilitate greater and more meaningful participation of developing and least developed countries.**
- It should be based on **inclusive consultation and collaboration for the benefit of all, while respecting sovereign independence, equality, mutual legitimate interests and concerns to make the multilateral organizations more responsive, effective, transparent and credible.**
- It should make multilateral organizations more **responsive, effective, transparent, democratic, objective, action-oriented, solution-oriented and credible,** so as to promote cooperation in building international relations.

  - It should be based on the norms and **principles of international law, and the spirit of mutual respect, justice, equality, mutual beneficial cooperation and realities of the contemporary world.**
- It should use innovative and inclusive solutions, including digital and technological tools to promote sustainable development and facilitate affordable and equitable access to global public goods for all.
- It should **strengthen capacities of individual States and international organizations** to better respond to new and emerging, traditional and non-traditional challenges, including those emanating from terrorism, money laundering, cyber-realm, infodemic and fake news.
- It should **promote international and regional peace and security, social and economic development, and preserve nature's balance with people-centered international cooperation at its core.**

Why BRICS nations are keen on multilateral social security framework?

- The representatives of BRICS nations have expressed willingness to have a **multilateral social security framework in order to safeguard workers' rights.**
- The Social Security Agreement will help the international workers to port their benefit to their home countries thereby preventing loss of their hard earned money.
- It would help international workers to **avoid double contributions in a cluster of such nations.**

BRICS
- BRICS is an acronym for the grouping of the world's leading emerging economies, namely Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.
- **In 2001, the British Economist Jim O'Neill coined the term BRIC** to describe the four emerging economies of Brazil, Russia, India, and China.
- **The grouping was formalised** during the **first meeting of BRIC Foreign Ministers' in 2006.**
- **South Africa was invited to join BRIC in December 2010**, after which the group adopted the acronym BRICS.
- **India has assumed** the **BRICS Presidency from January 2021.**

Structure
- **BRICS does not exist in the form of organization**, but it is an **annual summit** between the supreme leaders of five nations.
- **The Chairmanship of the forum is rotated annually** among the members, in accordance with the acronym B-R-I-C-S.

Operation Pangea XIV: Interpol

Why in News?

- Recently, **the International Criminal Police Organization** (Interpol) through its Operation Pangea XIV **targeted the sale of fake medicines and products online.**
- **More than 1.10 lakh web links,** including websites and online marketplaces, **were taken down in the operation.**

About operation Pangea XIV:

- Code-named "Operation Pangea XIV", the exercise was coordinated by Interpol.
- **It involved the police, customs, and health regulatory authorities of 92 countries** against the sale of fake and illicit medicines and medical products.
- **Indian agencies also participated in the operation**, said an official of the Central Bureau of Investigation that is the nodal body for the Interpol in the country.
- It showed that criminals were continuing to cash in on the huge demand for personal protection and hygiene products due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Significance:

- The online sale of illicit medicines continues to pose a threat to public safety, which is why operations such as Pangea remain vital in combating this global health menace.
- Criminals were continuing to cash in on the huge demand for personal protection and hygiene products due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Other Pharmaceutical Crime Operations

Operation Rainfall

- It disrupts the trafficking in pharmaceuticals and medical devices in Asia.
- Seven countries took part in the operation in 2018 i.e. Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines and Vietnam.

Heera

- It is a regional initiative that targets the trafficking of pharmaceutical products in West Africa.
- The countries involved are Benin, Burkina Faso, Céte dIvoire, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal and Togo. Operation Pangea XIV: Interpol

Qanoon

- It is a multi-year initiative targeting illicit medicines and medical products in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA,) region.
- It collects and shares information in order to identify transnational issues, support investigations and dismantle criminal networks.
- The countries participating in the initiative are Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Libya, Lebanon, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia and United Arab Emirates.

Maldives' UNGA Presidency

Why in News?

The Foreign Minister of Maldives, Abdulla Shahid on June 7, 2021, was elected as the President of the **76th session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA).**

➢ **Abdulla Shahid won against Afghanistan's former foreign minister Zalmai Rassoul** with three-fourth majority. He fetched 143 votes while Rassoul got 48 votes out of 191 votes polled. Maldives will occupy office of President of UNGA for the first time.

Election to UNGA President

Election to UNGA presidential post is held annually. It is rotated amongst various regional groupings. 76th UNGA session for 2021-22 was the turn of Asia-Pacific group.

Whom did India support?

- Both Afghanistan and Maldives are having excellent relation with India. **Even though, Afghanistan was first to announce participation, Maldives was first to declare its candidate's name in December 2018.** Afghanistan announced name of Zalmai Rassoul in January 2021.
- Thus**, India had already extended its support to Maldives.**
- India had announced its support for Abdulla during visit of Foreign Secretary Harsh Shringla to Maldives in **November 2020.**

United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)

- UNGA is **one among six principal organs of United Nations (UN).** It serves as main deliberative, policy-making, and representative organ of UN. Chapter IV of the United Nations Charter empowers the organ and prescribes its composition, functions & procedures.
- **UNGA is responsible for UN budget, and appointing non-permanent members to Security Council**. It is the only UN organ where **all member states have equal representation.**

Global Expansion of Nuclear Arsenal: SIPRI Report

Why in News?

According to a recent report published in the **SIPRI Yearbook 2021**, the **numbers of nuclear warheads which are ready and deployed have increased globally.**

Key Findings of the Report

The world has nine declared nuclear-armed states —

  ➢ The US,
  ➢ Russia,
  ➢ the UK,
  ➢ France,
  ➢ China,
  ➢ India,
  ➢ Pakistan,
  ➢ Israel and
  ➢ North Korea

- These countries together possess an estimated **13,080 nuclear weapons at the start of 2021.**
- This marked a **decrease from the 13,400** that SIPRI estimated these states possessed **at the beginning of 2020.**
- Despite this overall decrease, the estimated number of nuclear weapons currently deployed with operational forces increased to 3,825 from 3,720 last year.
  ➢ Around 2,000 of these — **nearly all of which belonged to Russia or the USA** — were kept in a state of high operational alert.
  ➢ The UK and France are the other two who have deployed warheads.
  ➢ **China, India and Pakistan are not listed in the report as having "deployed" such weapons** with operational forces.
- India possessed an **estimated 156 nuclear** warheads at the start of 2021 compared to 150 at the start of last year.
- Pakistan had **165 warheads**, up from 160 in 2020.
- China's nuclear arsenal consisted of **350 warheads up from 320 at the start of 2020.**
- The raw material for nuclear weapons is **fissile material; either highly enriched uranium (HEU) or separated plutonium.**
  ➢ **India and Israel have produced mainly plutonium,**
  ➢ Pakistan has produced mainly HEU but is increasing its ability to produce plutonium
  ➢ China, France, Russia, the UK and the US have produced both HEU and plutonium for use in their nuclear weapons
- Saudi Arabia, India, Egypt, Australia and China were the five largest importers of major arms in the world between 2016 and 2020.
- Saudi Arabia had 11 percent share and India 9.5 percent in the global imports of the major arms in this time period

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SIPRI
- Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) is **an international institute based in Sweden, dedicated to research into conflict, armaments, arms control and disarmament.**
- **Established in 1966**, the Stockholm based SIPRI provides data, analysis and recommendations, based on open sources, to policymakers, researchers, media and the interested public.

Children and Digital Dumpsites: WHO Report

Why in News?

The World Health Organization (WHO) in its recent report "Children and Digital Dumpsites" has **underlined the risk that children working in informal processing are facing due to discarded electronic devices or e-waste.**

About Children and Digital Dumpsites Report:

- **The report summarizes the latest scientific knowledge** on the links between informal e-waste recycling activities and the health impact among children.
- **The report also underlined the risk faced by children working in the informal processing** of **discarded electronic devices or e-waste.**

Key Findings of the Children and Digital Dumpsites Report:

- There are as many as **18 million children (as young as five years) and about 12.9 million women work at these e-waste dumpsites every year.**
- **The e-waste from high-income countries is dumped in the middle- or low-income countries for processing every year.**
- **This e-waste contains over 1,000 precious metals** and other substances like gold, copper, mercury, and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons.
- **Low-income countries do not have proper safeguarding regulations**, which makes the process even more dangerous.
- **Moreover, children are especially preferred at these dumpsites because of their small and dexterous hands.** Several women, including pregnant women, also work at these sites.

Impact of E-Waste:

- **Children:** The children working at these e-waste dumpsites are prone to improper lung function, deoxyribonucleic acid damage, and increased risk of chronic diseases like cancer and cardiovascular disease. Children are also less likely to metabolize or eradicate pollutants absorbed.
- **Women:** Processing e-waste exposes women as well as their children to toxins, which can lead to premature births and stillbirth.
- **E-Waste Areas:** The hazardous impact of working at e-waste dumpsites is also experienced by families and communities that reside in the vicinity of these e-waste dumpsites.

Recommendations:

The report has called for the **monitoring, safe disposal of e-waste, and raising awareness about its outcomes on the health of children and women working at these dumpsites.**

About E-Waste:

- **E-Waste is short for Electronic-Waste.** It is the term used to describe old, end-of-life or discarded electronic appliances.
- It majorly includes electronic equipment, completely or in part discarded as waste by the consumer or bulk consumer as well as rejects from manufacturing, refurbishment and repair processes.

- It contains over 1,000 precious metals and other substances like gold, copper, lead, mercury, cadmium, chromium, polybrominated biphenyls and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons.

E-Waste Generation:

- **According to the Global E-waste Statistics Partnership**, the volume of e-waste generated is surging rapidly across the globe.
- **About 53.6 million tonnes of e-waste were generated in 2019.** But only 17.4% of this e-waste was processed in formal recycling facilities.
- The rest of it was dumped in **low- or middle-income countries** for illegal processing by informal workers.
- Moreover, this is likely to increase in the coming years because of the rise in the number of smartphones and computers.

IN-EUNAVFOR Joint Naval Exercise

Why in News?

The maiden Indian Navy - European Union Naval Force (IN-EUNAVFOR) Exercise is being conducted in **Gulf Of Aden.**

About Exercise EUNAVFOR

- **EUNAVFOR is a multilateral naval exercise** comprising of **Italian Navy, Spanish Navy, and French Navy**.
- Ships of the four navies will endeavor to enhance and hone their war-fighting skills and their ability as an integrated force to promote, peace, security, and stability in the maritime domain.
- EUNAVFOR and the Indian Navy converge on multiple issues including **counter-piracy operations and protection of vessels deployed under the charter of the World Food Programme (UN WFP).**
- Indian Navy and EUNAVFOR also have regular interaction through SHADE (Shared Awareness and De-confliction) meetings held annually in Bahrain.
- This engagement showcases increased levels of synergy, coordination, and inter-operability between India and EUNAVFOR.
- It also underscores the shared values as partner navies, in ensuring freedom of seas and commitment to an open, inclusive and rules-based international order.

Major Indian Maritime Exercises	
Name of the Exercise	**Name of the Country**
SLINEX	Sri Lanka
Bongosagar and IN-BN CORPAT	Bangladesh
JIMEX	Japan

Naseem-Al-Bahr	Oman
Indra	Russia
Za'ir-Al-Bahr	Qatar
Samudra Shakti	Indonesia
Indo-Thai CORPAT	Thailand
IMCOR	Malaysia
SIMBEX	Singapore
AUSINDEX	Australia
Malabar Exercise	Japan, and the USA

Environment

State of Finance for Nature Report

Why in News?

The UN report, titled State of Finance for Nature, **analyzes the investment flow in nature-based solutions (NbS) and identifies the future investment needed to meet the climate change, biodiversity and land degradation targets** (set in three Rio Conventions).

About State of Finance for Nature Report:

- The report was **jointly produced by the United Nations Environment Programme** (UNEP), the **World Economic Forum** and the **Economics of Land Degradation.**

Purpose:

- The report tracks the **global trends in public and private investment in nature-based solutions**. By this, **it aims to improve data quality and identify opportunities for governments, businesses and financiers.**

Key Findings of the Report:

- The current investments in Nature-based solutions amount to **USD 133 billion**. This is about **0.10% of global GDP. Public funds** make up **86% and private finance makes up the remaining 14% of these investments.**
- **Public Investment**: The largest proportion of public investment is carried out by the **United States, with approximately $36 billion a year in NbS spending.** It is followed by **China, Japan, Germany and Australia.**

  - ➢ Countries such as **Brazil, India and Saudi Arabia are likely spending large amounts of money too**. But they **do not report internationally comparable data**, according to the report.
- **Private Investment**: The private investment in Nature-based solutions is mostly contributed by

  - ➢ Commercial financial institutions,
  - ➢ Investors including insurance companies, asset management firms
  - ➢ Philanthropies including foundations and endowments.

Recommendations:

- **Firstly,** the report calls for investments in nature-based solutions to triple by 2030 and to increase four-fold by 2050 from the current level.
- **By 2050,** the total investment of nature needs will amount to $8.1 trillion, while annual investment should reach $536 billion annually by 2050.
- **Secondly,** the report has called for a comprehensive system and framework for labelling, tracking, reporting and verifying the state of finance for NbS. This would improve data comparability and quality as an input to future decision-making.
- **Lastly,** the report has recommended reforming taxes, repurposing agricultural policies and trade-related tariffs. It also recommended harnessing the potential of carbon markets to finance Nature-based solutions.

Black Carbon and Glacier Melting

Why in News?

The report titled "**Glaciers of the Himalayas: Climate Change, Black Carbon and Regional Resilience"** released by World Bank says that the **glaciers are melting faster than the global average ice mass**. However, the strong policy on black carbon can sharply cut glacier melt.

Key Highlights of the report:

Coverage

- It covers the Himalaya, Karakoram and Hindu Kush (HKHK) mountain ranges.
- There are almost **55,000 glaciers in the HKHK Mountains**, and they store more freshwater "than any other region outside the North and South Poles".
    - ➢ The glaciers contain **estimated ice reserves of 163 cubic kilometres**, of which almost **80% feeds the Indus, the Ganges and the Brahmaputra.**
- According to the report, glaciers are melting faster than the global average ice mass.

    - ➢ **The rate of retreat of HKHK glaciers is estimated to be 0.3 metres per year** in the west to 1.0 metre per year in the east.
    - ➢ **Black Carbon (BC) adds to the impact of climate change.**
- **Causes: Industry [primarily brick kilns] and residential burning of solid fuel together account for 45–66% of regional anthropogenic [man-made] BC deposition**, followed by **on-road diesel fuels (7–18%)** and **open burning (less than 3% in all seasons)" in the region.**

Impacts

- **Deposits of BC** act in **two ways hastening the pace of glacier melt:**
    - ➢ By **decreasing surface reflectance of sunlight** and by **raising air temperature**
- **Glacier melt produces** flash floods, landslips, soil erosion, and glacial lake outburst floods (GLOF).
- In the short run, the higher volumes of melt water could replace receding groundwater downstream. But in the long run, decreased water availability would aggravate water shortage.

Progress

- **Some of the ongoing policy measures to cut BC emissions** are enhancing fuel efficiency standards for vehicles, phasing out diesel vehicles and promoting electric vehicles, accelerating the use of liquefied petroleum gas for cooking and through clean cookstove programmes, as well as upgrading brick kiln technologies.
- However, with all existing measures, water from glacier melt is still projected to increase in absolute volume by 2040, with impacts on downstream activities and communities.

Way forward:

- **Black carbon (BC) deposits produced by human activity** which accelerate the pace of glacier and snow melt in the Himalayan region **can be sharply reduced through new, currently feasible policies** by an additional 50% from current levels.
- **Full implementation of current policies** to **mitigate BC can achieve a 23% reduction** but enacting new policies and incorporating them through regional cooperation among countries can achieve enhanced benefits.
    - ➢ Regional integration and collaboration was one way to address the question of melting glaciers.

- **Specifically, in the Himalayas, r**educing black carbon emissions from **cookstoves, diesel engines, and open burning would have the greatest impact and could significantly reduce radiative forcing .**
- **More detailed modelling** at a higher spatial resolution is needed to expand on the work already completed.
- It is calling upon **regional governments to review policies on water management**, with an emphasis on **basin-based regulation** and use of price signals for efficiency, careful planning and use of hydropower to reflect changes in water flows and availability, and increasing the efficiency of brick kilns through proven technologies.
- There must also be **greater knowledge sharing in the region.**

Black Carbon

- Black carbon is a kind of an **aerosol.**
  - An aerosol is a suspension of fine solid particles or liquid droplets in the air.
- Among aerosols (such as brown carbon, sulphates), **Black Carbon (BC) has been recognized as the second most important anthropogenic agent for climate change** and the **primary marker to understand the adverse effects caused by air pollution.**
- **It gets emitted from gas and diesel engines, coal-fired power plants, and other sources that burn fossil fuel.**
- **It comprises a significant portion** of **particulate matter or PM**, which is an **air pollutant.**

Southern Ocean

Why in News?

Recently, **on the occasion of World Ocean Day (8th June),** the **National Geographic magazine** has recognised the '**Southern Ocean' as the world's fifth ocean.**

About Southern Ocean

- The Southern Ocean is **the only ocean 'to touch three other oceans (Pacific, Atlantic and Indian Ocean).**
- It is the **only Ocean to completely embrace a continent** rather than being embraced by them.
- It is also **defined by its Antarctic Circumpolar Current** that was formed 34 million years ago.
  - The current flows from west to east around Antarctica

Significance of Recognition

- It is a step towards **conservation of World's Oceans**; redirecting public awareness onto a region which needs conservation spotlight.
  - Southern Ocean is **getting rapidly warmed** due to global warming, industrial fishing on species like krill and Patagonian tooth fish.

Ramgarh Vishdhari Wildlife Sanctuary

Why in News?

Recently, the **National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA)** has given the green signal **to Ramgarh Vishdhari Wildlife Sanctuary as 52nd Tiger Reserve of India.**

About Ramgarh Vishdhari Wildlife Sanctuary

- **It is the fourth tiger reserve of Rajasthan** after Ranthambore, Sariska and Mukundra tiger reserves.
- It is like a **buffer for the Ranthambore National Park.**
- **It is located almost 45 kilometers on Bundi-Nainwa Road** and covers an area of 252 square kilometers.
- It is home to wild predators like hyena, tigers, panthers, antelopes and wild boars.
- It was notified as a sanctuary in 1982.
- It comprises of hilly dry deciduous forests on Vindhyan formations.
- It includes floral diversities like **Mango, Dhok, Khair and Salar.**

World's First Genetically Modified Rubber: Assam

Why in News?

Recently, the **world's first Genetically Modified (GM) rubber plant developed by Rubber Research Institute was planted in Assam.**

➢ The rubber plant is the **first of its kind developed exclusively for this region**, and is expected to grow well under the climatic conditions of the mountainous northeastern region.

Key Highlights:

- GM Rubber was developed in **biotechnology laboratory at Rubber Research Institute of India (RRII) in Puthuppally, Kottayam.**
- It was planted at **Rubber board's Sarutari research farm in Guwahati.**
- Rubber Board launched **field trial of GM Rubber in Assam** a decade after Kerala Government denied permission for the same because of its adverse impact on environment.

Significance of GM Rubber

- GM variant rubber has the **capacity to withstand adverse climatic conditions**. It will give a big boost to rubber production in India. It will greatly benefit farmers after trials are over. The crop is resistant to reduced moisture or drought, low & high temperatures as well as high light intensity. It will also cut short the maturity period of rubber. It will result into early yielding.

Issue with the growth of rubber

- **Growth of young rubber gets slower in winter season in North East because plants do not get enough light during monsoon**. **Lack of adequate water during summer season also creates stress to plants.** Thus, GM rubber can overcome these issues and result into faster growth.

Science and Technology

Disinfection System Vajra Kavach:

Why in news?

Mumbai-based start-up, **Indra water** has developed "**Vajra Kavach Disinfection System**" which removes scourge of viral particles from equipment used by Corona warriors front line workers.

➢ **Validation and testing of system** was done by **Department of Biosciences & Bioengineering at IIT Bombay**.

About Disinfection System

- Disinfection System removes any possible traces of SARS-Cov-2 virus from **Personal Protective Equipment, coats, gloves, N95 masks and gowns.**
- Thus, it enables **reuse of PPEs and other equipments used by healthcare workers.**
- In a way, it will **protect environment too**, by reducing biomedical waste generation.
- It will make **personal protective equipment more available, affordable, and accessible.**
- Disinfection can be done in just a **few minutes.**
- System can achieve a **1,00,000-fold reduction in number of microorganisms.**

How testing was done?

- It goes through a long trial and testing process.
- Testing was done with Escherichia virus MS2; which is a single-stranded RNA virus similar to human respiratory viruses like **influenza virus and coronavirus; and E.coli strain C3000.**
- While testing it, full loads of virus and bacteria samples were placed PPE kit and was then placed inside Vajra Kavach.
- After disinfection cycle time, PPE was removed and sample was rechecked to assess growth rate and log reduction of virus.

How this system disinfects materials?

System comprises of **multistage disinfection process having advanced oxidation, corona discharge and UV-C light spectrum which inactivate viruses, bacteria, and other microbial strains from materials.**

AmbiTAG

Why in News?

- Recently, Indian Institute of Technology **(IIT) Ropar**, Punjab has developed a **first-of-its-kind IoT (Internet of Things) device – AmbiTag** that records **real-time ambient temperature**.

Key Highlights:

- The device records **real-time ambient temperature during the transportation of perishable products, vaccines, and even body organs and blood.**
- The recorded temperature helps to know **whether that particular item transported from anywhere in the world is still usable or perished because of temperature variation.**

Developed under:

- **AWaDH (Agriculture and Water Technology Development Hub)** and its Startup ScratchNest developed the device.
- **AWaDH is a research center at IIT Ropar**. Established with support from the Department of Science and Technology(DST) and the Science and Engineering Research Board (SERB). It carries out extensive research in the field of agriculture and water.

Significance:

- AmbiTAG **is India's first indigenous temperature data logger** for the cold chain management
- Moreover, the device is also particularly critical for vaccines including the Covid-19 vaccine, organs, and blood transportation.

Nano Urea Liquid: IFFCO

Why in News?

- **The world's first Nano Urea Liquid** for farmers across the world was introduced by the **Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative Limited (IFFCO) on May 31, 2021.**
- **IFFCO** made the big reveal during its **50th annual general body meeting held in the online-offline mode in India on May 31, 2021.**

About Nano urea:

Urea that is produced from **nano-technology** to **improve the efficiency of the nutrients of the crops is called as nano urea.** The nano urea liquid will **replace conventional Urea** and it can **curtail its requirement by at least 50 percent.**

Benefit of Nano urea liquid:

- The Nano Urea Liquid has been found to be **effective and efficient for plant nutrition**, which increases production with improved nutritional quality.
- According to IFFCO, the nano urea liquid will also have **a positive impact on the quality of underground water, very significant in reduction in global warming** with an **impact on climate change and sustainable development.**

Significane:

- The introduction of nano urea liquid is significant as **its use by farmers will boost balanced nutrition program by reducing the excess use of Urea application in the soil.** It will help make the crops stronger, healthier and protect them from the lodging effect.
- **Excess urea not only causes environmental pollution but also harms soil health and makes plants more susceptible to disease and insect infestation,** delaying the maturity of the crop and resulting in production loss.

How much will Nano Urea cost?

- The Nano Urea Liquid will be **cost-effective as it will be cheaper and it will help in increasing farmers' income.**
- Nano urea contains **40,000 ppm of Nitrogen in a 500 ml bottle**, which is equal to nitrogen nutrient impact provided by one bag of conventional Urea.
- **This will not only reduce the input cost of farmers but also due to its small size,** it will also significantly bring down the cost of logistics and warehousing.
- **The 500 ml bottle of Nano Urea will be priced at Rs 240 for the farmers**, which is 10 percent cheaper than the cost of a bag of conventional Urea.

Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative Limited
- It is one of **India's biggest cooperative societies** which is wholly owned by Indian Cooperatives.
- Founded **in 1967 with just 57 cooperatives, today it is an amalgamation of over 36,000 Indian Cooperatives** with diversified business interests ranging from General Insurance to Rural Telecom apart from its core business of manufacturing and selling fertilisers.

Objective:
- To enable **Indian farmers to prosper through timely supply of reliable, high quality agricultural inputs and services in an environmentally sustainable manner and to undertake other activities to improve their welfare.**

Satellite Internet

Why in News?

The SpaceX, the world's leading private company in space technology, last week fired a spray of 60 satellites into orbit. This is the first operational batch of what is intended to evolve into a constellation of 12,000 satellites aimed at providing low-cost and reliable space-based Internet services.

About Starlink network:

- The **project "Starlink network" of SpaceX is one of the ongoing efforts to start beaming data signals from space**, and also the most ambitious.
- The first batch of Starlink satellites went up on May 24, 2019 will not be part of the network.
- These are similar in configuration to the ones launched on November 11.
- **In 2015, SpaceX announced the satellite Internet constellation** and later in 2018, it launched two test satellites.
- Following the recent launch, it has now deployed 122 satellites in orbit.
- In October 2019, SpaceX told the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) that it intends to deploy another 30,000 Starlink satellites in Low Earth Orbit (LEO) in coming years.

Why is it necessary to launch satellites in order to provide Internet services?

- This is mainly to ensure that **reliable and uninterrupted Internet services** are universally available in every part of the globe.
- Currently, **more than half the world's population do not have access to reliable Internet networks.**
- That is because the traditional ways to deliver the Internet **(fibre-optic cables or wireless networks) cannot take it everywhere on Earth.**
- In many remote areas, or places with difficult terrain, it is not feasible or viable to set up cables or mobile towers.
- Signals from satellites in space can overcome this obstacle easily.

Idea of Space Internet

- Space-based Internet systems have been in use for several years now but only for a small number of users.
- Also, most of the existing systems use satellites in geostationary orbit.
- This orbit is located at a height of 35,786 km over the Earth's surface, directly above the Equator.
- Satellites in this orbit move at speeds of about 11,000 km per hour, and complete one revolution of the Earth in the same time that the earth rotates once on its axis.
- To the observer on the ground, therefore, a satellite in geostationary orbit appears stationary.

How will placing satellites in lower orbits help?

- One big advantage of beaming signals from geostationary orbit is that the satellite can cover a very large part of the Earth.
- Signals from one satellite can cover roughly a third of the planet and 3 to 4 satellites would be enough to cover the entire Earth.
- As they appear to be stationary, it is easier to link to them.
- A satellite in the lower orbit, 200-2,000 km from the Earth's surface, can bring the lag down to 20-30 milliseconds, roughly the time it takes for terrestrial systems to transfer data.
- The LEO extends up to 2,000 km above the Earth's surface.
- The 12,000 Starlink satellites for which SpaceX has permission and the other 30,000 that it wants to launch will be deployed in the altitude band of 350 km to 1,200 km.

Problems with the lower orbits:

- Owing to their lower height, their signals cover a relatively small area.
- As a result, many more satellites are needed in order to reach signals to every part of the planet.
- Additionally, satellites in these orbits travel at more than double the speed of satellites in geostationary orbit about 27,000 kmph to balance the effects of gravity.
- Typically, they go around the Earth once every few hours.
- To compensate for the fact that they cannot be seen from a terrestrial location for more than a few minutes, many more satellites are needed in the networks, so that there are no breaks in the transmission of data.
- That is the reason why the Starlink network is talking about 42,000 satellites.

When will Starlink provide its space-based Internet service?

- Starlink aims to start service in the northern United States and Canada in 2020, and expand to cover the whole world by 2021.
- The current plan is to deploy satellites in two constellations of around 4,400 and 7,500.
- Launches will take place at frequent intervals now onward.
- SpaceX says it can start services on a small scale once 400 satellites join the network.
- Several other private companies too, have plans for space-based Internet services. But these projects are very small compared to Starlink.
- Once operational, space-based Internet networks are expected to change the face of the Internet.
- Services such as autonomous car driving are expected to be revolutionised, and the Internet of Things (IoT) can be integrated into virtually every household, whether urban or rural.

Concerns with this projection:

- **Three issues** have been flagged -
  - ➢ Increased space debris,
  - ➢ Increased risk of collisions, and
  - ➢ The concern of astronomers that these constellations of space Internet satellites will make it difficult to observe other space objects, and to detect their signals.
- To put things in perspective, fewer than 9,000 satellites have been launched into space since the beginning of the Space Age in 1957.
- Most of the operational satellites are located in the lower orbits.
- On September 2019, the European Space Agency (ESA) had to perform, for the first time ever, a collision avoidance manoeuvre to protect one of its live satellites from colliding with a mega constellation.
- Astronomers and scientists have also complained about increased light-pollution.
- They referred to light reflected from the man-made satellites that can interfere with and be mistaken for light coming from other heavenly bodies.

World Energy Investment Report, 2021: IEA

Why in News?

Recently, the **International Energy Agency (IEA)** published the **World Energy Investment Report, 2021.**

Key Highlights of the World Energy Investment Report 2021:

- **Global energy investments** are set to recover by **nearly 10% in 2021 to $1.9 trillion** reversing the decline in 2020.**However,** the energy transition is moving more funds toward electricity and renewables and away from fossil fuels.
- **Power Sector:** Global Power Sector which saw flat investments in 2020 is set to receive the highest ever funding i.e. up by about 5% to more than $820 billion. Among them, Renewables are forecast to account for 70% of the total.
- **Fossil Fuels:** The technologies like Carbon Capture and Storage(CCS) are yet to attain commercial success. So, the investments in oil are expected to grow by about 10%.
- **Coal Sector:** The approvals for coal-fired plants are some 80% below where they were five years ago. But coal is not out of the picture as there is a slight increase in coal-fired plants in 2020 driven by China and some other Asian economies.
- The Energy efficiency sector will also see a substantial rise (10%) in investment. But the low fossil fuel price may act as a deterrent.
- **Increase in Emissions:** The present scenarios will not deter the increase in carbon dioxide emission after the contraction in 2020. The Global emission is set to grow by 1.5 billion tonnes in 2021.
- **Net Zero Plan:** The commitments to the Net Zero plan is gaining momentum, but its transition to actual action is not visible.
  - ➢ **Net-zero emission** is the method of balancing the greenhouse gas emissions in the atmosphere by the greenhouse gas absorption from the atmosphere.

Way Forward

- **Clean energy investment** would need to double in the coming years to **maintain temperatures well below a 2 °C rise.** It needs to be **more than triple in order to keep the door open for a 1.5 °C stabilisation.**
- **A democratic decision-making** process and de-corporatisation of the energy sector is the need of the future for the survival of civilization on this planet.

Supersonic Commercial Plane

Why in News?

Recently, the **US airline United has announced plans to buy 15 new supersonic airliners** and "return supersonic speeds to aviation" in the year 2029.

About Supersonic Plane:

- Supersonic aircraft are planes that **can fly faster than the speed of sound.**
- The technology for supersonic flights is actually over **70 years old**, but only recently has been used for commercial flying.
- **Before 1976, when the first commercial supersonic flight took off,** the **planes were used entirely for military purposes.**
- Usually, supersonic planes can travel at the speed of around **900 kmph,** twice the speed of normal aircraft.

What about the Overture supersonic aircraft?

- The Overture supersonic aircraft would travel at the speed of Mach 1.7 or 1,805 kmph. In a single flight, it could carry 65 to 88 passengers.
- The aircraft will also not be noisy, as supersonic planes in the past were, as it aims for "zero overland noise."
  - ➢ Zero overland noise essentially means that the aircraft will fly at supersonic speeds only overwater. Thereby ensuring no sonic boom or excessive noise reaches the surfaces where people live.

Challenges with supersonic planes

Flying passengers at a supersonic speed is accompanied by a whole set of challenges.

- Firstly, the **costs of making "sustainable"** supersonic planes are extremely high.
- The very nature of its flying — using **excessive amounts of fuel and energy** — is likely to have high environmental costs.
- Despite the use of sustainable fuels, **greenhouse gas emissions are not nullified.**
- **Secondly,** the very speed of the planes results in producing excessive amounts of noise pollution in the environment.
- The **"Sonic Boom"** created by these planes feels like an **explosion to the human ear.**
- This, thus, limits where and when the supersonic planes can fly. They can only reach their actual speed until they are far enough from people and completely over the ocean.
- **Regulatory Approvals**, to fly such planes can be unsuccessful, especially for transatlantic flights. Getting clearance from regulators around the world would be a challenging task, since the supersonic planes in the past have already been flagged for these hurdles.
- **Lastly, it would not be economically feasible for everyone.** Only the very rich can afford supersonic planes, as a ticket is likely to be way costlier than a first-class ticket of a regular plane.

EnVision Mission to Venus: European Space Agency

Why in News?

Recently, **European Space Agency (ESA)** has announced a new mission- **EnVision mission to Venus.**

About EnVision

- EnVision is an ESA-led mission with contributions from NASA. It is likely to be launched sometime in the **2030s.**
- The earliest launch opportunity for **EnVision is 2031, followed by 2032 and 2033.**
- Once launched on an **Ariane 6 rocket,** the spacecraft will take about 15 months to reach Venus and will take 16 more months to achieve orbit circularization.
- The spacecraft will carry a range of instruments to study the planet's atmosphere and surface, monitor trace gases in the atmosphere and analyses its surface composition.

What are other such missions?

- EnVision will follow another ESA-led mission to Venus called '**Venus Express'** (2005-2014) that focused on atmospheric research and pointed to volcanic hotspots on the planet's surface.
- Other than this, **Japan's Akatsuki spacecraft** has also been studying the planet's atmosphere since 2015.

Why are scientists interested in studying Venus?

- At the core of the ESA's mission is the question of **how Earth and Venus evolved** so **differently from each other** considering that they are roughly of the same size and composition.
- **Venus is the hottest planet** in the solar system **because of the heat that is trapped by its thick cloud cover.**
- Last year, a team of scientists reported that they had found **phosphine gas (**a chemical produced only through biological processes) in the atmosphere of Venus.
- This triggered excitement in the scientific community that some life forms might be supported by the planet.
- But the existence of life on the planet is nearly impossible given the high temperatures of Venus and its acidic atmosphere.

PASIPHAE: A Sky Surveying Project

Why in News:

The project has been funded by the **world's leading institutions, signalling India's growing expertise in building complex astronomical instruments.**

PASIPHAE Sky Surveys

- **Polar-Areas Stellar-Imaging in Polarisation High-Accuracy Experiment (PASIPHAE)** is an international collaborative sky surveying project.
- **Scientists aim to study** the polarisation in the light coming from millions of stars.
- The name is inspired from Pasiphae, the daughter of Greek Sun God Helios, who was married to King Minos.
- Survey will use **two high-tech optical polarimeters** to observe the northern and southern skies, simultaneously.

Key Highlights:

- PASIPHAE survey will **measure starlight polarisation over large areas of the sky.**

- It will help create a **3-Dimensional model** of the distribution of the dust and magnetic field structure of the galaxy.
- The development of a vital instrument which will be **used in upcoming sky surveys to study stars, is being led by an Indian astronomer.**
- PASIPHAE will focus on capturing **starlight polarisation of very faint stars** that are so far away that polarisation signals from there have not been systematically studied.
- **The distances to these stars** will be **obtained from measurements of the GAIA satellite.**
- By combining these data, astronomers will perform a maiden magnetic field tomography mapping of the interstellar medium of very large areas of the sky **using a novel polarimeter instrument known as WALOP (Wide Area Linear Optical Polarimeter).**
- The Infosys Foundation, India, Stavros Niarchos Foundation, Greece and USA's National Science Foundation have each provided a grant of $1 million combined with contributions from the European Research Council and the National Research Foundation in South Africa.

Wide Area Linear Optical Polarimeter (WALOP)

- **An instrument, when mounted on two small optical telescopes**, that will be used to detect polarised light signals emerging from the stars along high galactic latitudes.
- **WALOP each will be mounted on the, 1.3-metre Skinakas Observatory, Crete, 1-metre telescope of the South African Astronomical Observatory located in Sutherland.**
- They will be unique instruments offering the **widest ever field of view of the sky in polarimetry**. Working Method WALOP will operate on the principle that at any given time, the data from a portion of the sky under observation will be split into four different channels.
- Depending on the manner in which **light passes through the four channels the polarisation value from the star is obtained.**
- That is each star will have **four corresponding images** which when stitched together will help calculate the desired polarisation value of a star.

Astronomical Polarimetry
- Polarimetry, **a technique to measure the polarisation of light**, is a powerful tool that allows astronomers to infer information about celestial objects, from passing comets to distant galaxies, that can not be obtained using other techniques.
- **Polarization is a property of light** that **represents the direction that the light wave oscillates.**
- Two decades ago, an Indian astrophysicist **Sujan Sengupta, put forth an idea, that the light emitted by a cloudy brown dwarf, or reflected off an extrasolar planet, will be polarised.**

Peter Pan Syndrome

Why in News?

Recently, **a special court in Mumbai granted bail to an accused of sexually assaulting a minor** as he was **suffering from Peter Pan Syndrome (PPS).**

 ➢ **A syndrome** is a **combination of symptoms and signs** that **together represent a disease process.**

Court observation:

- The court found the two were romantically involved, and that the 14-year-old had voluntarily been with the accused.
- During the hearing, the accused had told the court he suffered from "Peter Pan Syndrome".
  - ➢ The special public prosecutor argues that a medical examination of the man showed no signs of abnormality and that the defence itself could not provide medical papers to support the claim.
- The lawyer of the accused stated that the Peter Pan Syndrome affected people "who do not want or feel unable to grow up, where a person's mental age is more than his/her physical age".

About Peter Pan Syndrome:

- The term '**Peter Pan Syndrome' first appeared in 1983**, in a book authored by **Dr Dan Kiley titled 'Peter Pan Syndrome: Men Who Have Never Grown Up'.**

  - ➢ He described it as a **"social-psychological phenomenon".**
- **It is a fictional character** created by **Scottish novelist James Matthew Barrie in the early 1900s.**
  - ➢ His character is one of a carefree young boy, who never grows up.
  - ➢ He features in several of Barrie's books and plays and has since been adapted in numerous films, television series and comics.
- It is said that people who develop similar behaviours (of living life carefree, finding responsibilities challenging in adulthood, and basically, **"never growing up") suffer from Peter Pan Syndrome**.
- While the World Health Organization does not recognise Peter Pan Syndrome as a health disorder, many experts believe it is a mental health condition that can affect one's quality of life.

The symptoms of Peter Pan Syndrome:

- It **hasn't officially been diagnosed as a health disorder.**
  - ➢ So, there aren't clearly defined symptoms or characteristics or even reasons which cause it.
- However, according to **HealthLine, it could affect one's daily routine, relationships, work ethic, and result in attitudinal changes.**
- According to the University of Granada, "**The 'Peter Pan Syndrome' affects people who do not want or feel unable to grow up, people with the body of an adult but the mind of a child.**
  - ➢ They don't know how to or don't want to stop being children and start being mothers or fathers.
- The syndrome is not currently considered psychopathology.
  - ➢ However, an increasingly larger number of adults are presenting emotionally immature behaviours in Western society.
- It can affect anyone, irrespective of gender, race or culture. However, it appears to be more common among men.

Like Peter Pan Syndrome, a Wendy Syndrome:

- It takes after Wendy Darling, who appears beside Peter Pan but is seen as playing an antithetical character.
- She is often called a "mother", taking on the role of an adult or someone more mature.
- Healthline describes people suffering from Wendy Syndrome as often seen making decisions, tidying up messes, and offering one-sided emotional support.

Agristack

Why in News?

Recently, the **Ministry of Agriculture** has signed a **Memorandum of Understanding with Microsoft** to run a **pilot programme for 100 villages in 6 states.**

About AgriStack

- The AgriStack is a **collection of technologies and digital databases** proposed by the Central Government focusing on India's farmers and the agricultural sector.
- The central government has claimed that these new databases are being built to primarily tackle issues such as poor access to credit and wastage in the agricultural supply chain.
- **Under AgriStack'**, the government aims to provide 'required data sets' of farmers' personal information to Microsoft to develop a farmer interface for 'smart and well-organized agriculture'.
- The digital repository will aid precise targeting of subsidies, services and policies, the officials added.
- **Under the programme, each farmer of the country will get what is being called an FID**, or a farmers' ID, linked to land records to uniquely identify them. India has 140 million operational farm-land holdings.
- Alongside, the government is also developing a unified farmer service platform that will help digitise agricultural services delivery by the public and private sectors.

Issues with the move

- Agriculture has become the latest sector getting a boost of '**techno solutionism'** by the government.
- But it has, since then, also become the latest sector to enter the whole debate about data privacy and surveillance.
- **Since the signing of the MoUs, several concerns related to sharing farmers' data** with private companies the major one being Microsoft whose owner Bill Gates is said to be the largest private farmland owner in the US.
- **In all the MoUs, there are provisions under which the agriculture ministry will enter into a data sharing agreement with the private companies** of the likes of Amazon, Microsoft and Patanjali.
- The development has raised serious concerns about information asymmetry, data privacy and consent, profiling of farmers, mismanaged land records and corporatization of agriculture.
- The formation of 'Agristack' also implies commercialization of agriculture extension activities as they will shift into a digital and private sphere.

Why such concerns?

- The project was being implemented in the absence of **a data protection legislation**.
- It might end up being an exercise where private data processing entities may know more about a farmer's land than the farmer himself.
- **Without safeguards, private entities would be able to exploit farmers' data to whatever extent they wish to**.
- This information asymmetry, tilted towards the technology companies, might further exploit farmers, especially small and marginal ones.

What are some major threats?

- One of the biggest worries is the **threat of financial exploitation.**
- We have already seen how microfinance firms have wreaked financial havoc in rural hinterlands.

- Now, **once Fintech companies are able to collect granular data about the farmers' operations, they may offer them usurious rates of interest precisely when they would be in the direst need for credit.**
- With this, the risk of **commodifying agriculture** and farmer data ran high.

US' Digital Millennium Copyright Act

Why in News?

Recently, **the Union Minister for Electronics and Information Technology was locked out of his Twitter account** for an hour allegedly over a notice received for **violation of the US' Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA) 1998.**

What is the Digital Millennium Copyright Act or DMCA?

- **Digital Millennium Copyright Act or DMCA is a 1998 law passed in the US** and is among the **world's first laws recognising intellectual property on the internet.**
- **Purpose:** The law oversees the implementation of the two treaties signed and agreed upon by member nations of the **World Intellectual Property Organisation(WIPO) in 1996.**

Which are those two treaties of WIPO?

- **In 1996, WIPO member countries agreed upon** two treaties namely the **WIPO Copyright Treaty and the WIPO Performances and Phonograms Treaty.**
- **Both the treaties require member nations and signatories to** provide in their respective jurisdictions, protection to intellectual property that may have been created by citizens of different nations who are also co-signatories to the treaty.
- The said protection accorded by each member state must not be any less in any way than the one being given to a domestic copyright holder.
- Further, the **signatory countries should ensure ways to prevent circumvention of the technical measures used to protect copyrighted work.** It also provides the necessary international legal protection to digital content.

About WIPO:

- World Intellectual Property Organization(WIPO) is one of the **15 specialized agencies of the United Nations (UN).**
- **Purpose:** It was created to promote and protect intellectual property (IP) across the world by cooperating with countries as well as international organizations.
- **WIPO Convention:** It's mandate of governing bodies and procedures are set out in the WIPO Convention which had established WIPO in 1967.
- **Headquarters:** Geneva, Switzerland.

NATRAX-High Speed Track

Why in News?

Recently, **the Minister of Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises** inaugurated **NATRAX- the High Speed Track in Pithampur, Indore (Madhya Pradesh).**

About NATRAX:

- **It is one of the state-of-the-art automotive testing and certification centre** under National Automotive Testing and Research and development (R&D) Infrastructure Project (NATRIP),

  - NATRIP is the **largest and most significant initiative in the automotive sector** which comprises representatives from the Government of India, a number of State Governments and Indian Automotive Industry.

  - It is a flagship project of the Ministry of Heavy Industries.
  - It aims to create a state of the art testing, validation and R&D infrastructure in the country.
- It is a world class **11.3 km High Speed Track**. The track is the longest in Asia and the fifth-largest in the world.

  - It is developed in an area of 1000 acres of land.
- **It has multiple test capabilities like measurements of maximum speed, acceleration, constant speed fuel consumption, emission tests through real road driving simulation, high speed handling and stability evaluation during manoeuvres such as lane change, high speed durability testing, etc**. and is a Centre of excellence for Vehicle Dynamics.

Location:

- It is located only 50 km away from Indore, the financial capital of Madhya Pradesh.
- Being centrally located, it is accessible to most of the major Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs).

Himachal current Affairs

Excise Revenue hiked to 61 percent

In News:

The Excise and Taxation department has collected total revenue **of Rs. 500 crores in May 2021** as compared to **Rs. 310 crores collected during May 2020** with the **total revenue collection hike by 61 percent.**

- ➢ In spite prevailing pandemic situation revenue worth Rs. 185 crores had been collected under State Goods and Service Tax (SGST).
- ➢ Rs. 234 crores under Sales Tax/VAT
- ➢ Rs. 50 crores under State Excise, Rs. 25 crores under Other Tax and Duty (OTD)
- ➢ Rs. 6 crores under PGT heads in May 2021 as compared to revenue collection of Rs. 118 crores under SGST
- ➢ Rs. 65 crores under Sales Tax/VAT
- ➢ Rs. 108 crores under State Excise
- ➢ Rs. 15 crores under OTD and Rs. 3 crores under Passenger and Goods Tax (PGT) heads in May 2020.

Amar Singh Chaudhary

In News:

- He passed away at his native place in Hamirpur district on 2nd June 2021.
- He was 85 years old.
- He was former MLA from Mewa assembly constituency (now Bhoranj)

Online application to strengthen the regulation of Waste

Why in News?

To ensure safe disposal of **biomedical waste including Covid-19 waste, the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) has brought out dedicated guidelines for handling, treatment and disposal of waste generated during treatment, diagnostics and quarantine of Covid-19 patients.**

Background:

- **The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India** had framed **new regulations during 2016 for management of Biomedical Waste** with an objective to improve the collection, segregation, processing, treatment and disposal of waste in an environmentally sound manner thereby reducing the biomedical waste generation and its impact on health and environment.

Key Highlights:

- **New regulation has brought all the Allopathic, Ayurvedic, Veterinary Institutions, Pathological Laboratories, Blood Banks etc. under its ambit**. Under these new Rules, about 8990 Health Care Institutions are being regulated by the State Board and approximately 3.5 MT per day of Biomedical Waste is being generated by these institutions which is being disposed through the Common Biomedical Waste Treatment Facilities (CBWTFs) established at Solan, Kangra and Una and captive disposal facilities at institutions level

- **Generation and disposal status of Covid-19 waste is being reported on national tracking portal on daily basis by the State Board** and since April 2020 approximately 538 MT of Covid-19 waste have been disposed off through CBWTFs and captive facilities in the State.
- The State has witnessed **maximum generation of Covid-19 waste 105 MT during the month of May 2021**. At present nearly 4.74 MT of bio-medical waste is being generated per day and the three CBWTFs have incineration capacity of 6.4 MT per day indicating availability of adequate infrastructure for treatment and disposal of biomedical waste including Covid-19 waste in the State.
- Further to strengthen the regulation of Waste Management for Biomedical waste, hazardous waste and e-waste the State Board is in the process to develop an **online web/mobile application "Waste MIS"** through the Department of IT, which will have online manifest system to check the pilferage of waste and ensure its scientific disposal through the authorized vendors,

Amit Negi

In News:

Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur today congratulated Amit Negi of **village Batseri of Kinnaur district** for **scaling world highest peak Mount Everest.**

Baljeet Kaur

In News:

- Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur congratulated **Baljeet Kaur for scaling one of the toughest peaks in the Everest Massif in Nepal.**
- **Baljeet Kaur hails from Solan district** and was part of a **12-member team that was set to attempt to conquer** all **four peaks that was part of the Everest Massif expedition.**
- **The aim of this two-month-long expedition was to make** the first Indian ascent of the challenging Mt Nuptse and Mt Pumori, besides making an ascent of the difficult Mt Lhotse and Mt Everest.

"Shagun" scheme

 Why in News?

Social Justice and Empowerment Minister Sarveen Chaudhary said that the State Government has notified **"Shagun" scheme for providing Marriage Grant to BPL Girls/Women.**

Key Highlights:

- Main objective of the scheme is **to provide Rs. 31000 as financial assistance to the parents/ guardians or the girl herself** if her parents were not traceable for marriage of their girls who belong to BPL families, above 18 years of age and bonafide resident of Himachal Pradesh.
- The marriage grant would be given even **if the girl from Himachal Pradesh is marrying a boy from outside the state of Himachal Pradesh,**
- **For getting benefit under the scheme** the application should be made in the prescribed form by the parents/guardians the girls herself, in case she is destitute to the concerned Child Development Project Officer/Incharge Nari Sewa Sadan/Superintendent Balika Ashram.

- **The Child Development Project Officer/Incharge Nari Sewa Sadan/Superintendent Balika Ashram** will verify the antecedents contained in the application.
- The financial assistance under the scheme may **be paid two months in advance of the proposed date of marriage**. If the marriage has already taken place, the grant shall be disbursed even after the applicant applies for the grant of marriage, within a period of six months.
- **In case the applicant applies after a period of six months from the date of marriage**, the application shall not be considered and no benefit shall be provided.
- Shagun scheme would be **applicable throughout the State from 1st April, 2021.**
- **The District Programme officer** would be **competent to sanction a marriage grant of Rs. 31000 to bonafide** Himachal Pradesh girls/women who are above 18 years for their marriage

Ethanol plant in Una district

In News:

Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL) has decided to set up a **grain based ethanol plant in Una district** with **a capacity of 125 KL per day.**

Dr. Ranjeet Rana

In News:

Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur has expressed grief over the demise of **Dr. Ranjeet Singh Rana, Senior Editor, department of Information and Public Relations, Himachal Pradesh** who passed away at PGIMER, Chandigarh.

Justice L. Narayana Swamy

In News:

Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur organized a **High Tea in honour of Chief Justice of Himachal Pradesh High Court Mr. Justice L. Narayana Swamy**, who is **retiring on 30 June, 2021.**

Natural farming to double the income of farmers

Why in News?

Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur while addressing the **National Webinar on Realization of Mission Natural Farming among Smallholders' organized by the State Project implementing Unit, Prakritik Kheti Khushhal Kisan Yojna of Department of Agriculture,** from Shimla on 30th june has said that the **State was promoting natural farming in a big way so as to double the income of the farmers by end of 2022.**

Key Highlights:

- **In order to promote natural farming in the State,** the State Government is **implementing Prakritik Kheti Khushhal Kisan Yojna.**,This would **not only boost yield of the crops** but also **reduce farming inputs in a big way**
- **Subhash Palekar Natural Farming is emerging a favourite for agricultural practices to reduce farmers direct cost** while boosting yields and farm health through the use of non-synthetic inputs sourced locally.
- **NITI Aayog has also appreciated the steps taken by the State Government** for promoting natural farming in the State.

- The State Government is **endeavouring to motivate all the 9.61 lakh farmers** of the State to **adopt natural farming** so that Himachal could become a **natural farming State of the country**.
- As land holdings in the State were limited and most of the farmers falls under **small and marginal category**. Hence the **natural farming not only yields better crops** but also **fetch good prices to the farmers..**

Defence News

- **NSA AjitDoval** commissions Indian Coast Guard's offshore Patrol Vessel **Sajag**

- **India** will get **eight new Flying Training Academies** under the **liberalised Flying Training Organisation (FTO) policy** of the **Airports Authority of India (AAI), the Ministry of Civil Aviation.**

- **Indian Navy** will receive the **first set of three of the 24 MH-60 'Romeo' multirole helicopters from the US in July 2022.**

- 31st edition of India-Thailand Coordinated Patrol **(Indo-Thai CORPAT)** between the Indian Navy and the Royal Thai Navy is being conducted from today till 11th June 2021.

- Navies of **Indo - Thai** - begins three-day coordinated patrol in **Andaman Sea**

- ARDE & HEMRL develops State-of-the-Art Canopy Severance System

- The **maiden Indian Navy and European Union Naval Force (EUNAVFOR) exercise began in the Gulf of Aden.**

- Indian Naval Ships **Kochi and Teg** along with **P8I and MiG 29K** aircraft are participating in a Passage Exercise with **US Navy Carrier Strike Group Ronald Reagan** in Indian Ocean Region.

- **Defence Ministry** signs contract with **Goa Shipyard Ltd** for construction of **2 Pollution Control Vessels for Indian Coast Guard**

- Ministry of Defence, **DRDO** Successfully Test fires Subsonic Cruise Missile **'Nirbhay'** from **launch pad no.3 of the Integrated Test Range at Chandipur of Balasore district, Odisha**

- **Indian Naval Ship (INS) Tabar**, will **visit a number of ports in Africa and Europe till September end.**

- **DRDO** successfully flight-tested a **New Generation Nuclear Capable Ballistic Missile "Agni P" from Dr APJ Abdul Kalam island off the coast of Odisha, Balasore**.

- **Turkey & Azerbaijan armies** started **joint military exercises Mustafa Kemal Ataturk – 2021 in Baku.**

- The **three day drill will run until June 30, 2021.**

- **The Competition Commission of India (CCI)** approved **acquisition of the Zuarinagar plant of Zuari Agro Chemicals Limited by Paradeep Phosphates Limited.**

Sports

- Indian heavyweight boxer **Sanjeet Kumar** won a gold medal in the 91 kg weight category at the ASBC Asian Boxing Championships.

- **The International Cricket Council (ICC)** announced the **men's ODI World Cup will once again become a 14-team tournament in 2027 and 2031.**

- **Teenage India batswoman Shafali Verma** continued to **top the ICC women's T20I batting rankings.**

- Brazil will host Copa America for the second consecutive time after Colombia and Argentina were stripped of hosting rights for the Football tournament.

- **World No. 1 Novak Djokovic** captured the **83rd title in the 2021 Belgrade Open Tennis Tournament.**

- **Red Bull's Sergio Perez won a chaotic Azerbaijan Grand Prix 2021** held at **Baku, Azerbaijan.**

- The International Hockey Federation (FIH) has appointed **Oman** as the host country for the inaugural **FIH Hockey 5s World Cups** (Men and Women)

- Digital payments startup **BharatPe** announced it has **inked a three-year long deal to become an official partner with International Cricket Council (ICC).**

- The latest **International Hockey Federation world rankings 2021**, In Hockey, **Indian men's team,** maintained their **fourth position, Beljium tops while women's team held ninth position, Netherland tops.**

- The **Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI)** announced that the **remainder of Indian Premier League (IPL) 2021 will be played in the United Arab Emirates (UAE)** in the months of **Sep - Oct 2021.**

- **Aruna Tanwar has been awarded** a wild card entry for the upcoming **Tokyo Paralympic Games,** which will **make her the first Indian to compete in the global multi-para sport event, the national federation.**

- **Novak Djokovic** and **Barbora Krejcikova win in The French Open Tennis Tournament 2021.**

- **India's Mirabai Chanu, the 2017 world champion in weightlifting,** has qualified for the **Tokyo** Olympics in the women's 49-kg category announced by the International Weightlifting Federation(IWF).

- **Captain of the Indian football team, Sunil Chhetri** became the **second-highest active international goalscorer with 74 goals.** Cristiano Ronaldo (103) in the list of active footballers with the most international goals.

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- **Scotland's Kathryn Bryce and Mushfiqur Rahim of Bangladesh** have been named the International Cricket Council (ICC) Players of the Month for **May.**

- Formula One championship leader **Max Verstappen won the 2021 French Grand Prix.**

- **India's men's and women's hockey teams** will be **captained by Manpreet Singh and Indian forwardRani Rampal** respectively at next month's **Tokyo Olympics.**

- Sports Minister **KirenRijiju** launched **India's Official Olympic Theme Song 'LakshyaTeraSamneHai'** for the **Summer Games in July-August**.

- **Tokyo-bound shooter Saurabh Chaudhar**y won a **bronze medal** at the **10m air pistol event** at the**ISSF World Cup in Osijek**.

- **Australian Swimmer Kaylee Mc Keown broke** the **100-meter backstroke world record at the Australian Olympic trials.**

- Tokyo-bound javelin thrower from India, **Neeraj Chopra won the bronze medal at the Kuortane Games in Finland.**

- **Sajan Prakash** became the **first Indian swimmer to qualify for the upcoming Tokyo Olympics.**

- Indian Women Cricketer **Shafali Verma** Becomes the Youngest **Indian Cricketer in all formats**

- **Red Bull driver Max Verstappen** has **won the Styrian Grand Prix 2021 held at Spielberg, Austria.**

- **Indian shooter Rahi Sarnobat won** a **gold medal in the women's 25M pistol event at the 2021 ISSF World Cup being held in Osijek, Croatia.**

- **India's Deepika Kumari** completed a **hat-trick of gold medals at the Archery World Cup Stage 3 inParis.**

Summits and Conferences

- The **second United Nations (UN) Global Sustainable Transport Conference will take place from October 14 to 16 in Beijing, China.**

- The **Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi** has given its ex-post facto **approval for signing and ratification of an agreement on 'Cooperation in the field of Mass Media' between all the member states of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation.**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will participate in the outreach session of the **G7 Summit on 12th and13th June** in virtual format. **UK** currently holds the presidency of the G7 and has invited India along with **South Korea and South Africa as guest countries** for the G7 Summit.

- **External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar** has held a meeting with **India's envoys** to the **Gulf nations** namely **(**Saudi Arabia, UAE, Iran, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Bahrain**)** to discuss a host of issues, including encouraging **speedy resumption of flights to this region** and facilitating reuniting families separated by Covid disruption.

- **From June 08 to June 09, 2021, the first edition of the 2 day Arab-India Energy Forum** was held Virtually. It was under the **co-chairship of India and the Kingdom of Morocco.**

- The **International Energy Forum (IEF)** informed **India** that it has agreed to **host the 9th Asian Ministerial Energy Roundtable (AMER9) in 2022.**

- Under the **Ministry of Power, NTPC Limited,** organised a **two-day workshop on BRICS Green Hydrogen Summit.**

- **Andhra Pradesh Governor Biswa Bhusan Harichandan** inaugurated the **two-day International Education e-Conference.**

Ranks & Indices

- **NITI Aayog** launched the **third edition of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) India Index and Dashboard 2020-21.Kerala** retained the **top spot in 2021 SDG India Index**. In Union Territories **Chandigarh tops. Bihar and Jharkhand were the worst-performing states**

- **Cognizant** climbed to **No.185** on the **2021 Fortune 500 list** with a digital focus driving the advancement of the **annual ranking of America's largest companies**.

- The **US replaced Mauritius** as the **second largest source of foreign direct investment** into India during **2020-21** with inflows of USD 13.82 billion, according to government data. **Singapore** remained the **topsource**

- In 2021 **Performance Grading Index (PGI)**, Chandigarh, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Andaman and Nicobarand Kerala have obtained Grade 1++ (or Level II), which makes them the best performing states. **Ladakh** has obtained the **lowest grade, Grade VII.**

- **Top 100 list of Times Higher Education (THE) Asia University Rankings 2021 Released.** In that,**three Indian universities secured positions in the top 100 list. IISc Bangalore, IIT Ropar and IIT Indore** have secured ranks among the **top 100 universities in Asia.**

- **Ease of living index 2020**, **Bengaluru** ranks as most liveable city in India released by The Centre for Science and Environment (CSE)

- According to the **World Investment Report 2021 by the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), India** received **$64 billion in Foreign Direct Investment in 2020.**

- **Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)** Yearbook 2021 : US Tops, India Ranked 6th Position

- **Founder of the Tata Group, Jamsetji Nusserwanji Tata ($102.4 billion)** has **topped the Edel Give Hurun Philanthropists of the Century.**

- The Reuters Institute **Digital News Report, 2021**, India Ranks 31, Topped by **Finland**

- **DBS** has been named by **Forbes** in their **list** of **World's Best Banks 2021**. **DBS** was ranked #1 out of 30

domestic and international **bank** in **India** for the second consecutive year.

➢ Three Indian universities are ranked in the top-200 in QS World University Rankings 2022, with IIT-Bombay securing 177th position, IIT-Delhi at 185th, and IISc-Bengaluru placed on 186th position.

➢ The latest **International Hockey Federation world rankings 2021**, In Hockey, **Indian men's team** maintained their **fourth position while women's team held ninth position.**

➢ **Chhattisgarh** now ranks **second** in the whole country in terms of administering the **second dose of Covid vaccine** to health workers and frontline workers.

➢ In the **men's 67 kg category, India's teenage weightlifter Jeremy Lalrinnunga is ranked 12th.**

➢ **Bryce** secured the **women's prize** after becoming the **first Scottish player**, male or female, to make it into the **top 10 of the ICC rankings**.

➢ **NTPC** bags recognition of **India's best employers** among **Nation-Builders 2021**

Agreements and MoU

➢ **Professor Jayashankar Telangana State Agricultural University (PJTSAU)** has signed a memorandum of understanding with **Wadhwani Institute for Artificial Learning, Mumbai,** forproviding **AI-based interventions**.

➢ **Leading stock exchange BSE** stated it has **joined hands with Electronics and Computer Software Export Promotion Council (ESC)** to create awareness about the benefits of listing among small businesses and startups.

➢ **Boxop**, a Kerala-based **start-up** has **tied up with Mahindra Insurance** Brokers Ltd (MIBL) to provide low-cost **insurance** protection for the **Covid**-19 **treatment**.

➢ The **Union Cabinet** approved a **memorandum of cooperation** with **Japan** in the field of sustainable urban development which is expected to create employment opportunities.

➢ Cabinet approves MoU between India & Maldives in the field of **Sustainable Urban Development.**

➢ The **Kochi Metro Rail Ltd (KMRL)** and the **state government** signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for forming a special purpose vehicle (SPV) for the operation and maintenance of the **Rs 747-crore WaterMetro project**.

➢ **Add Engineering Gmbh**, signed an MoU with the **UAE-based defence sector EDGE Group PUSC** to share crucial technology to enhance production and improve efficiency of maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) in the defence aviation sector.

➢ On the Occasion of **World Environment Day** celebrated on June 5, **CII's Indian Green Building Council (IGBC)** and **Indian Institute of Architects (IIA)** signed a **MoU** to give a fillip to the Green

Building Movement and sustainable development in architectural design and planning.

➢ **New Zealand** announced it was the latest country to sign a **space agreement with NASA**, just as New Zealand's nascent space industry begins to take off.

➢ State run Indian Oil Corporation Ltd (IOC) **inked pacts with Gujarat government** for implementing projects totaling around **Rs. 24,000 crore** in the western state.

➢ The **National Medicinal Plant Board (NMPS)** and the **National Botanical Research Institute (CSIR-NBRI)** have signed an agreement to boost cultivation and production of medicinal plants and herbs in India.

➢ **BSE-led mutual funds distributor platform, BSE STAR MF**, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (**MoU**) with **Godavari Urban Multi State Credit Co-Op Society Ltd., Nanded (GUMCCSL)** to deepen its network of over 70,000 registered distributors.

➢ Merchant payment and lending service provider **BharatPe** mentioned it has entered into a **strategicpartnership with International Cricket Council (ICC).**

➢ CESL signed MOU with Ladakh and Meghalaya to generate around **65MW of decentralized solar**.

➢ In order to facilitate farmers by providing location specific **'Demand Based Tele Agriculture Advisories'**, the **Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) and Digital India Corporation (DIC)** has signed an initial pact to provide location specific farm tele-advisories.

➢ **Karnataka Industrial Area Development Board (KIADB)** has signed a Memorandum of Understanding **(MoU)** with **HDFC Bank** to provide a wide range of financial products and services toits customers.

➢ State-run hydro power giant **NHPC** signed pacts with **Convergence Energy Services Ltd (CESL)** to procure **25 electric vehicles** on lease and **three fast EV chargers**.

➢ **India and Kuwait** have signed a **MoU** that brings Indian domestic workers in the Gulf nation within the ambit of a legal framework that streamlines their recruitment and provides them with the protection of the law.

➢ A **MoU** for Bihar's **mega Dagmara hydroelectric project**, initiated with an **aim to** a new era of growth in the power sector, was **signed between** the **Bihar State Power Holding Corporation and the National Hydroelectric Power Corporation Limited (NHPC).**

➢ The **Emirates Group Security (EGS) and the GMR Aviation Academy (GMRAA)** signed a **MoU** to promote cooperation for development and exchange of **information, technical expertise, and experiences in aviation security.**

➢ An **MoU** has been signed **between** the **Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways and Ministry of**

Culture and Tourism for Cooperation in Development of National Maritime Heritage Complex at Lothal in Gujarat.

- State-owned SJVN Ltd has signed a pact with National Institute of Wind Energy (NIWE) to develop solar and wind energy projects.

- Union Bank of India has entered into an MOU with The National Small Industries Corporation Ltd (NSIC) under "NSIC Bank Credit Facilitation Scheme" to support MSMEs with credit requirements.

- India and Fiji signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for cooperation in the field of Agriculture and allied sectors in a virtual meeting.

- National Security Guard (NSG) and the Rashtriya Raksha University (RRU) signed (MoU) for cooperation and collaboration aimed at strengthening the core competencies of the NSG, which arecounter-terrorism, counter-IEDs, and anti-hijacking.

- IFFCO, INAES and Cooperar jointly signed MOU to setup Nano Urea Plant in Argentina

- Denmark signed Framework Agreement in ISA(International Solar Alliance) with India

- Maharashtra signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the British government under their 'ACT4Green' programme.

Science & Technology

- Artificial Synaptic Network that Mimics Human Brain Developed by Scientists in Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research, Bengaluru.

- The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) under the Ministry of Women and Child Development has devised an online tracking portal Bal Swaraj (COVID-Care link).

- Bharti group backed OneWeb, the Low Earth Orbit (LEO) satellite communications company, Co-owned by Bharati Global and the UK Government launched the next successful 36 satellites.

- China successfully launched an automated cargo resupply spacecraft named Tianzhou-2, or Heavenly Vessel.

- SpaceX launched thousands of tiny sea creatures to the International Space Station, along with a plaque-fighting toothpaste experiment and powerful solar panels.

- The Zoology Department of Panjab University, Chandigarh, in April 2021 by a team of zoologists headed by DrRanjanaJaiswara discovered a new species of Spider Cricket named Indimimusjayanti.

- A New Species Cyrtodactylusbengkhuaiai of Gecko Discovered from Meghalaya and Mizoram

- INS Sandhayak, the Indian Navy's oldest Hydrographic Survey Vessel was decommissioned at

Naval Dockyard in Visakhapatnam.

➢ National Institute of Immunology Receives Trademark for India's First Indigenous **Tumour AntigenSPAG9**

➢ **Income Tax Department** to launch new **e-filing portal**, The portal can be accessed through the address **www.incometax.gov.in.**

➢ To Treat **Post Covid - Fungal Infections** Researchers From **IIT Hyderabad** develops **Oral Amphotericin.**

➢ **The country''s first CAR-T cell therapy** was done at the **Bone Marrow Transplant unit at ACTREC, Tata Memorial Centre in Mumbai.** This trial is the joint effort of the IIT bombay and Tata MemorialCentre.

➢ A New Species of **Coffee Plant Argostemma quarantena Discovered in Wagamon hills, Kerala.** The New Species **belongs to the family Rubiaceae.**

➢ The **Indian Space Research Organisation has developed three types of ventilators,** and has come forward to transfer the technology to industry for **clinical usage as the country battles the second wave of COVID-19 pandemic.** It is a **low-cost and portable critical care ventilator, 'PRANA' ("Programmable Respiratory Assistance for the Needy Aid')** is based on the automated compression of an AMBU (Artificial Manual Breathing unit) bag.

➢ **Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Ropar** has developed a device called **'Jivan Vayu.** It can be usedas a **substitute for a CPAP machine.**

➢ **To Study Venus the European Space Agency (ESA)** has announced the **launching of its probe EnVision.** It will probably be **launched to the planet in early 2030.**

➢ The **Indian Coast Guard** inducted the **first three of 16 Advanced Light Helicopters (ALH) Mk-III designed and manufactured by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL).**

➢ A new **15-meter-tall tree Pyrostria laljii,** that belongs to the **genus of the coffee family** has recently been discovered. It was discovered from the Andaman Islands by a team of researchers from Indiaand the Philippines.

➢ The **European Space Agency (ESA)** has planned to **launch the world's first wooden satellite, WISA Woodsat, on Earth's orbit by the end of 2021.**

➢ **The Shenzhou 12 mission** launched from **Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in northwest China.** China successfully launched the **first three men crew to its new space station in its first crewed mission in five years.**

- Researchers at the **Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur and Yantai Institute of Coastal Zone Research in China** have developed a technique that can **detect the formation of cyclones in the North Indian Ocean region.**

- The **Indian Institute of Technology Madras, has launched a 'Centre for Research on Start-Ups andRisk Financing' (CREST).**

- **China** planned to **send its first crewed mission to Mars in 2033.**

- **DRDO** successfully test fires enhanced indigenously developed **Pinaka Rocket in Odisha**

- **LIC** Launches new **web portal - e- PGS**

Books & Authors

Name of the Book	Author
'Stargazing: The Players in My Life'	Ravi Shastri
Languages of Truth: Essays 2003-2020	Salman Rushdie
Skill it , kill it	Ronnie Screwvala
The Nutmeg's Curse'	Amitav Ghosh
It's a Wonderful Life	Ruskin Bond
Tiananmen square the making of protest	Former Indian foreign secretary Vijay Gokhale
Home in the World	Nobel laureate Amartya Sen
The startup wife	Tahmima Anam
Anomalies in Law and Justice	R V Raveendran
KaushikBasu	Policymaker's Journal: From New Delhi to Washington D.C

Appointments

Name of the Person	Appointed as
Adar Poonawalla	Chairman of Magma Fincorp
Dr Harsh Kumar Bhanwala	Senior Advisor of Omnivore
J.B. Mohapatra	Interim Chairman of CBDT

S K Majumdar	Chief Financial Officer (CFO) of Canara Bank
Alapan Bandyopadhyay	Chief advisor to the Bengal CM
Rear Admiral IB Uthaiah, VSM	Admiral Superintendent, Naval Dockyard, Visakhapatnam
Nagraj Adiga	Asia-Oceania Representative
Vice Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi	Chief of Personnel in Navy
T V Narendran, CEO and MD, Tata Steel	CII president
Shabnam Syed	Executive vice president of post-paid marketing in VIL
Arun Kumar Mishra's	Chairperson of NHRC
Justice (Retd.) Vikramjit Sen	Chairman of IBF
A K Vinod	Chief compliance officer of Union Bank
Dr Patrick Amoth of Kenya	Chair of WHO Executive Board
Dr Vinay K Nandicoori	Director of Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB), Hyderabad.
Paresh B Lal	Whatsapp Grievance officer for India
Simone Inzaghi	Coach of Inter Milan FC
V Bhoopal Reddy, MLC	Pro-tem Chairman for the State Legislative Council (Telangana)
Ranjitsinh Disale	World Bank Education Advisor
R S Sodhi	Board of International Dairy Federation
Lieutenant General Pradeep Chandran Nair, AVSM	21st Director General of the Assam Rifles
B Sankar	Chief GM of SBI Chennai Circle
Ramprasad Sridharan	CEO and MD of Benetton India

Ms Richa Arora	ECube Investment Advisors
M R Kumar	Chairman of Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC).
Antonio Guterres (Former Prime Minister of Portugal)	Chief of United Nation
Anup Purohit	Chief information officer (CIO) in Wipro
Anand Mohan Bajaj	Member of the Board of Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)
Dr Mukesh Sharma (IIT Kanpur professor)	Honorary member of WHO's Global Air Pollution and Health Technical Advisory Group (GAPH-TAG)
Rebecca Grynspan (Costa Rican economist)	1st Woman Secretary General of UNCTAD (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development)
Akshay Kumar (Bollywood superstar)	Ambassador of My lab Discovery Solutions
Nagraj Adiga	International Association of Ultrarunners Council
SM Shafiuddin Ahmed	Chief of Army Staff of Bangladesh Army.
Anand Prakash Badola	Charge of the Coast Guard region EAST at Chennai .
Benedetto Vigna	New CEO of Ferrari
Debbie Hewitt	New chairperson of The Football Association (FA)
Kedar Lele	executive director, customer development of Hindustan Unilever Limited
Pratap Bose	Executive Vice President and Chief Design Officer of Mahindra Group

K Nagaraj Naidu	Chef de Cabinet to Maldivian Foreign Minister Abdulla Shahid
Arjan Kumar Sikri- Supreme Court Justice (Retd.)	Chairman of the Grievance Redressal Board (GRB)
Amit Jain	Global CEO of Sterling and Wilson Solar
Ajai Puri (Chief Operating Officer of Bharti Airtel)	COAI chairman (Cellular Operators' Association of India)
Rebeca Grynspan	UNCTAD's 1st Women Secretary General
Ajay Simha	Marketing director of Nivea
Sreedhar Reddy Komalla	Head, Telugu content, digital business in Streaming platform SonyLIV
Raghu Narula	Head of wealth and retail banking in HSBC
SatyaNadella	Chairman of MICROSOFT
Esther Duflo, Raghuram Rajan, Arvind Subramanian, Prof Jean Dreze S Narayan.	Economic Advisory Council to the Tamil Nadu Chief minister M K Stalin
Rupesh Patel	Senior Fund Manager in Nippon India Mutual Funds
Hideaki Masago	Deputy Chief Risk Officer in Nippon India Mutual Funds
Ananta Barua	Whole-time Member (WTM) of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)
Santosh Kumar Mohanty	SEBI Whole-time Member
Upasana Kamineni (Director, Apollo Hospital)	Ambassador of Forest Frontline Heroes in WWF (World Wide Fund for Nature) India

Tadang Minu	Member of the Coaches Committee of the (AIBA) International Boxing Association
Amit Kumar	Executive Director (ED) and Group CEO of Symphony Limited
Amrita Padda	Chief People Officer in Bharati Airtel
GuenterButschek	Stepped Down as CEO & MD of TATA Motors
Karnam Malleswari (Olympic medalist weightlifter)	1st Vice Chancellor of Delhi Sports University
Darren Sammy (former West Indies captain)	Independent non-member director of the CWI (Cricket West Indies) board.
Nikhil Sahni	New Division President, South Asia and Country Corporate Officer, Mastercard India.
Mawya Sudan	1st woman fighter pilot in the Indian Air Force (IAF) from Rajouri district, Jammu & Kashmir
Suresh N Patel	central vigilance commissioner (CVC)
Manesh Mahatme	Head of Whatsapp Payments Business
Aditya Nath Das	Andhra Pradesh Chief Secretary gets 3-Month Extension
Praveen Sinha	Special Director of CBI
Jeremy Kessel	Grievance redressal officer for Twitter India
Dr C Sylendra Babu	Tamil Nadu's new Director General of Police and head of police force
Shambhu Nath Srivastava	chairman of IFUNA

Ricky Kapur	Head of Asia-Pacific business of Zoom Video Communications
Chandan Sinha, Manjeev Singh Puri	Board of directors of RBL Bank

Awards & Honours

Name of the Person	Award/ Honour
Valeria Luiselli	2021 DUBLIN Literary Award sponsored by Dublin City Council, for her novel Lost Children Archive
Sanjay Dutt	UAE's Golden Visa
Nitin Rakesh and Jerry	International Business Book of the Year Award for 2021 for Transformation in Times of Crisis, published by Notion Press.
Union health minister Harsh Vardhan	Special award for control tobacco consumption in India on World No Tobacco Day.
Abinaya Dinesh	Won Tech Giant Apple WWDC21 Swift Student Challenge for created an app called Gastro at Home
Hyderabad International Airport	Gold Recognition by the Airports Council International (ACI) Asia-Pacific Green Airports Recognition 2021
David Diop (French Author)	International Booker Prize 2021 for At Night All Blood Is Black.
QX Global Group (Business process management servicesprovider)	Outsourcing Service Provider of the Year Award a the 19th Edition of the Asian Leadership Awards.
R S Sodhi, MD of Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation (GCMMF)	Asia Pacific Productivity Champion from Asian Productivity Organization (APO), Tokyo, Japan.
Tsitsi Dangarembga (Zimbabwean writer)	PEN Pinter Prize in 2021
M R Jayadevan Nair (Malayali violinist)	Best original score at the Hollywood North Film Awards, a Canada-based non-profit academy.

DBS (Development Bank of Singapore)	Forbes World's Best Banks 2021 List in India
Erica Fernandes	Times Most Desirable Women on TV 2020
K.K. Shailaja (former Kerala State Health Minister)	2021 Central European University (CEU) Open Society Prize.
RK Sabharwal	Mongolia's 'The Order of Polar Star'
Ishan Kapur	Diana Award for helping marginalised girls
Delhi Metro	'Japan Society of Civil Engineers' award
Palagummi Sainath- Jounalist	Fukuoka Grand Prize for 2021

Important Days & Themes

Date	Observed as	Aim/Theme
June 1	World Milk Day	Theme : Sustainability in the dairy sector
June 1	Global Parents Day	Theme : Appreciate all parents throughout the world
June 2	Telangana Formation Day	
June 2	International Sex Workers Day	Theme : Access to justice
June 3	World Bicycle Day	Aim : To promote Bicycle among all members of society and also promoting equality and good health
June 4	International Day of Innocent Children Victims of Aggression	
June 5	World Environment Day	Reimgine. Recreate. Restore
June 5	World Day against Speciesism	Aim : To stop discrimination based on species membership.
June 6	World Pest Day	Aim : To create awareness of how pest management helps preserve the quality of life for people.
June 6	UN Russian Language Day	
June 7	World Food Safety Day	Theme : 'Safe food today for a healthy

		tomorrow
June 8	World Oceans Day	Theme : 'The Ocean: Life and Livelihoods'
June 8	World Brain Tumor Day	
June 9	World Accreditation Day (WAD)	Theme : Accreditation: Supporting the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
June 12	World day against child labour	Theme : Act now: end child labour
June 13	International Albinism Awareness Day	Theme : Strength Beyond all Odds
June 14	World blood donar day	Theme : Give blood and keep the world-beating
June 15	Global Wind Day	
June 15	World Elder Abuse Awareness Day	Aim : To create awareness against abuse of elder peoples in our society
June 17	World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought(International)	Theme : "Restoration, land and recovery. We build back better with healthy land"
June 18	Autistic pride Day	
June 19	World Sickle Cell Awareness Day	
June 20	World Refugee Day	Theme : Together we heal, learn and shine
June 21	World Music Day	
June 21	World Yoga Day	Theme : Yoga for Wellness
June 23	International Widows Day	
June 23	International Olympic Day	Theme : Stay healthy, stay strong, stay active
June 25	International Seafarer Day	Theme : Seafarers : at the core of shipping's future
June 26	International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illiicit Trafficking	Theme : Share Facts on Drugs, Save Lives
June 26	United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture	
June 27	International MSME Day	Theme : Key to an Inclusive and Sustainable Recovery
June 28	National Insurance Awareness Day	
June 29	International Day of the Tropics	Theme: 'Digital Divide in the Tropics'
June 29	World Statistics Day	Theme: Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) -2 (End Hunger, Achieve Food Security and Improved Nutrition and Promote Sustainable Agriculture).
June 30	World Asteroid Day	

Obituaries

Name of the person	Field	Place
Lee Evans	Record-setting sprinter & Olympic activist	
Sir Anerood Jugnauth	Former President of Mauritius	Floreal
Narinder bragta	Himachal Pradesh BJP leader	Chandigarh
Indira Hridayesh	Congress Leader	Delhi
Ashok Panagariya	Indian Neurologist	Jaipur, Rajasthan
Buddhadeb Dasgupta	Bengali filmmaker	Kolkatta, West Bengal
N. Dingko Singh	Former Asian Games gold medallist, Boxer	Manipur
Radhamohan	Noted social worker and retired professor in Economics	Nayagarh district, odisha
Sanchari Vijay	Kannada Actor	Karnataka
Nirmal Kaur	Former Indian Volleyball Captain	Chandigarh
Surat Singh Mathur	1st Olympian from independent india	Delhi
Raghubir Singh Rajawat	Brigadier & Mhavir Chakra Recipient	Jaipur, Rajasthan
Kenneth Kaunda	Zambia's 1st President	
Milkha Singh (Flying Sikh)	Indian Athlete	Mohali, Punjab
Guruprasad Mohapatra	DPIIT Secretary	New Delhi
John McAfee	American Antivirus Software Pioneer	United States
Benigno Aquino	Former Philippine President	Manila
Sivan	Filmmaker & Cinematographer	Kerala

Nation and States Miscellaneous:

National

- Union Minister **Narendra Singh Tomar** introduces Horticulture Cluster Development Programme. Ina **pilot phase**, the programme will be implemented in **12 horticulture clusters** out of the **total 53 clusters** selected for the programme.

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

- In view of the growing problem related to children affected by COVID-19, The Union Ministry of Women and Child Development stated the **National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR)** has devised an online tracking portal **"Bal Swaraj (COVID-Care link)"** for children in need of care and protection.

- **Aimed at empowering small and marginal farmers**, who constitute 86 per cent of India's farming community, the **Common Services Centres (CSC)** has unveiled a unique **Agri Services Portal** that will act as a one-stop destination and marketplace for them.

- **Union Minister of State (I/C) for Ports, Shipping & Waterways Shri Mansukh Mandaviya** in the presence of **Chief Minister of Goa Shri PramodSawant** inaugurated the second floating jetty at OldGoa virtually on the occasion of Goa statehood day.

- The **Health Minister** has launched the revamped **Central Government Health Scheme**, **CGHS and the Umbrella schemes** of Rashtriya ArogyaNidhi, RAN and Health Minister's Discretionary Grant, HMDG on NHA's platform, making them cashless, paperless and the citizen centric.

- GST Council forms 8 member panel under to examine **GST exemption** on **Covid material**

- WHO labelled Two Covid-19 Variants in India as **'Kappa' and 'Delta'**

- The **Union Cabinet** has approved the draft of **Model Tenancy Act (MTA)** for adoption and enactment by **States and Union Territories** to promote rental housing in the country.

- **Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar** launched **Seed MinikitProgramme** by distributing Seed Minikits, higher yielding varieties of seeds to farmers.

- **The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment** will launch **Senior care Ageing Growth Engine (SAGE)** project to select, support and create **a "one-stop access"** of elderly care products and services by credible start-ups.

- **India's government** will bring **forward to 2023 from 2025** the possibility of fuel companies selling gasoline containing up to **20% of ethanol (E20),** according to brokers and a publication in the country's official gazette.

- '**National AI Portal'** celebrated its first anniversary on **May 28, 2021.**

- **Union Minister for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying** announced integration of **eGopala App**with **UMANG platform** so that 3.1 Crore users of Umang platform will get access to App.

- **Union Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas & Steel Shri Dharmendra Pradhan** presided over a virtual ceremony in which a number of initiatives were launched to provide major fillip to the **SATAT(Sustainable Alternative Towards Affordable Transportation) initiative**, and **help India leap ahead towards a greener**.

- The **Union Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank'** announced that the government has decided to extend the validity period of the **Teachers Eligibility Test (TET)** qualifying certificate from**7 years to lifetime with retrospective effect from 2011.**

- **Union Minister of State for Finance and Corporate Affairs Shri Anurag Singh Thakur** launched the **six modules of short films** of Investor Education & Protection Fund Authority (**IEPFA**) titled **"HisaabKi Kitaab"**

- The **IncomeTax** Department **launched** its **new** e-filing **portal** www.**incometax**.gov.in.

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** announced the extension of the **Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY)** till Diwali this year to ensure free ration is provided to those in need.

- Central government has raised **upper ceiling for family pension** from **Rs 45,000 to Rs 1, 25,000 per month** to provide **'ease of living'** for the family members of the deceased employees and would provide adequate financial security to them.

- **Gujarat Maritime Board (GMB)** will set-up the **country's first international maritime services** cluster at GIFT City.

- **Environment, Forest and Climate Change Minister Prakash Javadekar** launched an awareness campaign on **single use plastic 2021** on the occasion of **World Ocean Day**.

- The government has allotted over **Rs 40,700 crore for solid and liquid waste management (SLWM)**in more than two lakh villagesin the financial year 2021-22 under the **Swacch Bharat Mission Grameen (SBMG)**

- The Central Government, approved the construction of 3.61 lakh new houses under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana - Urban (PMAY-U).

- Defence Minister noted that, motto of Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan is to Make in India and Makefor World.

- The **Central government** increased the **Minimum Support Price (MSP) of kharif crops** for the 2021-21 crop season (July-June) by an **average 3.7 per cent** as compared to the previous year with the maximum hike reserved for **pulses and oilseeds** to encourage farmers to shift from paddy.

- The **Ministry of Labour and Employment** announced that the **Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC)** would extend benefits of its **health insurance cover** to all casual and contractual workers at **municipal bodies**.

- Union Health Ministry's National Telemedicine Service – **eSanjeevani** has crossed another milestone by completing **6 million (60 lakh)** consultations through more than 375 online OPDs. Currently, the National Telemedicine Service is operational in **31 States/Union Territories.**

- **Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay** has **launched** its **new Centre for Digital Heath** – the first-of- its-kind in India. The **'Koita Centre for Digital Health' (KCDH)** was **launched** with a generous contribution received from its alumni Rekha and Rizwan Koita, under the aegis of the Koita Foundation.

- Foreign secretary **Harsh Vardhan Shringla** released stamp to mark 70th Anniversary if **India-Germany Ties**

Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare inaugurated the newly revamped **Hardayal Municipal Heritage Public Library** in **Chandni Chowk, Delhi.** He dedicated the library that houses an enormous collection of rare books to the entire nation.

'Namaste Yoga' a mobile application was launched on 11th June in the curtain raiser event for the **7th International Day of Yoga**. The event was organised by the **Ministry of Ayush** in association with the Morarji Desai National Institute of Yoga.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurated **two centers** of excellence established by the **Border Roads Organization (BRO) at Seema Sadak Bhawan in New Delhi**. Mr. Singh also flagged off the **first-ever solo women motor cycle expedition** by Kanchan Ugursandi to Umling La Pass, Ladakh and back.

Centre has launched **'Project O2 for India'** to step up production of medical oxygen to meet the potential increase in demand due to further waves of the pandemic.

Indian Railways has envisaged investment of nearly **55,000 Crore rupees for Modernization of Signalling, Telecommunication and other infrastructure development.** Railways have also started **Electronic Interlocking (EI)** at 2221 Railway Stations so far.

PM NarendraModi invited the **world to invest in India** while addressing the **5th edition of global tech event Viva Tech via video conferencing. Viva Tech** is one of the **largest digital and start-up** events inEurope.

Mega-launch event **'Sankalp Se Siddhi' – Mission Van Dhan**, was launched by Shri Arjun Munda, Minister for Tribal Affairs at the new premises of TRIFED Head Office in New Delhi.

Minister of State for Education Shri Sanjay Dhotre launched **NIOS Diploma course in Yogic Science** on the occasion of International Day of Yoga.

The Minority Affairs Minister Shri **Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi** launched a nationwide **"JaanHaiToJahaanHai"** awareness campaign **to create awareness on Corona vaccination** in rural and remote areas of the country and also to **"Crush and Curb"** the rumours and apprehensions, being spread by some vested interests regarding the on-going vaccination drive.

The **union government** is working on a **'green tariff' policy** that will help electricity distribution companies (discoms) supply electricity generated from **clean energy projects** at a cheaper rate as compared to power from conventional fuel sources such as coal.

Union Cabinet approved merger of Central Rail side Warehouse Company Ltd with Central Warehousing Corporation

The Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MoTA) and the **National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT)**, recently collaborated on a joint mission for the **NISHTHA** capacity-building programme for Eklavya school teachers and principals.

- ➢ Shri **Ravi Shankar Prasad**, **Union Minister for Law & Justice, Communications and Electronics & IT,** formally launched the **e-filing portal** of Income Tax Appellate Tribunal (ITAT), '**itat e-dwar'**.

- ➢ **Prime Minister NarendraModi** will interact with participants of **Toycathon 2021** via video conference. Around **1.2 lakh participants** from **across India** registered and submitted more than 17,000 ideas.

- ➢ Union Minister **PrakashJavadekar** launches **Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) of LiDAR** Survey of Forest Areas for 10 States.

- ➢ Union Government announced the Scheme **FAME II(Faster Adoption and Manufacture of Hybrid and Electric Vehicles) extended till 2024**

- ➢ Rajnath Singh inaugurates **63 bridges** built by **BRO** in 8 states

- ➢ **All websites of the high courts** now have captchas that are **accessible to people with disabilities**, the law ministry.

- ➢ **IFSCA** constituted Panel to Examine Best Practices in **Ship Financing**, Leasing Chaired by **Vandana Aggarwal**

- ➢ The government extended the **Atmanirbhar Bharat RozgarYojana**, which was launched in October

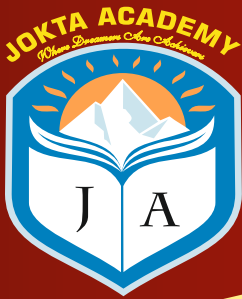last year to encourage employment generation, **by nine months till March 31, 2022**.

States:

- **Punjab Social Security Minister Aruna Chaudhary** launched the women-empowerment oriented **'Udaan Scheme'** on the occasion of **International Menstrual Hygiene Day**, under which sanitary pads of **Rs 40.55 crore** would be distributed **free of cost annually to needy women and girls.**

- In Karnataka, the **Health Department** has launched **Doctors ride towards village side programme.**

- **Union Minister for Food Processing Industries Narendra Singh Tomar**, virtually inaugurated the **Indus Best Mega Food Park**, along with **BhupeshBaghel, Chief Minister, Chhattisgarh**, and in presence of RameswarTeli, Union Minister of State for Food Processing Industries.

- **Governor of Haryana, S N Arya,** approved the **Haryana Recovery of Damages to Property Bill**.

- **Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh RK Mathur** launched the **YounTab scheme** for students and distributed **12,300 tablets** among them virtually in Leh.

- **Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar** took a major decision with the announcement of a **33%reservation** for **girls in engineering and medical colleges of the state**.

- **Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao** ordered a digital survey of agriculture lands in **27 select villages** across the state on a pilot basis **from June 11.**

- The **Punjab cabinet** gave its **nod** for the creation of a **special purpose vehicle (SPV)** for operations and maintenance of large multi-village surface water supply schemes across the state.

- The **Odisha Government** has launched a **doorstep delivery service for oxygen concentrators**.

- **Goa Chief Minister** Pramod Sawant **launched solar-based electrification programme for rural households** in the state

- The **Maharashtra government** has decided to implement the **Maharashtra Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme** (MAPS) with the objective of providing employment and training to the youth of the state.

- **Raimona in Assam's Kokraj hardistrict** was declared as the **state's sixth national park** of the state.

- The **State government** has launched the **Knowledge Economy Mission** to bring the ongoing efforts to provide employment to the educated and support **'knowledge workers'** under a single programme.

- "**Weyan, a village in district Bandipora (J&K)** has become the first village in the country, where the entire population above 18 years has been vaccinated".

- **Punjab chief minister Capt Amarinder Singh** virtually inaugurated **Malerkotla** as the **23rd district of the state** and laid the foundation stone of **development projects worth Rs 548 crore** in Malerkotla city.

- **Haryana Pran Vayu Devta Pension Scheme (PVDPS)** 2021 &**Oxy Van (Oxygen Forest)** launched Rs. **2500 per year** in Prana Vayu Devta Pension Yojana for **maintenance of trees older than 75 years**.

- Jammu & Kashmir, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha flagged off the first consignment of **IFFCO's Nano Urea (Liquid) from Kalol area of Gujarat,** through virtual mode.

- **'Project Mumbai'** delivers free food to more than 55 lakh people in last 6 months under **'KhanaChahiye'** programme in Maharastra

- **The Gujarat government** announced a complete waiver of **property tax for cinema houses, multiplexes and gyms from April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2022** in view of the pandemic.

- **Rajasthan has launched Chief Minister Anuprati Coaching Scheme** to **help under privileged students** prepare for entrance examinations to civil services and professional courses, with an aim to give them equal opportunity.

- **Punjab Government** has also **initiated** the usage of **Electronic Identity Cards (eIDs)** equipped with **Near Field Communication (NFC)** technology for their officers/employees through one of its prominent entities viz. Punjab Mandi Board.

- Karnataka Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa launched a **DBT mobile application** that will help transfer funds directly to beneficiaries of various government welfare schemes.

- **Assam** govt announced its seventh national park with **Dehing Patkai**. "Raimona and Dihing Patkai National Parks have been formally notified, adding to **Assam's total tally of National Park (NP) to 7**.

- **Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy** will be launching **Jagananna Thodu scheme**, which **aims** at **providing a helping hand to small and petty vendors** across the State. Under the scheme, an **interest-free loan of Rs 10,000** will be provided to 3.7 lakh small and petty vendors at an expenditure of Rs 370 crore.

- Ladakh's Lieutenant Governor **R K Mathur** decided All jobs in Ladakh reserved for Residents

- With the aim to vaccinate all people above 45 years against COVID-19 in Delhi within the next four weeks, Delhi **Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal** launched **'Jahan Vote, Wahan Vaccination' campaign**.

- **Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma** announced the **Mukhyamantri Sishu Sewa Achoni scheme** which will **provide relief to children who have lost their parents due to Covid-19.** Their extended family members will be entitled to **Rs 3,500 financial aid per month**.

- The **Tamil Nadu Government** has extended the investment period for establishing **liquid medical oxygen plants** in the State upto **31st of December 2022**.

- In Madhya Pradesh, **'Yuva Shakti Corona Mukti Abhiyan'** means free from corona with the help of a youth power campaign will be launched to make people aware about the COVID pandemic.

- **Telangana government** had launched the **Telangana AI Mission (T-AIM)powered by NASSCOM** and as part of the T-AIM an **accelerator programme** called **Revv Up** has been launched to enable and empower AI startups.

- **Raja Parba, a 3-day festival** celebrating **womanhood** is being celebrated across **Odisha**.

- **Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M. K. Stalin** inaugurated a new scheme for children who have lost their parents due to COVID. The scheme assures **five lakh rupees** deposit and takes care of their education until they attain **18 years of age**.

- **Renganar** becomes first village in **Chattisgarh** where every eligible person gets vaccinated against COVID-19. **Chhattisgarh** now ranks **second** in the whole country in terms of administering the **second dose of Covid vaccine** to health workers and frontline workers.

- The **Rajasthan government** will soon set up a **Vedic Education and Sanskar Board** to revive the knowledge of Sanskrit scriptures and Vedas. The board is likely to be formed in the next **four to fivemonths**.

- The Union Minister **NitinGadkari** dedicated Newly constructed flyover at **Butibori in Nagpur** (Nagpur–Hyderabad) to the nation.

- **Odisha CM** inaugurated scheme for COVID-19 **Orphan Children – 'Ashirbad'**

- **Nagaland Government** has announced the **approval for transfer of 2,000 rupees each** to the bank accounts of **all the Building and Other Construction Workers**.

- Software Technology Parks of India (STPI) stated that, Under this **IBPS Scheme, Andhra Pradesh**is the **highest in employment generation** by creating 12,234 new jobs followed by Tamil Nadu at 9,401 while remaining was spread across Punjab, Odisha, Maharashtra, Jharkhand and Bihar.

- **Gujarat Chief Minister Mr. Vijay Rupani** e-launched the **Agricultural Diversification Scheme-2021** for benefitting vanbandhu-farmers in the tribal areas of the state.

- **Andhra Pradesh Governor BiswaBhusanHarichandan** has released a **Special Postal Cover** brought out by **India Post** on the occasion of International Yoga Day at a programme held in Raj Bhavan.

- World's First GM Rupper Developed at the **Kerala-based Rubber Research Institute of India (RRII),** the sapling was planted by **Rubber Board chairman and executive director KN Raghavan** at the board's farm in Sarutari near **Guwahati,Assam.**

- An **amendment to the Maharashtra (Urban Areas) Protection and Preservation of Trees Act, 1975** to bring in the concept of **"heritage trees"** was approved in a meeting of the Maharashtra Cabinet.
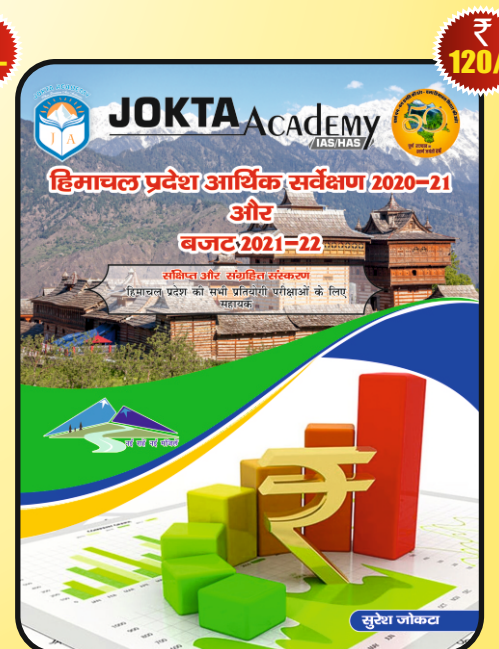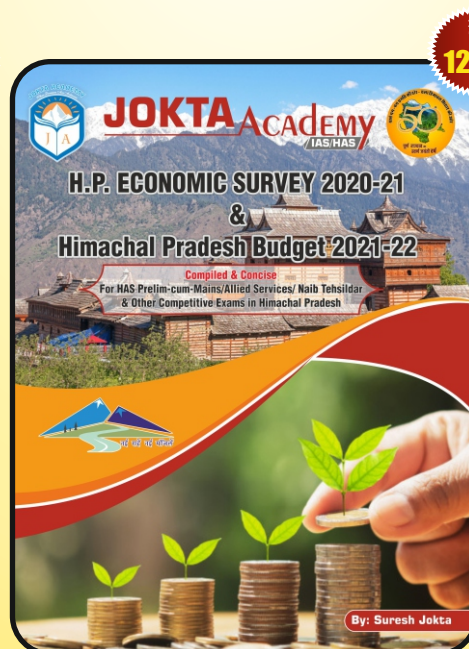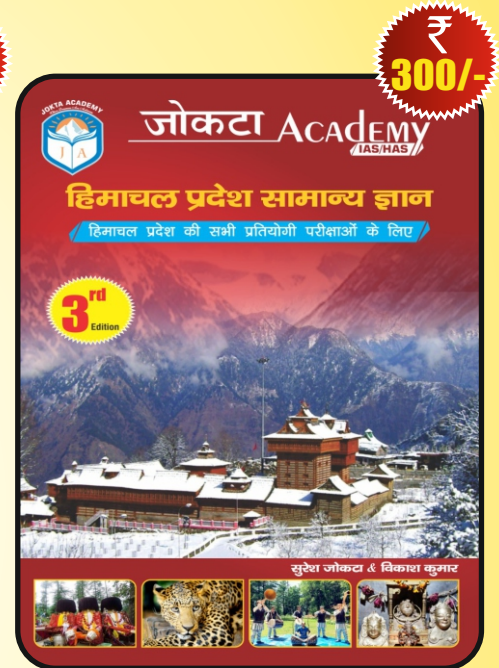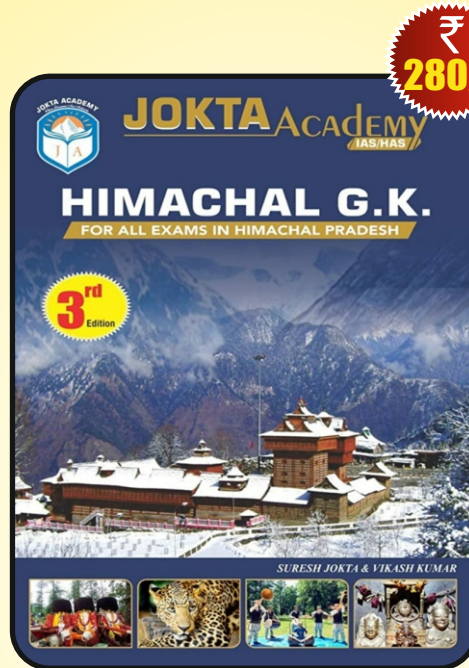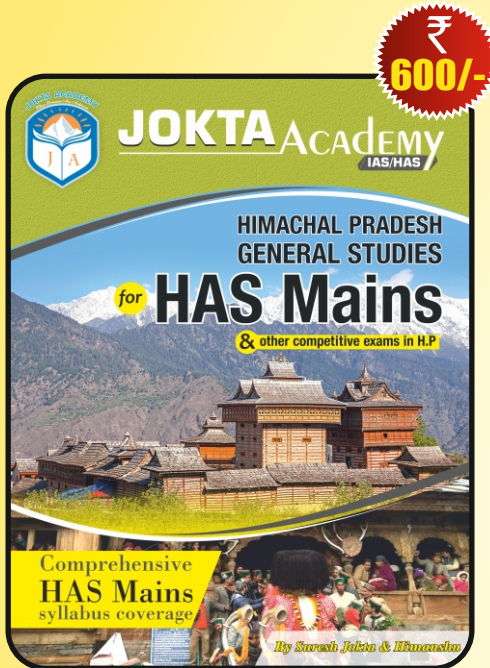
- **Union minister NitinGadkari** inaugurated and **laid foundation stones** of **road projects worth Rs 6,155 crore** in Himachal Pradesh through video conferencing from **Manali in Kullu district**.

- Karnataka CM announced that **Prime Minister NarendraModi** would lay the **foundation stone** for the **Bengaluru Suburban Rail project within the next three months.**

- The Gujarat government announced **'Gujarat Electric Vehicle Policy 2021'** to promote use of electric vehicles in the state.

- The **Delhi government** has **developed a portal** through which **families of COVID19 victims** will apply for Mukhyamantri COVID19 **PariwarAarthikSahayataYojana** to avail financial assistance.

- **Odisha Govt** make Partnership with **UNWFP(United Nations World Food Programme)** to Empower Women **SHGs**

- **Ladakh** Celebrates Two days **Hemis Festival (birth of Guru Padmasambhava)**

- **Goa** becomes **First Rabies-Free state in India,Goa Chief Minister PramodSawant** announced that the **state has not had a single case of rabies** in Goa **in the past three years**

- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** will inaugurate a **Zen garden** and **Kaizen Academy** in Gujarat's **Ahmedabad.**

- **Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani** virtually inaugurated the **country's first Fenton Catalytic Reactor**,an advanced industrial wastewater treatment plant, at Vatva industrial area of the city.

- **Andhra Pradesh** has started a **Supporting Andhra's Learning Transformation (SALT)** programme to transform **foundational learning in government schools** for which the **World Bank** has approved a **loan of 250 million dollars.**

- **Telangana** CM Announced **Rs 10 lakh** financial assistance to **Dalit families**

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I must honestly state that Jokta 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 SHARMA
Rank-2 HAS-2019

Vipan Kumar
District Manager

I admit with utmost honesty that Jokta 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 Jokta sir benefited me Immensly to clear this exam.

VIPAN KUMAR
District Manager
(2021)

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