

EVERY INFORMATION YOU NEED RELATED TO YOUR EXAMS

# CURRENT AFFAIRS

100 PRACTICE QUESTIONS INCLUDED

*I am a man  
and all that  
affects mankind  
concerns me.*  
*Mahatma*



**MARCH 2021**

**PRABHA IAS IPS  
COACHING ACADEMY**

# PREFACE

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

*The Magazine is divided into three sections:*

***Section 1: Topic Wise Current Affairs in Short .....Page 04 to Page 122***

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

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

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# SECTION 1

## Topic Wise Current Affairs in short

## Topic 1 - Important Days

### Zero Discrimination Day: 01 March



- The United Nations and other international organisations observe Zero Discrimination Day on March 1 each year. Zero Discrimination Day is observed to encourage and celebrate the rights of all people, regardless of their age, gender, sexuality, nationality, race, skin colour, or other factors.
- The aim of Zero Discrimination Day is to raise consciousness about the right to live a dignified life, regardless of one's choices, values, occupation, education, disability, or illness.
- “End Inequalities” is the slogan of Zero Discrimination Day 2021.

### Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) Headquarters: Geneva, Switzerland.
- UNAIDS Executive Director: Winnie Byanyima.
- UNAIDS Founded: 26 July 1994.

### 45th Civil Accounts Day celebrated on 01 March 2021



- The **Indian Civil Accounts Service (ICAS)** observes the “**Civil Accounts Day**” every year on **March 01, 2021**, since its inception in **1976**.
- The year 2021 marks the **45th** Civil Accounts Day celebrations. ICAS is one of the Civil Services of India, under the Department of Expenditure, Union Ministry of Finance.
- Initially, the ICAS was carved out from the Indian Audit & Accounts Service (IA & AS), through the promulgation of an Ordinance amending the **C & AG’s (Duties, Powers and Conditions of Service) Amendment Act, 1976**.

### World Wildlife Day observed globally on 3rd March



- Every year on March 3rd, the world commemorates World Wildlife Day to remember the unique and beautiful species of wild fauna and flora that exist on the globe. World Wildlife Day also raises awareness of the benefits that wild fauna and flora protection

bring to people living on the planet.

- The day also serves as a reminder of the importance of combating wildlife crime and human-caused extinctions, which have a wide range of economic, environmental, and social consequences. World Wildlife Day will be celebrated in 2021 under the theme “**Forests and Livelihoods: Sustaining People and Planet**”, as a way to highlight the central role of forests, forest species and ecosystems services in sustaining the livelihoods of hundreds of millions of people globally, and particularly of Indigenous and local communities with historic ties to forested and forest-adjacent areas.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- World Wildlife Fund Headquarters: Gland, Switzerland.
- World Wildlife Fund Founded: 29 April 1961, Morges, Switzerland.
- President and CEO of World Wildlife Fund: Carter Roberts.

**World Hearing Day: 3 March**



- **World Hearing Day** is held on **3 March** each year by the **World Health Organisation (WHO)** to raise awareness on how to prevent deafness and hearing loss and promote ear and hearing care across the world.
- The theme of World Hearing Day 2021 is **Hearing care for ALL!: Screen, Rehabilitate, Communicate**. World Hearing Day 2021 will mark the launch of the first-ever **World Report**

**on Hearing.**

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

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

**National Safety Day: 04 March**



- The National Safety Council (NSC) of India commemorates National Safety Day (NSD) every year on March 4th. The 50th National Safety Day will be observed in 2021.
- The goal of the day is to increase people's safety awareness by providing them with safety, health, and environmental support services.
- “Sadak Suraksha (Road Safety)” is the theme for National Safety Day 2021.
- The National Safety Council, which was formed on March 4, 1966 by the Ministry of Labour, Government of India, is also commemorated on this day. In 1972, the first National Safety Day was observed.
- Additionally, the National Safety Week is celebrated from 4 March to 10 March by organizing week-long safety campaigns.

**National Security Day: 04 March**



- In India, **March 4** is celebrated as **National Security Day (Rashtriya Suraksha Diwas)** every year, in the honor of the **Indian Security Forces**.
- The day aims to show gratitude to all the security forces, including policemen, para-military forces, commandos, guards, army officers, and other persons involved in security, who sacrifice their life in maintaining the peace and security of the people of the country.
- 4 March also marks the day when the **National Security Council (NSC) of India** was established, in **1966** by the Ministry of Labour under the Government of India. The **first National Security Day (NSD)** was held in **1972**.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- National Security Council of India Founded: 19 November 1998.
- National Security Council of India Headquarters: New Delhi.

**International Women’s Day: 8 March**



- Every year on March 8th, International Women's Day is commemorated. This day honours women's social, economic, cultural, and political accomplishments.

- The day frequently acts as a rallying point for women's equality. International Women's Day is a day to recognise ordinary women who have made exceptional contributions to the history of their countries and cultures. It is also a day to reflect on progress made, to call for reform, and to honour acts of bravery and dedication by ordinary women.
- This year’s theme for International Women Day, **“Women in leadership: Achieving an equal future in a COVID-19 world”**, celebrates the tremendous efforts by women and girls around the world in shaping a more equal future and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Secretary-General of United Nations: Antonio Guterres.
- United Nations founded: 24 October 1945.
- Headquarters of United Nations: New York, United States.

**10. Central Industrial Security Forces Celebrates its 52nd Raising Day**



- The **Central Industrial Security Forces (CISF)** – Raising Day (CRD) is observed on **March 10** in India every year. In 2021, the nation is celebrating the **52nd Raising Day of CISF**. The basic objective of the CISF is Better **“protection**

and security” of industrial undertakings in both government and private sectors in the country.

- CISF was set up under an Act of the Parliament of India on **10 March 1969**, for the better protection and security of industrial undertakings in the country.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Director-General of Central Industrial Security Force: Subodh Kumar Jaiswal.

**World Kidney Day observed globally on 11th March 2021**



- **World Kidney Day** is observed globally on the **second Thursday of March** every year. This year World Kidney Day is observed on **11th March 2021**. The theme of the 2021 World Kidney day is **“Living Well with Kidney Disease”**.
- World Kidney Day is a global campaign aimed at raising awareness of the importance of our kidneys. World Kidney Day aims to raise awareness of the importance of our kidneys to our overall health and to reduce the frequency and impact of kidney disease and its associated health problems worldwide.

**World Consumer Rights Day 2021**

**WORLD CONSUMER RIGHTS DAY 2021**



- **World Consumer Rights Day** is celebrated on **March 15** every year to raise global awareness about consumer rights and needs, and protect consumers across the globe against market abuses.
- The **theme** for World Consumer Rights Day 2021 is **“Tackling Plastic Pollution.”**
- The day highlights the power of consumers and their rights for a fair, safe and sustainable marketplace for everyone.

**National Vaccination Day: March 16**



- Every year on March 16, India commemorates National Vaccination Day (also known as National Immunization Day) to emphasise the importance of vaccination to the entire world.
- The primary aim of National Vaccination Day is to raise public consciousness about the importance of vaccinating against polio and removing it entirely from the planet. The National Vaccination Day in 2021 is significant since the country has begun its largest Covid-19



immunisation programme.

- The first commemoration of the day took place in 1995. The first dose of Oral Polio Vaccine was given in 1995, when India launched the Pulse Polio Programme. According to the World Health Organization, immunization is a process through which an individual's immune system becomes fortified against foreign harm causing agent.

**Global Recycling Day 2021: 18 March**



- **Global Recycling Day** is observed every year on **March 18** to create awareness among the masses about the rapid pace at which our natural resources are being used. The day also promotes the concept and practice of recycling. Every year, events are organised by environmentalist and activists to promote the cause.
- In 2021, the theme of Global Recycling Day is **"Recycling Heroes"**. Its main aim is to recognise the people, places and activities that showcase the importance of recycling in preserving natural resources.
- Recycling has helped in reducing carbon emissions by over **700 million tonnes** every year. Notably, over 1.6 million people are employed around the world in the recycling industry. In this decade, the yearly contribution of recycling will increase up to \$400 billion.

**Ordnance Factories' Day in India: 18 March**



- Every year on March 18th, Ordnance Factories Day is commemorated. The construction of India's oldest ordnance factory, located in Cossipore, Kolkata, began on March 18, 1802. OFB is the world's 37th largest defence equipment maker, Asia's 2nd largest, and India's largest.
- Rifles, firearms, artillery, ammunition, and other arms are displayed in exhibitions across India to commemorate the day. The festivities begin with a parade, followed by an exhibition featuring photos from various mountaineering expeditions.
- OFB was founded in 1775 and its Headquarters is in Ayudh Bhawan, Kolkata. OFB consists of 41 Ordnance Factories, 9 Training Institutes, 3 Regional Marketing Centres and 5 Regional Controllerates of Safety, which is spread all over India.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Director-General & Chairman of Ordnance Factories: C S Vishwakarma.
- Headquarters of Ordnance Factory Board: Kolkata, West Bengal.

**UN French Language Day Observed Globally on 20 March**



- The **UN French Language Day** is observed annually on **20 March**. The day was established by the **UN's Department of Public Information in 2010**, to celebrate multilingualism and cultural diversity as well as to promote equal use of all six official languages throughout the Organization.
- **March 20** was chosen as the date for the French language since it coincides with the 40th anniversary of the **International Organization of La Francophonie**, representing countries and regions where French is a customary language.
- The date of French Language Day was chosen symbolically in reference to **March 20, 1970**, which marks the creation of the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation (ACCT), which became the International Organization of La Francophonie (OIF).

#### Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

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

**World Oral Health Day is observed on 20 March**



**World Oral Health Day**  
20 March

- **World Oral Health Day** is observed every year on **20th March**. It focuses on highlighting the benefits of good oral health, spreads awareness about oral diseases and promotes maintenance of oral hygiene.
- The theme for the next three years, 2021-2023 is: **Be Proud Of Your Mouth**. The day is an initiative of FDI World Dental Federation; an organization that brings together the world of dentistry with the aim of achieving optimal oral health for everyone.
- Oral health is as important as general health. It helps you maintain a healthy mouth, teeth and gums. It also helps to improve your appearance. Poor oral health can not only lead to oral diseases but also major health problems like heart disease, diabetes mellitus, stroke, respiratory problems and premature births in pregnant women.

#### International Day of Happiness: 20 March

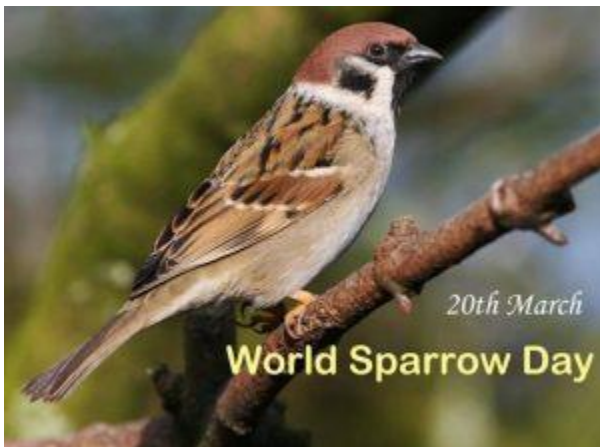


- **International Day of Happiness** is celebrated on **March 20** to promote happiness as a fundamental human right for all human beings across the world. The 2021 International Day of

Happiness campaign theme is 'Keep Calm.

- **Stay Wise. Be Kind'**. Since **2013**, the United Nations has celebrated the International Day of Happiness as a way to recognize the importance of happiness in the lives of people around the world. The day was proclaimed by the **United Nations General Assembly on 28 June 2012**.

**World Sparrow Day: 20 March**



- **World Sparrow Day** is celebrated every year on **March 20** to raise awareness about the House Sparrow and other common birds to urban environments, and of threats to their populations. The theme of 2021 World Sparrow Day **"I LOVE Sparrows"**.
- The day was initiated by the **Nature Forever Society of India** in collaboration with the **Eco-Sys Action Foundation (France)** and numerous other national and international organisations across the world. The first World Sparrow Day was celebrated in **2010**.
- The sparrows are known to live in the backyards and green patches in urban areas but "in the last two decades, their population is on the decline in almost every city," according to the [wwfindia.org](http://wwfindia.org). On this World Sparrow Day let's encourage children and others around us to respect spaces for sparrows.

**World Water Day observed globally on 22 March**



- Every year on March 22nd, the world commemorates World Water Day. World Water Day honours water while also raising awareness of the 2.2 billion people who do not have access to clean drinking water. It's about taking steps to address the world's water crisis.
- The achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 6: water and sanitation for everyone by 2030 is a major priority of World Water Day.
- "Valuing water" is the theme of World Water Day 2021. Water has immense and complex importance for our homes, food, culture, health, education, economics, and the dignity of our natural environment, in addition to its economic value.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Secretary-General of the United Nations: Antonio Guterres.
- The United Nations officially came into existence on 24 October 1945.

**International Day of Forests: 21 March**



- The **International Day of Forests** (also known as World Forestry Day) is celebrated every year on **March 21**.
- The day is to celebrate to raise awareness of the importance of all types of forests, and trees outside forests, for the benefit of current and future generations as well as to increase the public awareness among communities about the values, significance and contributions of the forests to balance the life cycle on the earth.
- The theme for International Day of Forests 2020 is **“Forest restoration: a path to recovery and well-being”**. This year’s theme fits into the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030), a call for the protection and revival of ecosystems around the world.

**World Down Syndrome Day: 21 March**



- The **World Down Syndrome Day** is observed globally on **21 March** each year, to raise public awareness for the rights, inclusion and well being of people with Down syndrome.
- This year, the theme for World Down Syndrome Day is **“We Decide.”** This day was first observed

in the United Nation in the year **2012**. The 21st day of March (the 3rd month of the year) has been selected to signify the uniqueness of the triplication (trisomy) of the **21st chromosome** which causes Down syndrome.

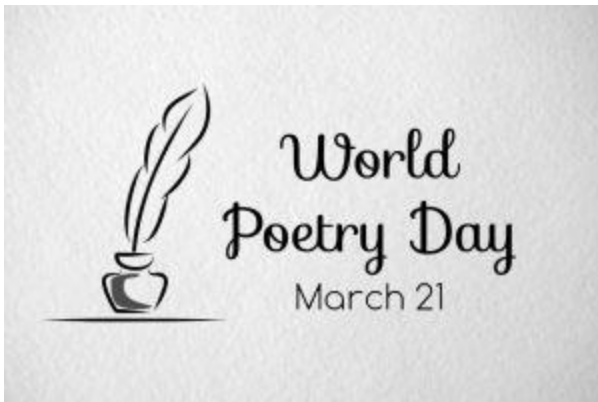
- Down Syndrome is a condition in which the child is born with an extra 21st chromosome. It comes in the category of a genetic disorder, and it also causes developmental disabilities. The child born with this condition is likely to suffer thyroid or heart-related problems.

**International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination**



- The **International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination** is observed annually on **21 March** to remind people about the negative consequences of racial discrimination.
- This year theme is **“Youth standing up against racism”**. It engages the public through #FightRacism, which aims to foster a global culture of tolerance, equality and anti-discrimination and calls on each and every one of us to stand up against racial prejudice and intolerant attitudes.
- The International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination is observed annually on the day the police in Sharpeville, South Africa, opened fire and killed 69 people at a peaceful demonstration against apartheid “pass laws” in **1960**.

**World Poetry Day: 21 March**



- **World Poetry Day** is celebrated on **21 March** every year to promote the reading, writing, publishing and teaching of poetry throughout the world.
- The Day celebrates one of humanity’s most treasured forms of cultural and linguistic expression and identity. Practised throughout history – in every culture and on every continent – poetry speaks to our common humanity and our shared values, transforming the simplest of poems into a powerful catalyst for dialogue and peace.
- **UNESCO** first adopted 21 March as World Poetry Day during its **30th General Conference** in Paris in **1999**, with the aim of supporting linguistic diversity through poetic expression and increasing the opportunity for endangered languages to be heard.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

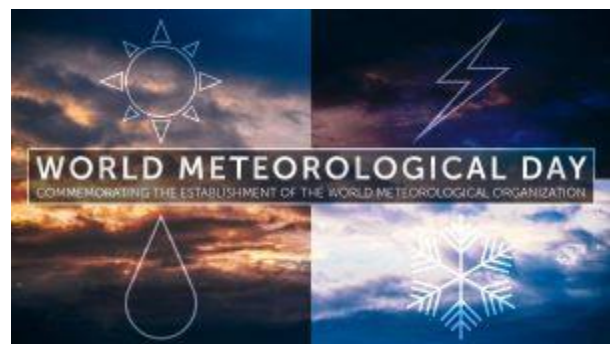
- UNESCO headquarters: Paris, France.
- UNESCO Head: Audrey Azoulay.
- UNESCO Founded: 16 November 1945.

**Shaheed Diwas Observed On 23 March**



- Every year, **March 23** is observed as **Martyrs Day (Shaheed Diwas or Sarvodaya Day)** to pay tribute on the death anniversary of the freedom fighters **Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev Thapar, and Shivaram Rajguru**, who laid their lives for the freedom of India.
- It was on March 23 in 1931, in **Lahore (Pakistan)**, that these three were hanged to death for assassinating **John Saunders**, a British police officer in 1928.
- They had mistaken him for British police superintendent **James Scott**, who had ordered lathi-charge, which eventually led to the death of **Lala Lajpat Rai**. Also, 30 January is observed as Martyr’s Day or Shaheed Diwas in the memory of Mahatma Gandhi.

**World Meteorological Day observed globally on 23 March**



- The **World Meteorological Day** is celebrated every year on **23 March** to commemorate the date of the establishment of the World Meteorological Organization in **23 March 1950**. The day also highlights the contribution

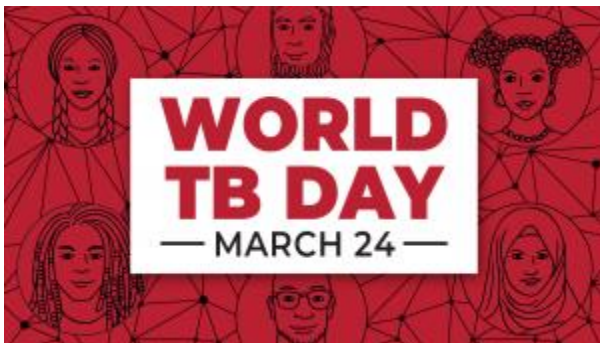
that the National Meteorological and Hydrological Services make to the safety and well-being of society.

- The World Meteorological Day theme is “**The ocean, our climate and weather**” celebrates WMO’s focus in connecting the ocean, climate and weather within the Earth System. It also marks the starting year of the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030).

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- World Meteorological Organization  
Head: Petteri Taalas.
- The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) is an intergovernmental organization with its headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland.
- World Meteorological Organization has a membership of 191 member states and territories.

**World Tuberculosis Day: 24 March**



- **World Tuberculosis Day** is observed every year on **24 March** to create awareness among the public about the global epidemic of tuberculosis (TB) and efforts to eliminate the disease.
- The date marks the day in **1882** when **Dr Robert Koch** announced that he had discovered the bacterium that causes TB, which opened the way towards diagnosing and curing this disease.
- The theme of World TB Day 2021 – ‘**The Clock is Ticking**’ –conveys the sense that the world is

running out of time to act on the commitments to end TB made by global leaders. This is especially critical in the context of the **COVID-19 pandemic** that has put End TB progress at risk, and to ensure equitable access to prevention and care in line with WHO’s drive towards achieving **Universal Health Coverage**.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

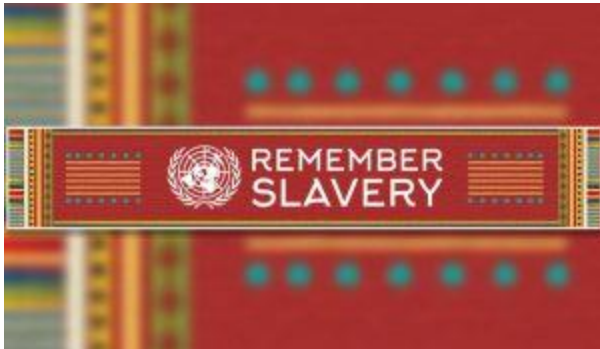
- Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus is the WHO’s Director-General.
- WHO Headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland.

**International Day for the Right to the Truth Concerning Gross Human Rights Violations and for the Dignity of Victims**



- **International Day for the Right to the Truth Concerning Gross Human Rights Violations and for the Dignity of Victims** is observed annually on **24th March** every year.
- This day is observed on 24th March every year to pay tribute to “**Monsignor Óscar Arnulfo Romero**” as he was murdered on 24 March 1980. He was actively engaged in criticizing violations of the human rights of the most vulnerable individuals in **El Salvador**.
- The International Day for the Right to the Truth Concerning Gross Human Rights Violations and for the Dignity of Victims aims to honour the memory of victims of gross and systematic human rights violations. It also aims to promote the importance of the right to truth and justice.

**International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade**



- **International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade** is observed annually on **25th March** every year.
- This day offers the opportunity to honour and remember those who suffered and died at the hands of the brutal slavery system. International Day also aims to raise awareness about the dangers of racism and prejudice today.
- 2021 Theme: **“Ending Slavery’s Legacy of Racism: A Global Imperative for Justice”**

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- United Nations Headquarters in New York, USA.
- Mr Antonio Guterres is the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

**International Day of Solidarity with Detained and Missing Staff Members**



- The **International Day of Solidarity with**

**Detained and Missing Staff Members** is observed annually on **25 March** by the United Nations.

- The day is marked each year on the anniversary of the abduction of **Alec Collett**, a former journalist who was working for the **United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)** when he was abducted by armed gunman in 1985. His body was finally found in Lebanon’s Bekaa Valley in **2009**.

**World Theatre Day: 27 March**



- **World Theatre Day** is observed globally on **27th March** every year. World Theatre Day was initiated in **1961** by the **International Theatre Institute (ITI), France**. It is celebrated annually on the 27th March by ITI Centres and the international theatre community.
- This day is a celebration for those who can see the value and importance of the art form “theatre”, and acts as a wake-up-call for governments, politicians and institutions which have not yet recognised its value to the people and to the individual and have not yet realised its potential for economic growth.
- Every year the Executive Council of ITI chooses an outstanding theatre personality to write the message for World Theatre Day. The author of the Message of World Theatre Day 2021 is **Helen MIRREN, United Kingdom**. The first World Theatre Day Message was written

by **Jean Cocteau** in 1962.

**Earth Hour 2021: 27 March**



- Every year, the **Earth Hour** is celebrated worldwide on the last **Saturday of March** month to show support for the fight against climate change and commitment towards a better planet. **Earth Hour 2021** is being marked on **March 27, 2021**. The Earth Hour 2021 theme will focus on **“Climate Change to Save Earth.”**
- The Day is a worldwide movement organized by the **World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)**, encouraging individuals, communities, corporates, and households to turn off their lights for one hour, from **8:30 to 9:30 p.m.**
- It was started as a lights-off event in Sydney, Australia, in 2007 to raise awareness for energy consumption and its effects on the environment.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- World Wide Fund Headquarters: Gland, Switzerland.

- World Wide Fund Founded: 29 April 1961, Morges, Switzerland.
- World Wide Fund President and CEO: Carter Roberts.

**International Transgender Day of Visibility: 31st March**



- **International Transgender Day of Visibility** observed globally on **31st March** every year. The day is dedicated to celebrating transgender people and raising awareness of discrimination faced by transgender people worldwide, as well as a celebration of their contributions to society.
- The day was founded by US-based transgender activist **Rachel Crandall of Michigan in 2009**.
- As a reaction to the lack of LGBT recognition of transgender people, citing the frustration that the only well-known transgender-centred day was the Transgender Day of Remembrance which mourned the murders of transgender people but did not acknowledge and celebrate living members of the transgender community

## Topic 2: Agreements

**India inks pact with the Philippines for sale of ‘defence equipment**





- India and the Philippines have agreed to a "implementing agreement" for "procurement of defence material and equipment," in which the Philippines will purchase India's BrahMos cruise missiles.
- Delfin Lorenzana, the Philippine Defense Secretary, was also present at the signing ceremony in Manila.
- The BrahMos missile is made by a joint venture between India and Russia called "BrahMos Aerospace," and it can be launched from submarines, ships, planes, or land platforms.
- It is the world's fastest supersonic cruise missile.
- Currently, the missile is used only by India, however, several countries including the Philippines, Vietnam, South Africa, Egypt, Oman, Chile and Brunei have expressed interest in the procurement of the missile.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Philippines President: Rodrigo Duterte.
- Philippines Capital: Manila.
- Philippines Currency: Philippine peso.

**Kotak Mahindra Bank tie-up with Indian army to handle salary accounts**

- The Indian army's salary account will be handled by Kotak Mahindra Bank, a private sector lender. The bank has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for a salary account with the Indian Army here.
- The MoU allows Kotak to sell its salary account product, along with exclusive benefits for the Indian Army, to all active and retired army personnel.
- Other advantages of the salary account include a customised salary account for army employees, as well as improved complimentary personal injury insurance coverage for both on-duty and off-duty accidents.
- It covers accidental death for total or partial permanent disability. It will also offer special education benefit for children and additional girl child benefit by covering dependent children of up to **22 years** in the event of an accident claim by the salary account holder.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Kotak Mahindra Bank CEO: Uday Kotak.
- Kotak Mahindra Bank Establishment: 2003.
- Kotak Mahindra Bank Headquarters: Mumbai, Maharashtra.
- Kotak Mahindra Bank Tagline: Lets make money simple.

**IBM signs MoU with U'khand Government to**

**introduce STEM for Girls**



- **IBM** has announced a collaboration with **SamagraSikhsha Uttarakhand**, the Government of Uttarakhand’s education mission, to introduce the **‘IBM STEM for Girls’** program in 130 secondary and higher secondary schools across five districts in the state.
- The collaboration is part of a three-year program between IBM and Uttarakhand State Government with the American India Foundation as the implementation partner to increase the participation of girls and women in STEM careers.
- The program will advance the skills and careers of close to **25,600 students** in the **Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) fields**.
- The ‘IBM STEM for Girls’ program features a comprehensive approach that builds technical capabilities as well as life and self-actualization skills.
- ‘STEM for Girls’ is an IBM Corporate Social Responsibility initiative primarily aimed at improving education-to-work and career pathways for girls who are studying in Government schools.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- IBM CEO: Arvind Krishna.
- IBM Headquarters: Armonk, New York, United States.
- Governor of Uttarakhand: Baby Rani Maurya.
- Uttarakhand CM: Tirath Singh Rawat.

**SBI and IOCL to ink India’s First Libor Alternative Rate Deal**



- The **State Bank of India (SBI)** and **Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL)** will sign the first **Secured Overnight Financing Rate (SOFR)** linked **external commercial borrowing (ECB)** deal.
- The deal will be signed because the de facto international benchmark reference rate called the **London Interbank Offered Rate (LIBOR)** will no longer work as the benchmark after December 2021.
- The state bank of India highlighted that it will be arranging **\$100 million** linked to SOFR for **5 years**.
- The LIBOR will no longer work as the benchmark after December 2021. Thus, the **Secured Overnight Financing Rate (SOFR)** and **Sterling Overnight Interbank Average Rate (SONIA)** are the most potential

alternatives.

- But only a few swap deals are linked to these alternatives at the international level. Libor is still used extensively especially for loans that are getting matured within the year.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- SBI Chairperson: Dinesh Kumar Khara.
- SBI Headquarters: Mumbai.
- SBI Founded: 1 July 1955.

**Italy signs International Solar Alliance amended Framework Agreement**



- The amended Framework Agreement of the International Solar Alliance (ISA) has been ratified by Italy and India. The Italian Ambassador to India, Vincenzo De Luca, signed the framework agreement. India initiated the ISA, which now has a membership of over 121 countries.
- After an amendment to the ISA Framework Agreement went into effect on January 8, 2021, enabling all UN member states to participate, the European country signed the ISA framework agreement. The amendments to the ISA framework agreement allow all United Nations member states, including those outside the tropics, to join the ISA grouping.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- President of Italy: Sergio Mattarella.
- Capital of Italy: Rome; Currency of Italy: Euro.
- Prime Minister of Italy: Mario Draghi.

**UP and MP sign agreement with Jal Shakti Ministry for 'Ken-Betwa Link' project**



- On the occasion of World Water Day, the governments of **Uttar Pradesh** and **Madhya Pradesh** signed an agreement with the **Union Ministry of Jal Shakti** to implement the **Ken-Betwa river interlinking project**.
- The main purpose of this project is to carry water from surplus regions to drought-prone and water-scarce region through the interlinking of rivers.
- The surplus water will be transferred from the **Ken river in Panna district in Madhya Pradesh to the Betwa river in Uttar Pradesh**.
- The project will benefit the Bundelkhand region of Uttar Pradesh, by resolving the water scarcity and thus bring prosperity to this region.
- The water will be transferred through the construction of the **Dhauan Dam** and a 221 km-long canal.
- The Ken-Betwa Link Project will provide annual irrigation of **2.51 lakh hectares, 1,700 million** cubic meters (mcm) of water to Uttar Pradesh and drinking water supply to about **62**

lakh people and also generate 103 MW of hydropower.

### Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- Uttar Pradesh Governor: Anandiben Patel.
- Uttar Pradesh Chief minister: Yogi Adityanath.
- Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh: Shivraj Singh Chouhan; Governor: Anandiben Patel.

### India, Japan agree for greater cooperation in patent verification



- **India and Japan** have agreed to recognize each other's offices to act mutually as competent **International Searching and International Preliminary Examining Authority (ISA/IPEA)** for any international patent application filed with them. This memorandum of cooperation on the industrial property was arrived at during the 4th review meeting between DPIIT and Japan Patent Office.
- India had approved an MoC between the **Indian Patent Office (IPO)** and the JPO for entering into a PPH on a pilot basis for three years. This is a reciprocal arrangement, so the JPO will also be able to accelerate the prosecution of a Japanese application using positive examination results received from the IPO.
- The IPO will only offer acceleration for patent applications in certain technical fields such as physics, computer science, IT, electronics, metallurgy and automobiles.

### Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

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

### India & Bangladesh ink 5 MoU to Boost Cooperation



- To strengthen bilateral relations, India and Bangladesh have signed five Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs). The MoUs were signed in Dhaka on March 27, 2021, by Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her Indian counterpart Narendra Modi.
- Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi was in Bangladesh for a two-day official visit to commemorate the birth centenary of Bangladeshi Founding Father Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the country's golden jubilee of independence in 1971. PM Modi's journey to a foreign country is his first since the coronavirus pandemic broke out.

### MoUs were signed in the following areas

- Disaster management, resilience, and mitigation.
- Cooperation between Bangladesh National Cadet Corps (BNCC) and National Cadet Corps of India (INCC).
- Establishment of a framework of cooperation in the area of trade remedial measures between

- Bangladesh and India.
- Supply of ICT equipment, courseware, and reference books and training for Bangladesh-Bharat Digital Service & Employment and Training (BDSET) Centre.

- Establishment of sports facilities in Rajshahi College field and surrounding areas

## Topic 3: Appointment

### Tenure of PC Mody as CBDT Chairman extended for 3 months



- Pramod Chandra Mody's re-appointment as Chairman of the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) has been extended for another three months. He was named as the CBDT chief in February 2019. He is an Indian Revenue Service officer from the 1982 batch.
- The Cabinet Appointments Committee has approved a three-month extension, which will take effect on March 1, 2021, and end on May 31, 2021. MrMody's term had previously been extended for six months in August of the last year.
- Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**
- Central Board of Direct Taxes Established: 1924.
- Central Board of Direct Taxes Headquarters: New Delhi.

### Jaideep Bhatnagar takes over as Principal Director

### General of PIB



- The former head of the News Services Division of All India Radio, **Jaideep Bhatnagar**, took over as **Principal Director General** of the **Press Information Bureau**.
- Prior to his current charge as head of the organisation, Bhatnagar has worked in PIB for six years in different capacities. He will take over from **Kuldeep Singh Dhatwalia**, who superannuated on February 28, 2021.

### Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- PIB has its Headquarters in New Delhi.
- The Press Information Bureau was established in June 1919.

### Vice Admiral Ajendra Bahadur Singh takes over as ENC chief



- Eastern Naval Command's Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief (FOC-in-C) is Vice Admiral Ajendra Bahadur Singh (ENC).
- Vice Admiral Atul Kumar Jain has been succeeded by him. Atul Kumar Jain has been moved to New Delhi to serve as the Chairman Chiefs of Staff Committee's Vice Chief of Integrated Defence Staff (CISC).
- Vice Admiral A.B. Singh studied the ceremonial guard and platoons of naval staff drawn from the ENC's numerous ships and establishments. In 2011, he received the VishishtSeva Medal, and in 2016, he received the AtiVishishtSevaMedal.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Eastern Naval Command Headquarter: Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh.
- Eastern Naval Command Founded: 1 March 1968.

**Matam Venkata Rao assumes Charge as MD & CEO of Central Bank Of India**



- **Matam Venkata Rao** has taken charge as the new **Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Central Bank Of India**. Rao till now held the position of Executive Director at Canara Bank. His appointment is for a period of 3 years with effect from the date of assumption of office on or after March 1, 2021, or until further orders, whichever is earlier.
- Rao is a Certified Associate of the **Indian Institute of Bankers**. He is a post-graduate in agriculture from Sri Venkateshwara Agriculture College, Tirupati, Andhra Pradesh.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Central Bank of India Headquarters: Mumbai.
- Central Bank of India Founded: 21 December 1911.

**Kuldiep Singh takes additional charge as CRPF DG**



- After incumbent chief A P Maheshwari retires, IPS officer Kuldiep Singh has been assigned the

additional charge of CRPF director general (DG).

- After incumbent chief A P Maheshwari retires, IPS officer Kuldip Singh has been assigned the additional charge of CRPF director general (DG).
- With an estimated strength of around 3.25 lakh members, the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) is the country's largest paramilitary. It is the lead internal security force, with Left Wing Extremism-affected states, counter-terrorist fighting in the Kashmir valley, and counter-insurgency operations in the northeast as its main operational theatres.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Central Reserve Police Force Headquarters: New Delhi, India.
- Central Reserve Police Force Formed: 27 July 1939.
- Central Reserve Police Force Motto: Service and Loyalty.

**Manpreet Vohra Appointed India’s High Commissioner To Australia**



- Senior diplomat, **Manpreet Vohra** has been appointed as India’s next High Commissioner to **Australia**. Vohra, a 1988-batch Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officer, is presently Ambassador of India to **Mexico**.
- He is expected to take up the assignment shortly. Mr Vohra’s appointment comes at a time India-Australia ties are at an upswing and the two countries are stepping up cooperation

particularly in the Indo-Pacific region.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Prime Minister of Australia: Scott Morrison.
- The currency of Australia: Australian dollar.
- Capital of Australia: Canberra.

**Mary Kom appointed chairperson of AIBA’s champions and veterans committee**



- Six-time world champion boxer **Mary Kom** has been appointed as the **Chairperson of the International Boxing Association’s (AIBA) Champions and Veterans Committee**. The 37-year-old was voted to the post by AIBA’s board of directors on March 03, 2021.
- The Committee was formed in December 2020. It consists of the most respected worldwide boxing veterans and champions who have achieved significant results and who are ready to share their experience.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- AIBA Headquarters: Lausanne, Switzerland.
- AIBA President: Umar Kremlyov.
- AIBA Founded: 1946.

**Ligia Noronha appointed UN Assistant Secretary-General**



- Ligia Noronha, a leading Indian economist, has been appointed Assistant Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Environment Programme's New York Office by UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres (UNEP).
- Noronha served as Executive Director (Research Coordination) and Director of the Division on Resources, Regulation, and Global Security at The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) in New Delhi before joining the UNEP.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- United Nations Environment Programme Headquarters: Nairobi, Kenya.
- United Nations Environment Programme Head: Inger Andersen.
- United Nations Environment Programme Founder: Maurice Strong.
- United Nations Environment Programme Founded: 5 June 1972.

**Tarun Bajaj to take additional charge of Revenue Secretary**



- Department of economic affairs secretary, **Tarun Bajaj** has been given the additional charge of revenue secretary. Present revenue secretary **Ajay Bhushan Pandey** retires on February 28.
- The Centre has decided to not grant an extension to finance secretary Ajay Bhushan Pandey who was also holding additional charge of the revenue department in the finance ministry.
- Tarun Bajaj, an old hand at the Finance Ministry, assumed charge as Economic Affairs secretary last May, at a time when India saw the worst growth contraction in history on account of the Covid-19 pandemic.

**Naureen Hassan appointed as 1st VP & COO of Federal Reserve Bank**



- Indian-origin **Naureen Hassan** has been appointed as the first **Vice President and Chief Operating Officer (COO)** of the New York-based **Federal Reserve Bank**, by the Board of Governors of the **Federal Reserve System**.
- Hassan, whose parents had immigrated from India, is a 25-year veteran of the financial services industry with **expertise in strategy, digital transformation, cybersecurity and regulatory/risk management**.
- With this new role, Hassan will become the second-highest-ranking officer of the New York Fed as well as an alternate voting member of the **Federal Open Market Committee**.



- Prior to this, she was the Chief Digital Officer for Morgan Stanley Wealth Management (MSWM). She will take over the new role with effect from **March 15, 2021**.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- CEO of the Federal Reserve Bank: John C. Williams.
- Federal Reserve Bank Chairperson: Jerome Powell.
- Federal Reserve Bank Founded: 23 December 1913.
- Federal Reserve Bank HQ: New York, United States.

**NABARD's Chintala takes charge as chairman of APRACA**



- G R Chintala, the chairman of NABARD, has taken over as the chairman of APRACA (Asia Pacific Rural and Agricultural Credit Association). DPK Gunasekera, who is also the Chief Executive Officer of Bank of Ceylon, has stepped down.
- In his address as APRACA Chairman, Chintala thanked the members of APRACA for their contributions to the growth of rural finance in Asia Pacific.

- APRACA, which was established in 1977 and represents 21 countries in the Asia-Pacific region, is an association of institutions involved in agricultural, rural, and microfinance policy and development.

**Girish Murmu re-appointed Chairman of UN Panel of External Auditors**



- Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG), **Girish Chandra Murmu** has been re-appointed as the **Chairman of the Panel of External Auditors of the United Nations** for the year 2021. Prior to this, Mr Murmu was elected as Chairman of the Panel for 2020 as well.
- At present, the panel consists of 13 countries which are India, Germany, Chile, China, United Kingdom, France, Philippines, Switzerland, Italy, Ghana, Indonesia, Canada and Russia.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- CAG Founded: 1858.
- CAG Headquarters location: New Delhi.

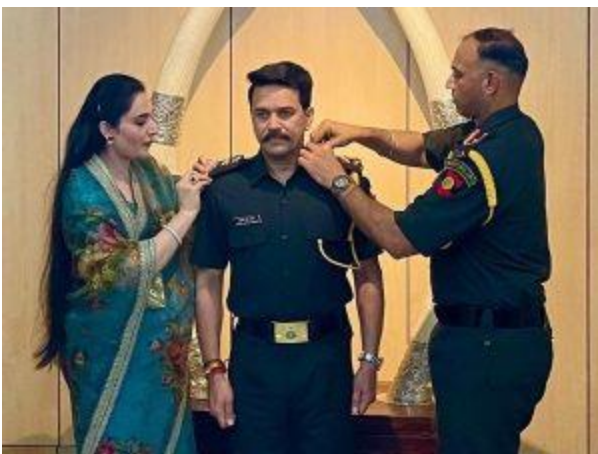
**Gol appoints Dr. GP Samanta as new Chief Statistician of India**



Government of India  
**Ministry of Statistics and  
 Programme Implementation**

- The Central Government has appointed **Dr G P Samanta** as the new **Chief Statistician of India (CSI)** for a period of two years.
- He is India’s fourth CSI. He will replace Kshatrapati Shivaji who was holding an additional charge of the post since September 2020.
- Currently, Dr Samanta was serving as an adviser in the Reserve Bank of India’s (RBI) Department Of Statistics and Information Management. Dr Samanta will also serve as the Secretary of the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI).

**Union Minister Anurag Thakur promoted as Captain in Territorial Army**



- Union Minister **Anurag Thakur** has become the first serving MP to be appointed as **Captain in the Territorial Army**. Thakur has been promoted to the rank of Captain at **124 Infantry**

**Battalion Territorial Army (Sikh).**

- The four-time BJP MP from Himachal Pradesh’s Hamirpur was commissioned into the Territorial Army as a Lieutenant by then Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Dalbir S Suhag TA in July 2016.

**Pallav Mohapatra appointed MD & CEO of ARCIL**



- **Asset Reconstruction Company (India) Ltd (Arcil)** has announced the appointment of **Pallav Mohapatra** as its **Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director**. Prior to the appointment, Mohapatra was the MD and CEO of the **Central Bank of India**.
- Before being elevated as MD and CEO of CBoI, he was Deputy Managing Director, Stressed Assets Management Group, State Bank of India.
- **Vinayak Bahuguna** headed Arcil as MD and CEO for five years till June 2020. Arcil, which was set up in **2002**, currently has assets under management (in non-performing loans) of **₹12,000 crore**.

**World Bank economist Deepak Mishra appointed as director of ICRIER**



- **Deepak Mishra**, Practice Manager in the **World Bank's** Macroeconomics, Trade, and Investment Global Practice, has been appointed as the **next director and chief executive** of the **Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER)**.
- He will take the charge of **Rajat Kathuria** who has been the director and chief executive of ICRIER since 1st September 2012.
- Mishra has held various positions at the World Bank, including co-director of the World Development Report 2016 (Digital Dividends), country economist for **Ethiopia, Pakistan, Sudan, and Vietnam**.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- ICRIER Established: August 1981.
- ICRIER Headquarters: New Delhi.

**Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Principal Advisor P K Sinha resigns**



- Former Cabinet Secretary and Principal Advisor in the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) **P.K.**

**Sinha** has relinquished his high-profile position on personal grounds. He was appointed in the PMO first as Officer on Special Duty (OSD) briefly and then as Principal Advisor, a specially created position for him, in September 2019 after the 2019 parliamentary polls.

- Besides him, two senior officials are serving as Advisors in the PMO: Bhaskar Khulbe and Amarjit Sinha, both 1983 batch retired IAS officials. Mr. Sinha is a retired 1977 batch IAS officer of Uttar Pradesh cadre and served in various capacities during the UPA and the NDA regimes.
- His is the second high profile exit from the PMO after PM's Principal Secretary Nripendra Misra had resigned after the last Lok Sabha polls. Earlier, he was Secretary, Ministry of Power in the government of India and served as Cabinet Secretary for four years from 2015.

**M. A. Ganapathy appointed Director General of National Security Guard**



- M. A. Ganapathy, a senior IPS officer, was appointed Director-General of the National Security Guard on March 16, 2021.
- Ganapathy is the Director-General of the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security and is a 1986 batch Indian Police Service (IPS) officer from the Uttarakhand cadre (BCAS).
- From the date of his appointment to the date of his superannuation on February 29, 2024, he

has been the Director-General, National Security Guard (NSG).

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- National Security Guard Headquarters: New Delhi.
- The motto of the National Security Guard: SarvatraSarvottam Suraksha.

**Lt Gen DP Pandey takes over as new commander of 15-Corps**



- Lt General **DP Pandey** has taken over the command of strategic **Kashmir-based 15 Corps** from Lt Gen **BS Raju**, who has been appointed as the new **Director-General of Military Operations (DGMO) of the Indian Army**.
- An alumnus of the National Defence Academy, General Pandey was commissioned into the Sikh Light Infantry Regiment in December 1985 from Indian Military Academy, Dehradun.

**Dr Harsh Vardhan appointed as chairman of ‘Stop TB Partnership Board’**



- Union Minister for Health and Family

Welfare, **Dr Harsh Vardhan** has been appointed as the Chairman of the international body **Stop TB Partnership Board**.

- He was appointed in recognition of his outstanding contribution to the movement to eradicate Tuberculosis from India by **2025**. He will serve a three-year term, commencing from July this year.
- The Stop TB Partnership is a unique international body with the power to align actors all over the world in the fight against TB.
- The participation of a wide range of constituencies gives this global body the credibility and the broad range of medical, social and financial expertise needed to defeat TB.
- The Partnership’s vision is a **TB-free world**.
- The appointment of Dr Harsh Vardhan as the Chair of this prestigious global body is a proud recognition of India’s political commitment to the eradication of TB.
- Established in the year 2000, the **‘Stop TB Partnership’** is mandated to eliminate Tuberculosis as a public health problem.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- World Tuberculosis Day, observed on 24 March.

**Ajay Mathur takes over as Director-General of International Solar Alliance**



- With effect from March 15, 2021, Dr. Ajay Mathur has been appointed Director-General of the International Solar Alliance (ISA). He has been named for a four-year term that can be extended for another four years.
- Dr. Ajay Mathur has taken the place of Upendra Tripathy, who served as Director-General since 2017 and ended his term on March 15.
- From strategy, science, and technology commercialization to funding, international collaboration, and institutional growth, Mathur brings a wealth of leadership and experience to the energy transition. He is a member of the **Prime Minister’s Council on climate change**.
- He had also served as the Director-General of TERI and also a key Indian climate-change negotiator. He was also the spokesperson for India during the 2015 climate negotiations in Paris.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- ISA Headquarters Location: Gurgram, Haryana.
- ISA Established: 2015.

**NeoGrowth appoints Ajinkya Rahane as brand ambassador**



- **NeoGrowth Credit Pvt. Ltd**, a lender to small businesses, has announced the appointment of cricketer **Ajinkya Rahane** as its brand ambassador. The agreement is for a year which can be extended further.

- Rahane will feature in a campaign slated to be released in the first week of April, which will talk about the ease of procuring loans through NeoGrowth for small businesses. The campaign **“Keeping it simple”** will show the day-to-day struggles of small businesses while scaling up and how NeoGrowth can help them overcome them.

**Arindam Bagchi takes charge as MEA spokesperson**



- **Arindam Bagchi**, an officer of the 1995 batch of the **Indian Foreign Service (IFS)**, has assumed charge as the new spokesperson of the Ministry of External Affairs(MEA). He is replacing Anurag Srivastava, an officer of the 1999 batch of IFS.
- Before this, Bagchi was serving as the joint secretary (north) at the MEA headquarters. He was an Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officer from the 1995 batch.
- In past, he has served as India’s ambassador to Croatia from November 2018 to June 2020. He was also India’s deputy high commissioner to Sri Lanka.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Minister of External Affairs: Subrahmanyam Jaishankar.

**Indian-American Doctor Vivek Murthy appointed as US**

**Surgeon General**



- The US Senate has voted, 57-43, to confirm the appointment of Indian-American doctor **Vivek Murthy** as the **Surgeon General** under **US President Biden’s administration**.
- The 43-year-old Dr Murthy would occupy the position of America’s Surgeon General for the second time.
- Prior to this, Dr Murthy was appointed as surgeon general under the Obama administration in 2011 but was fired by former President Trump in 2017.

**Principal Scientific Advisor K. VijayRaghavan gets an extension**



- K. VijayRaghavan's tenure as Principal Scientific Advisor (PSA) has been extended by a year by the government. After retiring as Secretary of the Department of Biotechnology, he was appointed PSA in 2018. His contract was set to

expire on April 2, but it was extended until April 2022.

- After the outbreak, the Office of the PSA has worked closely with industry, research organisations, and health and science ministries to speed the production of diagnostics, medicines, and vaccines.
- The PSA office also played a key role in the development of the National Science Innovation and Technology Policy, as well as the National Research Foundation, which will be established soon.

**Sanjeev Kumar appointed as Chairman of Airports Authority of India**



- IAS **Sanjeev Kumar** has appointed as **Chairman** of the **Airports Authority of India (AAI)** under the **Ministry of Civil Aviation**.
- Kumar is a 1993-batch IAS officer of Maharashtra cadre. The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has approved his appointment.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Airports Authority of India Headquarters: New Delhi.
- Airports Authority of India Founded: 1 April 1995.

**Atish Chandra appointed as CMD of Food Corporation**

of India



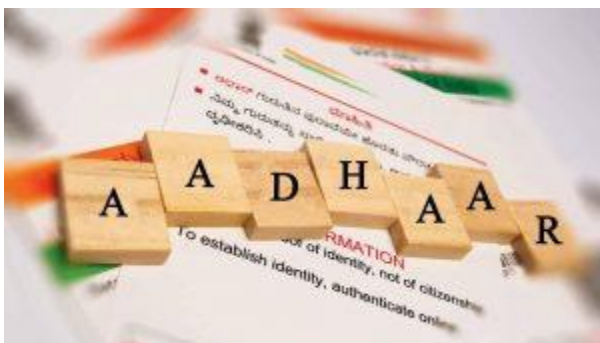
**Food Corporation of India**

- **Atish Chandra** has been appointed as **Chairman and Managing Director, Food Corporation of India** in the rank and pay of Additional Secretary.
- Mr Chandra, a 1994 batch IAS officer of Bihar cadre, is currently Joint Secretary, Department of Agriculture, Cooperation and Farmers Welfare.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Food Corporation of India Founded: 14 January 1965.
- Food Corporation of India Headquarters: New Delhi.

**Saurabh Garg appointed as new CEO of UIDAI**



- Senior bureaucrat, **Saurabh Garg** has been appointed as the **Chief Executive Officer (CEO)** of **Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI)** as part of a bureaucratic reshuffle effected by the Centre.

- Mr Garg is at present serving in his cadre state Odisha. He is a 1991 batch IAS officer.
- The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has approved the appointment of Mr Garg as the CEO, UIDAI in the rank and pay of Additional Secretary, an order issued by the Personnel Ministry.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- UIDAI Founded: 28 January 2009;
- UIDAI Headquarters: New Delhi.

**Anish Shah to take over as M&M’s Managing Director, CEO**



- Anish Shah, who will take over as managing director and CEO of Mahindra and Mahindra on April 2, will be the first career executive to manage the \$19.4 billion Mahindra Group's entire market. On April 2, Pawan Goenka will step down as MD, CEO, and board member.
- Anand Mahindra, the company's chairman, will join the board of directors as a non-executive director. From April 2022, the markets regulator Sebi has required that the chairperson of the board of directors of top 500 listed entities be a non-executive director who is not connected to the MD or CEO

## Topic4: Award

### Golden Globe Awards 2021 announced



- The Golden Globe Awards were held in 2021 to recognise excellence in American and foreign film, as well as American television.
- The annual festival, now in its 78th year, honoured the best in American television and film in 2020 and early 2021, as selected by the Hollywood Foreign Press Association.
- With four nominations, the American TV series "The Crown" took home the most at the ceremony. For his portrayal of Levee Green in Ma Rainey's Black Bottom, late American actor Chadwick Boseman received the Golden Globe award for Best Actor in a Drama category, posthumously.

### WAN-IFRA names The Hindu Group 'Champion Publisher of the Year 2020'



- The **Hindu Group** won two golds and two silvers

at **South Asian Digital Media Awards** given by **WAN IFRA (World Association of News Publishers)**, culminating in being named '**Champion Publisher of the Year**', owing to the highest tally on the points table.

- The awards are presented in recognition of outstanding work done by news publishers, in digital media. The winners were honoured virtually at the Digital Media India 2021 Conference held on March 3, 2021.

### Bihari Puraskar 2020 to be awarded to MohankrishnaBohara



- The **30th Bihari Puraskar for 2020** will be given to **MohankrishnaBohara** for his Hindi book of Criticism, titled **Taslima: Sangharsh Aur Sahitya**. The **K.K. Birla Foundation** announced this in New Delhi. The book was published in **2016**.
- Bihari Puraskar carries award money of two lakh 50 thousand rupees, a Citation and a Plaque. The award is one of the three literary awards instituted by the **K.K. Birla Foundation in 1991**.
- Named after famous Hindi poet Bihari, the award is given every year for an outstanding work in Hindi or Rajasthani published in the last



10 years by a Rajasthani writer.

year

**Ashwin, Beaumont Win ICC Player of Month Awards for February**



- India spinner **Ravichandran Ashwin** was awarded the **ICC Player of the Month** award for February, the **International Cricket Council (ICC)**. Ashwin beat England captain Joe Root and West Indies’ Kyle Mayers to the award.
- Ashwin played a crucial role with bat and ball as India raced to a 2-1 lead over England in their four-match Test series in February before eventually winning the series 3-1 in March. He was the highest wicket-taker in the series with 32 scalps and scored a century in the second Test in Chennai.
- Meanwhile, England opener **Tammy Beaumont** won the **ICC Women’s Player of the Month for February**. Beaumont was the overwhelming winner after she played three ODIs in February against New Zealand where she passed fifty in each of these, totalling 231 runs. She beat her teammate Natalie Sciver and New Zealand’s Brooke Halliday to the award.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

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

**Koneru Humpy is BBC’s Indian sportswoman of the**



- Koneru Humpy, the world rapid chess champion, has been named the BBC Indian Sportswoman of the Year. The virtual awards ceremony is hosted by BBC Director-General Tim Davie.
- Anju Bobby George, a veteran athlete, won the Lifetime Achievement Trophy.
- Manu Bhaker, a 19-year-old Indian shooter, was named the Emerging Player-of-the-Year award winner by English cricketer Ben Stokes. In 2018, Bhaker won two gold medals at the ISSF World Cup, then gold at the Youth Olympics and a Commonwealth Games gold with a new personal best.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- BBC director-general: Tim Davie.
- BBC Headquarters: London, United Kingdom.
- BBC Established: 1922.

**Amitabh Bachchan to be honoured with 2021 FIAF Award**



- Megastar **Amitabh Bachchan** will be honoured with an award by the **International Federation of Film Archives (FIAF)**.
- The veteran actor will be the first Indian cinema personality to be bestowed with the FIAF Award for his dedication and contribution to the preservation of the world’s film heritage.
- Amitabh Bachchan was nominated for the award by the **FIAF affiliate Film Heritage Foundation** which is a not-for-profit organisation founded by **Shivendra Singh Dungarpur** a filmmaker & archivist. This foundation is dedicated to preserve, restore, document, exhibit and study the film heritage of India.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- FIAF Founded: 17 June 1938; Headquarters: Brussels, Belgium.

**Grammy Awards 2021 Announced: Check the list of Winners**



- The **63rd edition of the annual Grammy Awards** ceremony was held in Los Angeles on March 14, 2021. The 2021 Grammy awards recognized the best recordings, compositions, and artists of the eligibility year, between **September 1, 2019, to August 31, 2020**.
- The award is presented by **The Recording Academy** to recognize achievements in the American music industry. **Beyonce** received the most nominations with nine, as well as the most awards with four.

Here is the list of winners of **Grammy Awards 2021**:

Sl. No.	Category	Winner
1.	Album Of The Year	<b>“Folklore”</b> by Taylor Swift
2.	Record Of The Year	<b>“Everything I Wanted”</b> by Billie Eilish
3.	Best New Artist	<b>Megan Thee Stallion</b>
4.	Best Rap Album	<b>“King’s Disease”</b> by Nas
5.	Best R&B Album Winner	<b>“Bigger Love”</b> by John Legend
6.	Best Rap Song	<b>“Savage”</b> by Beyoncé, Shawn Carter, Brittany

7.	Best Country Album	<b>"Wildcard"</b> — Miranda Lambert
8.	<b>Song Of The Year</b>	<b>"I Can't Breathe"</b> by Dernst Emile II, H.E.R. and Tiara Thomas
9.	Best Rock Album	<b>"The New Abnormal"</b> by The Strokes
10.	Best Rock Song	<b>"Stay High"</b> by Brittany Howard, songwriter (Brittany Howard)
11.	Best Dance/Electronic Album	Bubba by Kaytranada
12.	Producer of the Year, Classical	David Frost
13.	Best Music Video	Brown Skin Girl by Beyoncé, Blue Ivy & WizKid
14.	Best Country Song	<b>Crowded Table</b> by Brandi Carlile, Natalie Hemby & Lori McKenna
15.	Best Folk Album	All the Good Times

16.	Best Comedy Album	Black Mitzvah by Tiffany Haddish
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**Gowsalya Shankar honoured with International Woman of Courage 2021**



- Gowsalya Shankar, an anti-caste activist and human rights defender from Tamil Nadu, has been nominated for the International Woman of Courage (IWOC) Award by the US Consulate.
- The IWOC Award Certificate of Nomination was presented to her by Judith Ravin, the United States Consul General in Chennai, at an event titled "Courageous Women Inspire a Better World."
- Ms. Gowsalya was nominated by the US Mission in India for the US Secretary of State's IWOC Award in 2021, which recognises women who have shown extraordinary bravery, strength, and leadership in acting to better the lives of others.

**Sahitya Akademi Award 2020 announced**



- **Sahitya Akademi** announced its annual **Sahitya**

**Akademi Awards in 20 languages.** Seven books of poetry, four of the novel, Five short stories, two plays, and one each of memoirs and epic poetry in 20 Indian languages.

- The awards for **Malayalam, Nepali, Odia and Rajasthani** will be announced later. Sahitya Akademi Award is a literary honour in India. It is a dream for all Indian writers to look forward to one of the prestigious literary awards.
- The **political-writer M VeerappaMoily, poet Arundhathi Subramaniam** will be bestowed with the Sahitya Akademi Award 2020.
- Sahitya Akademi Award 2020 winners will be bestowed with the award in the form of a casket, containing the engraved copper-plaque, a shawl and a cash amount of **Rs. 1,00,000/-** at the Sahitya Akademi Award Presentation function.

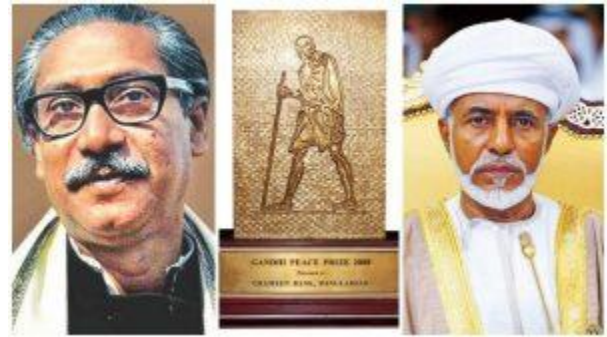
**The complete list of winners in different language and genre categories is given in the table below.**

S.No	Language	Title and Genre	Name of the Author
1	Assamese	Bengsata (Short stories)	Apurba Kumar Saikia
2	Bengali	Eka EkaEkashi (Memoirs)	Mani Shankar Mukhopadhyay
3	Bodo	GwthenayLamayaoGwdanAgan (Short stories)	Dharanidhar Owari
4	Dogri	Baba Jitmal (Play)	Gian Singh

5	English	When God Is a Traveller (Poetry)	Arundhathi Subramaniam
6	Gujarati	Banaras Diary (Poetry)	Harish Meenakshru
7	Hindi	Tokeri Mein Digant ‘ Their Gatha” (Poetry)	Anamika
8	Kannada	Sri Bahubali Ahimsadigvijayam (EPIC POETRY)	M. VeerappaMoily
9	Kashmiri	Tilasm-e-Khanabadosh (Short stories)	HidayKoul Bharti
10	Konkani	Yugaparivarathananch oYatri (Poetry)	RS Bhaskar
11	Maithili	GachhRoosalAchhi (Short Stories)	Kamalkant Jha
12	Manipuri	Malangbana Kari Hai (Poetry)	IrungbamDev en
13	Marathi	Udya (Novel)	Nanda Khare
14	Punjab i	AamKhass (Short stories)	Gurdev Singh Rupana
15	Sanskrit	Vaishali (Novel)	Mahesh Chandra Sharma Gautam

16	Santali	Gur Dak Kasa Dak(Poetry)	RupchandHansdah
17	Sindhi	Jehad (Plays)	JethoLalwani
18	Tamil	SellaathaPanam (Novel)	Imaiyam
19	Telugu	Agniswaasa(2015-17) Poetry	Nikhileswar
20	Urdu	Amawas Mein Khwab (Novel)	Hussain-ul-Haque

announced



- The **Gandhi Peace Prize** for the year **2019** is being conferred on (Late) His **Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said Al Said** of Oman. Gandhi Peace Prize recognizes the unparalleled vision and leadership of the Late H.M. Sultan Qaboos Bin Said in strengthening relations between **India and Oman**, and his efforts to promote peace and non-violence in the Gulf region.
- On the other hand, Gandhi Peace Prize for the year **2020** is being conferred on **Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman**. The Committee selected the name of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in recognition of his outstanding contributions towards social, economic and political transformation through non-violent and other Gandhian methods.
- The award carries an amount of **Rs. 1 crore**, a **citation**, a **plaque** and an **exquisite traditional handicraft/ handloom item**.

**67th National Film Awards Announced**



The **67th National Film Awards** are currently being announced in **New Delhi**. The awards are for films from the year **2019**. The event is organised by the Directorate of Film Festivals, which comes under the **Ministry of Information and Broadcasting**. The ceremony was supposed to be held in May last year but was delayed indefinitely due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

**7. Gandhi Peace Prize for the Year 2019 & 2020**

**ESAF Small Finance Bank Awarded With 'Great Place To Work' Certification**



- **ESAF Small Finance Bank** had been awarded ‘**Great place to work**’ certification by the Great place to Work Institute.
- The certification is the result of an employee survey conducted by the third-party global authority on recognising high-trust and performance culture at workplaces.
- This recognition acknowledges the bank’s commitment and credibility amongst its employees.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- ESAF Small Finance Bank MD & CEO: K Paul Thomas;
- ESAF Small Finance Bank HQ: Thrissur, Kerala.

**Hindi Writer Prof. Sharad Pagare Selected for Vyas Samman 2020**



- Well known Hindi writer, Prof. **Sharad Pagare** will be conferred with the **prestigious Vyas Samman – 2020**. He will be awarded the 31st Vyas Samman for his novel “**Patliputra Ki Samragi**”.
- The Vyas Samman started in 1991, is given by **KK Birla Foundation** for an outstanding literary work in Hindi authored by an Indian citizen published during the last **10 years**. It carries an award of **four lakh rupees** along with a citation and plaque.

**Asha Bhosle to be honoured with ‘Maharashtra Bhushan’**

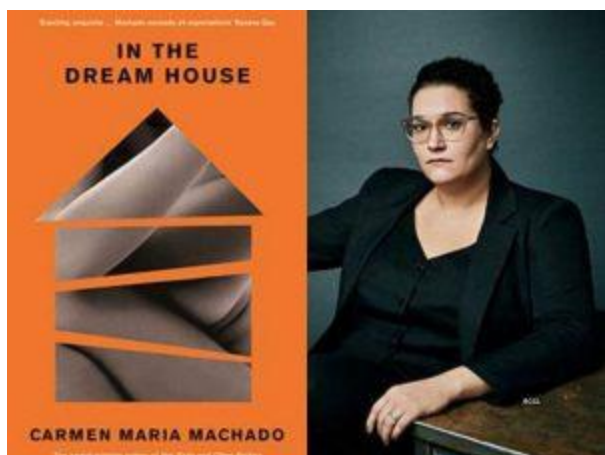


- The prestigious Maharashtra Bhushan Award will be given to legendary singer Asha Bhosle in 2020. Ms Bhosle was selected for the award for the year 2020 by a committee chaired by Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray.
- Ms Bhosle, whose sister Lata Mangeshkar won the award in 1997, said she learned of her nomination for the 2020 award from Mr Thackeray. In the year 2000, Ms. Bhosle received the Dadasaheb Phalke Award.
- The award, which was founded by the State government in 1996 to recognise distinguished work and achievements of eminent people from all walks of life in the state, comes with a cash prize of ten lakh rupees and a citation.
- The first Maharashtra Bhushan awardee was Marathi writer **P.L. Deshpande** and the last winner of this award was historian **Babasaheb Purandare** who got it for the year **2015**.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

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

**Carmen Maria Machado wins The Rathbones Folio Prize 2021**



- **‘In The Dream House: A Memoir’ by Carmen Maria Machado Wins The Rathbones Folio Prize 2021.**
- In the 2019 book, the author outlines her experiences in a same-sex relationship with her former partner, and the abuse she was subjected to. It is at once an inventive and radical work, a true testimony to her narrative gift.
- The prize is open to all genres – fiction, non-fiction, and poetry- from writers from around the world. It is the only prize in which all the books considered for the prize are selected and judged by an academy of peers, though there are three main judges.

**66th Filmfare Awards 2021: Check Complete List of Winners**

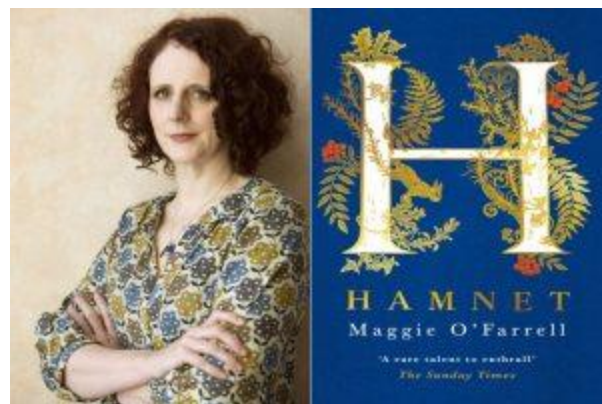


- The awards for the **66th annual Filmfare awards** were announced. The event was hosted by actors **Rajkummar Rao and Riteish**

**Deshmukh.** Despite the difficulties the film industry faced during 2020 as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, Filmfare decided it was important to commemorate the best of Indian cinema.

- Among the winners was the late **Irrfan Khan**, who won the award for best actor in a leading role (male) category, while **Amitabh Bachchan** bagged the best actor (critics) Award.

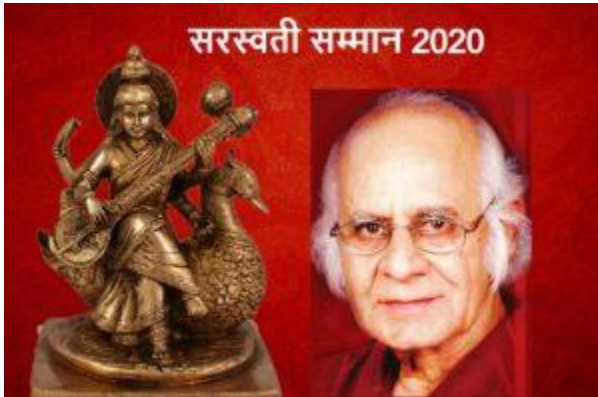
**Maggie O’Farrell’s ‘Hamnet’ wins book critics award for fiction**



- **Maggie O’Farrell’s Hamnet**, an imagined take on the death of Shakespeare’s son from the bubonic plague, has won the **National Book Critics Circle prize** for fiction. Hamnet, an unfortunately well-timed story for the current pandemic, explores the impact of the boy’s illness and death on his family.
- He was Shakespeare’s only son, and scholars have long speculated about his influence — if any — on “Hamlet,” which Shakespeare worked on in the years following Hamnet’s death.
- Tom Zoellner’s *Island on Fire: The Revolt That Ended Slavery in the British Empire* won for nonfiction, and Amy Stanley’s *Stranger in the Shogun’s City: A Japanese Woman and Her World* was the winner in biography.
- The autobiography award went to Cathy Park Hong for *Minor Feelings: An Asian American*

Reckoning.

**Dr Sharankumar Limbale to receive Saraswati Samman 2020**



- Noted Marathi writer **Dr Sharankumar Limbale** will receive **Saraswati Samman, 2020** for his book **Sanatan**. The award carries fifteen lakh rupees, a citation and a plaque. Saraswati Samman, instituted by **KK Birla Foundation in 1991**, is recognised as the most prestigious and highest literary award in the country.
- **Dr Limbale's Sanatan** has been published in **2018**. **Sanatan** is an important social and historical document of the Dalit struggle. Speaking first to All India Radio, Dr Limbale was overjoyed with emotion as he started his career with the public broadcaster.

## Topic 5: Banking News

**World Bank plans \$100-mn guarantee scheme for solar rooftop projects**



- The World Bank aims to launch a \$100 million credit guarantee programme to support India's rooftop solar programme, which has yet to gain traction.
- Micro, small, and medium-sized businesses (MSMEs) will be able to get low-interest debt financing to build rooftop solar panels under the scheme.
- The World Bank scheme, which is being introduced in partnership with the State Bank of

India (SBI) and the MSME ministry to accelerate the adoption of rooftop solar units, would provide MSMEs with about \$1 billion in credit.

- The agreement would help companies that often struggle to meet bank and other financial institution lending requirements, and whose financial woes have been compounded by the covid-19 pandemic.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- World Bank Headquarters: Washington, D.C., United States.
- World Bank Formation: July 1944.
- World Bank President: David Malpass.

**Axis Securities' new platform to make an investment in bond**





- **Axis Securities** has announced the launch of **'YIELD'** – an online platform to buy and sell bonds as well as debentures in the secondary market. By offering competitive rates and technical know-how, YIELD would empower the investors to make the right investment decision.
- The trades and settlement of transactions executed will be reported on the BSE NDS (new debt segment) platform.
- “YIELD is the first-of-its-kind initiative that allows retail investors direct access to the debt instruments,” the brokerage house said in a statement.
- This new tool will remove the hassle of filling up physical forms or the need for separate KYC with the bond institutions, it added.
- To facilitate transactions only insecure options, it aggregates only 'AAA' to 'A' rated quality debt instruments available for investment in the secondary market.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Axis Bank Commenced operations: 1994.
- Axis Bank Headquarters: Mumbai, Maharashtra.
- Axis Bank Tagline: Dil Se Open.
- Axis Bank MD and CEO: Amitabh Chaudhry.

**EPFO keeps interest rate unchanged at 8.5% for 2020-21**

- The board of **Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO)** has kept the interest rates on **Provident Fund deposits** for the financial year 2020-21 at **8.5 per cent**. The rate has been kept unchanged, as in 2019-20.
- The decision was taken by the Central Board of Trustees, at the 228th meeting, under the chairmanship of Labour Minister **Santosh Kumar Gangwar**.
- Last year, in March, EPFO had reduced the interest rate on provident fund deposits to a seven-year low of 8.5 per cent for 2019-20. For the financial year 2018-19, the interest rate was fixed at 8.65 per cent. The EPFO had provided an 8.55 per cent interest rate to its subscribers for 2017-18 and an interest rate was 8.65 per cent for the financial year 2016-17.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- CEO of EPFO: Sunil Barthwal.
- EPFO Founded: 4 March 1952.
- EPFO Headquarters: New Delhi.

**Alliance Insurance launches insurance portal 'SMEInsure'**

# Alliance

## Insurance Group

- Alliance Insurance has launched the 'SMEInsure' insurance portal to provide financial security to Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), small shop owners, and business owners.
- It's a forum for insuring 5 million small and medium businesses (SMEs) under the insurance group.
- Notably, the portal will provide insurance coverage in both physical and digital formats. Physical insurance will be provided through individual personal assistance, while digital insurance will be provided through the portal.
- Alliance Insurance aims to hit more than 5 crore SMEs in the first year and generate Rs 10 crore in revenue. In India, nearly 97 percent of SMEs are uninsured.

### Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- Alliance Insurance CEO & Principal Officer: S. V. Thakkar.
- Alliance Insurance Headquarter: Mumbai, Maharashtra.

### HDFC Bank launches SmartUp Unnati programme



- **HDFC Bank** on the occasion of International Women' Day has announced the launch of a dedicated programme named "**SmartUp Unnati**" for mentoring women entrepreneurs by women leaders at the bank.
- Under the SmartUp Unnati programme, over the next one year, senior women leaders from HDFC Bank will mentor women entrepreneurs in helping them achieve their goals. This programme is available only to exist customers and will initially target more than **3,000 women entrepreneurs** associated with the bank's SmartUp programme.

### Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- Headquarters of HDFC Bank: Mumbai, Maharashtra.
- MD and CEO of HDFC Bank: Sashidhar Jagdishan (Succeeds Aditya Puri).
- The tagline of HDFC Bank: We understand your world.

### MeitY released the list of "Digital Payment Scorecard"



- The **Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology** (MeitY) has released the list of **“Digital Payment Scorecard”**. In the list, the **State Bank of India (SBI)** has topped for the third consecutive months.
- The digital payment scorecard tracks the performance of the Commercial Banks on several digital parameters. SBI maintained the top remitter bank by recording the highest UPI transaction volume which accounted for nearly **Rupees 640 million**.
- SBI has also emerged as the largest issuer of debit cards. It issued over **290 million** debit cards with a 30% market share with respect to card spends and 29% share with respect to transaction volume. Bank has also made steady progress with respect to increasing payment acceptance infrastructure.

#### Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- SBI Chairperson: Dinesh Kumar Khara.
- SBI Headquarters: Mumbai.
- SBI Founded: 1 July 1955.

#### RBI removes PCA restrictions on IDBI Bank



- The **Reserve Bank of India** has removed **IDBI Bank** from its enhanced regulatory supervision or **Prompt Corrective Action (PCA) framework**.
- It was noted that as per published results for the quarter ending December 31, 2020, the bank is not in breach of the PCA parameters on regulatory capital, net NPA and leverage ratio.
- The bank has also provided a written commitment that it would comply with the norms of minimum regulatory capital, net NPA and leverage ratio on an ongoing basis and has apprised the RBI of the structural and systemic improvements that it has put in place which would help the bank in continuing to meet these commitments.

#### Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

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

#### Axis Bank launches “Wear N Pay” contactless payment wearable devices



- Under the name Wear 'N' Pay, Axis Bank has unveiled a line of wearable contactless payment systems. These devices are available in a variety of wearables, including a band, key chain, and watch loop, and start at Rs 750.
- The wearables are connected to an Axis Bank customer's bank account and function in the same way as a standard debit card. It can be used to make transactions at any retailer that accepts contactless payments.
- The new 'Wear N Pay' devices from Axis Bank come with a range of accessories, including a band, key chain, and watch loop.
- Users do not need to carry their smartphones and wallet for payments anymore. These wearable devices can be worn easily to carry out contactless transactions on the go.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Axis Bank Commenced operations: 1994.
- Axis Bank Headquarters: Mumbai, Maharashtra.
- Axis Bank Tagline: Dil Se Open.
- Axis Bank MD and CEO: Amitabh Chaudhry.

**India's Forex Reserves Surpass Russia's to become World's 4th Biggest**



- **India's foreign-exchange reserves** surpassed **Russia's** to become the world's **fourth-largest reserve**.
- The foreign currency holdings of India stood at **\$580.3 billion** as of March 5, as per the data by the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)**.
- The reserve of Russia was **\$580.1 billion**. Overall, **China** has the largest reserves, followed by **Japan and Switzerland**, as on the International Monetary Fund table.
- Reserves for both countries have mostly flattened out this year after months of rapid increase. India pulled ahead as Russian holdings declined at a faster rate in recent weeks. India's reserves, enough to cover roughly 18 months of imports, have been bolstered by a rare current-account surplus, rising inflows into the local stock market and foreign direct investment.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

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

**RBI: Image-based Cheque Truncation System in all branches by Sep 30**



- The **Reserve Bank of India** has asked banks to implement the image-based **Cheque Truncation System (CTS)** in all branches by **September 30** this year. The move is aimed at faster settlement of cheques resulting in better customer service.
- The Apex bank said that to leverage the availability of CTS and provide a uniform customer experience irrespective of the location of her/his bank branch, it has been decided to extend CTS across all bank branches in the country.
- To facilitate this, banks will have to ensure that all their branches participate in image-based CTS under respective grids by September 30.
- A cheque truncation system is an arrangement that facilitates the electronic processing of a cheque with the use of **Magnetic Ink Character Reader (MICR)** data and the scanned image of the instrument without involving any physical exchange or movement of the financial instrument.

**RBI Imposes Rs 2 Crore Fine on State Bank of India**



- For breaching certain provisions of Section 10 of the Banking Regulation (BR) Act, 1949, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has levied a monetary penalty of 2 crores on the State Bank of India (SBI).
- Specific guidelines issued by the central bank to the bank on the payment of remuneration to employees in the form of fee.
- The RBI has been granted the authority to enforce this penalty under the BR Act's provisions. The penalty isn't supposed to be a judgement on the fairness of any transaction or arrangement between the bank and its customers.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- RBI 25th Governor: Shaktikant Das; Headquarters: Mumbai; Founded: 1 April 1935, Kolkata.
- SBI Chairperson: Dinesh Kumar Khara.
- SBI Headquarters: Mumbai.
- SBI Founded: 1 July 1955.

**PNB sets-up subsidiary to manage credit card business**



- **Punjab National Bank (PNB)** has set up a wholly-owned subsidiary namely **“PNB Cards & Services Ltd”** to manage its credit card business. The PNB Cards & Services Ltd has been incorporated on March 16, 2021, by

the **Registrar of Companies, Delhi**.

- The new subsidiary will undertake the non-financial support services related to the credit card business of the bank. The authorised capital of the company is **Rs 25 crore** and the paid-up capital is **Rs 15 crore**.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Punjab National Bank Headquarters: New Delhi.
- Punjab National Bank MD and CEO: S. S. Mallikarjuna Rao.
- Punjab National Bank Founded: 19 May 1894, Lahore, Pakistan.

**RBI imposes Rs 15 lakh penalty on Fedbank Financial Services**



- The **Reserve Bank of India** has imposed a penalty of **Rs 15 lakh** on **Fedbank Financial Services Limited, Mumbai**.
- The penalty has been imposed for non-compliance with “certain provisions of the directions issued by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) contained in **”Monitoring of Frauds in NBFCs (Reserve Bank) Directions, 2016’**.
- The statutory inspection of the company with reference to its financial position as of March 31, 2019, revealed, inter alia, non-compliance with the directions issued by it. The inspection report of the KoyanaSahakari Bank based on its financial position as of March 31, 2019,

revealed that it had exceeded the prudential inter-bank (single bank) exposure limit.

**Indian Overseas Bank launches ‘IOB Trendy’ savings account**



**Indian Overseas Bank**

- **Indian Overseas Bank (IOB)** has launched **‘IOB Trendy’**, a savings account customised for the growing millennial population in the country by keeping their banking preferences in mind. IOB Trendy is a Savings Bank Account Scheme introduced by the bank towards this endeavour.
- For opening an IOB Trendy account, a customer needs to be within the age bracket of **21 – 38 years**.
- The account may be self or jointly operated. In the case of a joint account, the primary holder has to be a millennial at the time of account opening.
- There is no **‘Opening Balance’** requirement for IOB Trendy. So, no charges will be levied for the first month for non-maintenance of balance.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Indian Overseas Bank CEO: ParthaPratim Sengupta;
- Indian Overseas Bank Headquarters: Chennai;
- Indian Overseas Bank Founded: 10 February 1937, Chennai.

**Union Bank of India launched “UNI – CARBON CARD”**



- **Union Bank of India** has launched “**UNI – CARBON CARD**”, an **HPCL** co-branded credit card on the **Rupay platform of NPCI**.
- It is a unique card designed with association with one of the largest Public Sector Bank, Union Bank of India and HPCL, a leader in the fuel retail and Rupay – India’s largest card payment network. It will create an opportunity to create value for the customers.
- The Bank is having a total network of **9590+ branches and 13280+ ATMs** across India, this co-branded credit card is a Bank’s maiden joint venture.
- While using this card at HPCL retail outlets, the cardholder gets **Cashback/Rewards** in addition to the waiver of fuel surcharge provided by the Bank.
- Cardholders will be able to enjoy many freebies and offer brought out by NPCI such as **Entertainment, Lifestyle, Travel, Shopping, Food delivery, etc.,**
- The card is offered to salaried and others. The card limit offered is 20% of gross annual income with a minimum of **Rs 50,000/-** with no upper limit.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

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

- Union Bank Tagline: Good People to Bank with.

**SBI Mutual Funds Launches First Overseas Fund**



- On March 1, 2021, the State Bank of India (SBI) Mutual Funds unveiled their first overseas bid.
- SBI International Access — US Equity FOF is an open-ended fund of funds scheme that invests in mutual funds and exchange-traded funds (ETFs) that invest in US markets that are based in other countries.
- In general, the scheme will invest 95-100 percent of its net assets in Amundi Funds – US Pioneer Fund (including ETFs) that invest primarily in US markets.
- Customers who are involved in the scheme must make a first-time investment of at least Rs 5,000. The minimum application number for additional transactions is Rs 1,000.
- There is no upper cap for the investment in this fund.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- SBI Chairperson: Dinesh Kumar Khara.
- SBI Headquarters: Mumbai.
- SBI Founded: 1 July 1955.
- SBI Mutual Fund MD & CEO: Vinay Tonse.

**HDFC ERGO launches Business Kisht Suraksha cover**



- **HDFC ERGO General Insurance** has launched the “**Business Kisht Suraksha**” cover. It is a unique cover that was launched with the aim of protecting the balance sheet of **Microfinance Institutions (MFIs)**, financial institutions and banks if any catastrophe or a natural disaster occurs.
- This was launched with the aim of limiting the impacts on the balance sheet of financial institutions which occurs because of non-payment of EMIs by borrowers or because of several calamities like **earthquakes, floods, cyclones**.
- The Business Kisht can be customised as per the needs of the individual MFI or financial institution (FI). It can also be tailor-made based on the geographical presence of the borrower, MFI or any FIs.
- The MFIs or FIs would also be given the option to select the number of EMIs which might need insurance coverage.

#### Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- HDFC ERGO CEO: Ritesh Kumar.
- HDFC ERGO Headquarters: Mumbai.
- HDFC ERGO Founded: 2002.

#### NPCI Partners SBI Payments to launch “RuPaySoftPoS” for Merchants



- The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) and SBI Payments have teamed up to sell Indian merchants “RuPaySoftPoS.”
- At a low cost, the RuPaySoftPoS solution would provide retailers with a cost-effective acceptance infrastructure. This ground-breaking approach allows retailers to transform NFC-enabled smartphones into merchant point-of-sale (PoS) terminals.
- RuPaySoftPoS is expected to provide retailers with a smooth, cost-effective acceptance infrastructure at a low cost, allowing millions of underserved Indian MSMEs to accept digital payments. RuPaySoftPoS will enable merchants to use their **near-field communication (NFC)**-enabled smartphones as the **point of sale (PoS)** terminals and accept payment up to **Rs 5,000** through a simple tap and pay mechanism.
- Merchants can convert their existing android smartphone devices into a payment terminal by simply downloading a supported app.
- This solution will revolutionise the way micro and small merchants receive payments and create a demarcated shift in their tendency to deal in cash to accepting secure, contactless digital payments instead.

#### Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- National Payments Corporation of India MD & CEO: DilipAsbe.



- National Payments Corporation of India  
Headquarters: Mumbai.
- National Payments Corporation of India  
Founded: 2008.

**Sebi cancels Sahara India Financial Corp’s registration as sub-broker**



- The Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) has cancelled Sahara India Financial Corporation Ltd's certificate of registration as a sub-broker, citing the company's failure to meet the "fit and proper" requirements.
- In 2018, the regulator named a specified authority to investigate whether Sahara India Financial broke the Intermediaries Regulations.
- According to the designated authority's report, Sahara India Financial (noticee) is not a "fit and proper person" to continue as a sub-broker in the securities market, based on Subrata Roy Sahara's antecedents and various judicial pronouncements against him and other Sahara group companies.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Securities and Exchange Board of India  
Founded: 12 April 1992.
- Securities and Exchange Board of India  
Headquarters: Mumbai.
- Securities and Exchange Board of India Agency

executive: Ajay Tyagi.

**NPCI launches UPI-Help on BHIM app for Grievance Redressal**



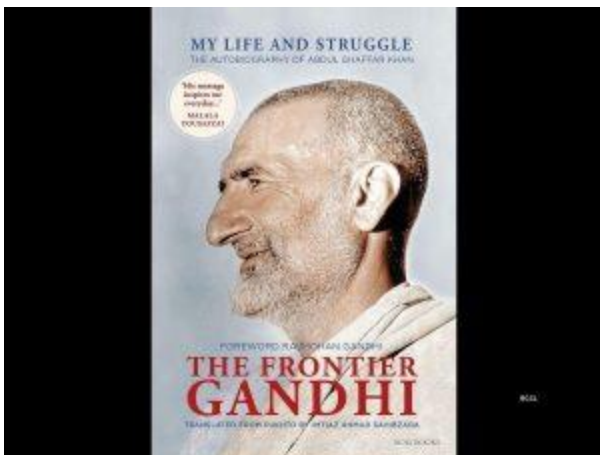
- The **National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)**, the umbrella entity for digital payments in India, has launched a new application named **“UPI-Help”** on **BHIM UPI**, which will act as a grievance redressal mechanism for the users of the BHIM application.
- Initially, UPI-Help has been made live on the BHIM app for the customers of **State Bank of India, AXIS Bank, HDFC Bank, and ICICI Bank**. Users of other banks participating in UPI will also be added to UPI-Help soon.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

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

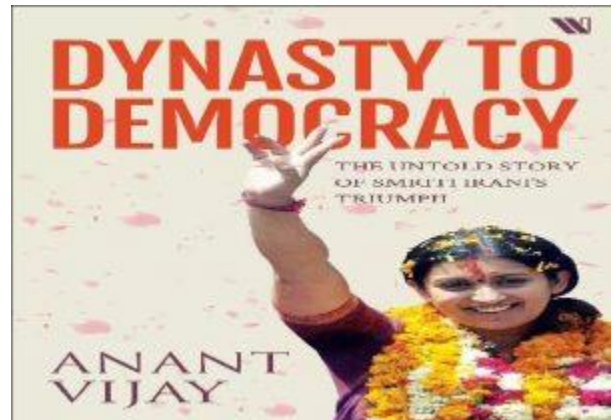
## Topic 6: Books and Author

### Frontier Gandhi's autobiography released in English



- The autobiography of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, also known as the "Frontier Gandhi," titled "The Frontier Gandhi: My Life and Struggle," will be published in English by Roli Books.
- This will be his first English-language autobiography. Imitiaz Ahmad Sahibzada, a former Pakistani civil servant and author, translated the book into English.
- Ghaffar Khan's book details the incidents and people who shaped the independence movement.
- The book explains the sacrifices and efforts that contributed to India's independence.

A book on Smriti Irani's victory in Amethi released soon



- The English translation of journalist-author Anant Vijay's book "Amethi Sangram: Aitihāsik Jeet Ankahi Dastan" will be released on March 15.
- The book, titled "Dynasty to Democracy: The Untold Story of Smriti Irani's Triumph", traces Union Minister Irani's journey from her defeat in 2014 to her victory in the Congress stronghold of Amethi, Uttar Pradesh during the 2019 Lok Sabha election.
- The Hindi book was published in December 2020. The book can also be seen as a study of the RSS's working style, its strategies and exemplary execution that backed Smriti Irani's efforts from 2014 to 2019.

Maharashtra Governor releases e-book titled Dawn Under The Dome



- Maharashtra Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari published Dawn Under The Dome, a digital e-book.
- The history of the Mumbai General Post Office building is depicted in this digital novel. Swati Pandey, the Post Master General of Mumbai, collaborated with Orchida Mukherjee to write it.
- According to the book, the building was constructed using three types of Indian stones: grey basalt with buff trachyte and Yellowstone from Mumbai's Kurla and Malad, respectively, and white stone from Dharandhra.

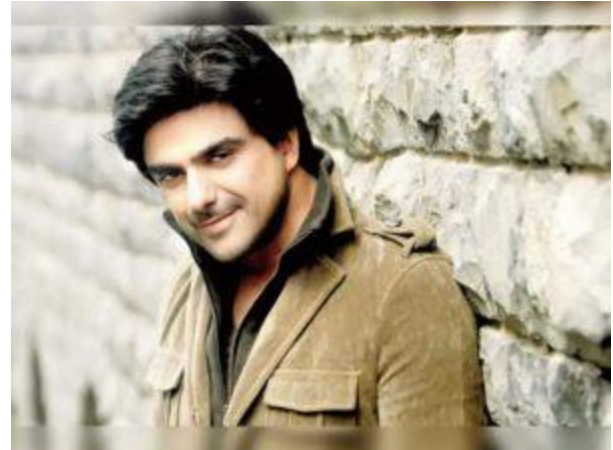
**A Book 'Battle Ready for 21st Century' released**



- A book titled **"Battle Ready for 21st Century"** co-edited by Lt Gen **AK Singh**, Distinguished Fellow CLAWS and Brig **Narender Kumar**, Visiting Fellow CLAWS was released by **Gen Bipin Rawat**. The book lays down the conceptual framework for the strategic management of future conflicts.

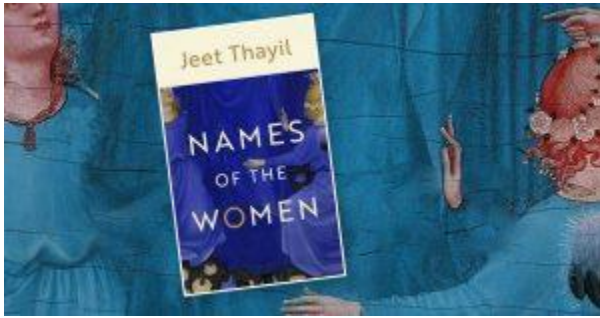
- The book "Battle Ready for the 21st Century" has endeavoured to postulate and define emerging areas of conflict, desired capabilities and doctrinal issues that need careful examination.

**A book titled 'My Experiments with Silence' authored by Samir Soni**



- The book **"My Experiments with Silence"** is authored by **Samir Soni** on anxiety and self-discovery. Soni's book aims to be a personal account of his dialogues with himself during his growing-up years in Delhi, his stint at Wall Street and his time in Bollywood.
- The book will be published by **OM Books International**. Soni said his book will be an "ode to anyone who has fought or is fighting their inner demons".

**A book titled "Names of the Women" by Jeet Thayil**



- Jeet Thayil wrote a book called "Names of the Women." Women's positions in the Gospels were suppressed, reduced, or deleted, according to the text.
- Jeet Thayil is a well-known author whose novel "Narcopolis" was shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize in 2012 and won the DSC Prize for South Asian Literature. In 2020, his most recent novel, 'Low,' was released.

## Topic 7: Defence News

### Indian Air Force to Participate in EX Desert FLAG VI



- The Indian Air Force (IAF) will take part in Exercise Desert Flag-VI, which will take place at Al-Dhafra airbase in the United Arab Emirates from March 3 to 27, 2021.
- The exercise's goal is to give participating forces operational experience, train them to conduct simulated air combat operations in a controlled environment, and provide an opportunity to improve their operational capabilities through shared sharing of best practises.
- The United Arab Emirates Air Force hosts Ex Desert Flag, an annual multi-national large-force employment warfare exercise. The IAF is participating with six **Su-30 MKI**, two **C-17** and one **IL-78 tanker aircraft**.

### Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- Chiefs of Air Staff: Rakesh Kumar Singh Bhadauria.

### DRDO successfully flight test SFDR technology



- The **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** conducted a successful flight test of **Solid Fuel Ducted Ramjet (SFDR) technology** from the integrated test range (ITR), **Chandipur, off Odisha coast**.
- The SFDR technology will help DRDO with the technological advantage to develop long-range air-to-air missiles (AAMs). DRDO began developing SFDR first in **2017** and had conducted successful tests in **2018 and 2019 as well**.
- The SFDR is a missile propulsion system being developed primarily by the **Defence Research and Development Laboratory**

**(DRDL) and Research Centre Imarat (RCI) in Hyderabad.**

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

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

**Rajnath Singh Attends 3-day Combined Commanders' Conference**



- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, along with top defence officials, attended the three-day Combined Commanders' Conference (CCC) in Kevadia, Gujarat.
- The emphasis will be on theaterization of armed forces, self-reliance in the defence field, and emerging regional threats. It is a premier brainstorming event for the three Services' Military Commanders.
- On Day 2, Defense Minister Rajnath Singh conducted deliberations. On the third and final day, PM Narendra Modi presided over a first, valedictory session. The most recent CCC was conducted at the Air Force Station in Jodhpur in 2018.

**Indian Navy's 'silent killer' INS Karanj commissioned**



- In Mumbai, the Indian Navy commissioned its third Scorpene submarine, Project P-75's INS Karanj. India's status as a submarine-building nation was further cemented with the delivery of Karanj.
- Mazagon Dock Ltd (MDL), one of India's leading shipyards, has the potential and capabilities to fulfil the Indian Navy's requirements and ambitions. Prior to Karanj, the Indian Navy commissioned the INS Kalvari and INS Khanderi in 2017 and 2019, respectively.
- Karanj is a small submarine that measures 60 metres in length. Weapon package includes sufficient wire-guided torpedoes and sub-surface to surface missiles to neutralise a large enemy fleet. For self-defence, it has a **state-of-the-art torpedo-decoy system**.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

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

**India-Uzbekistan joint military exercise DUSTLIK II commences in Ranikhet**



- The **India – Uzbekistan** joint military exercise **DUSTLIK II** has commenced in Foreign Training Node **Chaubatia, Ranikhet in Uttarakhand**. This is the **Second Edition** of the annual bilateral joint exercise of both armies.
- It will continue till the 19th of this month. The first edition of the exercise was held in **Uzbekistan** in November 2019. 45 Soldiers each from Uzbekistan and the Indian Army are participating in the exercise.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Capital of Uzbekistan: Tashkent; Currency: Uzbekistani Som.
- President of Uzbekistan: ShavkatMirziyoyev.

**KRAS releases the First batch of MRSAM Missiles**



- The **Kalyani Rafael Advanced Systems (KRAS)**, which is a joint venture between the **Kalyani Group of India** and **Rafael Advanced Defence Systems of Israel**, have released the first batch of **Medium Range**

**Surface to Air Missile (MRSAM) kits.**

- The missile was released for the Indian Army and Indian Air Force. The release of the MRSAM Missile also marked the KRAS’ commitment to delivering more than **1000 MRSAM missile kits** to India in near future.
- These missile sections will then be sent for further and future integration to **Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL)**. The Kalyani Group has infused the “State-of-the-art technology with engineering excellence in the company.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

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

**INS Jalashwa Arrives at Port Anjouan as part of Mission Sagar-IV**



- As part of **Mission Sagar-IV**, Indian Naval Ship **Jalashwa** arrived at **Port Anjouan, Comoros** to deliver 1,000 Metric Tonnes of rice. An official ceremony for handing over the food aid from the Government of India to the Government of Comoros. INS Jalashwa, the largest amphibious ship of the Indian Navy, has been specially sent to Comoros due to its large carrying capacity.
- This consignment of 1000 metric tonnes of rice

as food assistance was flagged off to Comoros in the light of a promise made by the Vice President of India, **Venkaiah Naidu** during his brief visit to Comoros in the month of October 2019. This is the second visit of an Indian Navy ship to the island country within a span of one year.

- Earlier, as part of **Mission Sagar-I, in May-June 2020**, the Indian Navy had delivered essential medicines to the nation and had also deployed a specialist medical team to work alongside their counterparts and to render assistance for dengue fever-related emergencies.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

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

**Indian Navy undertakes exercise PASSEX with Royal Bahrain Naval Force**



- **Indian Navy on 18th March** undertook **Passage Exercise (PASSEX)** with Royal Bahrain Naval Force Corvette **Al Muharraq** in the Persian Gulf under Operation Sankalp. PASSEXs are conducted regularly by the Indian Navy with units of friendly foreign navies,
- whilst visiting each other’s ports or during a rendezvous at sea.
- The exercises are aimed at fostering interoperability and reflecting the commitments of both, India and Bahrain, to build cooperative

partnerships in meeting emergent maritime challenges.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

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

**Defence Ministry deal with BDL to acquire 4,690 anti-tank guided missiles**



- The **Defence Ministry** has sealed a deal with the public sector undertaking **Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL)** to acquire **4,960 MILAN-2T anti-tank guided missiles** at a cost of **₹ 1,188 crores** for the Indian Army.
- The missiles, having a range of **1,850 metres**, are being produced by BDL under license from French defence major MBDA Missile Systems. These missiles can be fired from the ground as well as vehicle-based launchers and can be deployed in the anti-tank role for both offensive and defensive tasks.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Minister of Defence: Raj Nath Singh.
- Bharat Dynamics Limited  
Founded: 1970, Hyderabad.
- Bharat Dynamics Limited Chairman & MD:

Siddharth Mishra.

**Indian Armed Forces 4th Strongest in the World**



- **China** has the strongest military force in the world while **India stands at number four**, according to a study released by defence website **Military Direct**. China has the strongest military in the world, scoring **82 out of 100 points** in the index.
- The **USA**, despite their enormous military budgets, comes in 2nd place with 74 points, followed by **Russia** with 69, **India** at 61 and then **France** with 58.
- The **U.K.** just about makes the Top 10, coming in 9th place with a score of 43. The study said the “ultimate military strength index” was calculated after taking into consideration various factors including budgets, number of inactive and active military personnel, total air, sea, land and nuclear resources, average salaries, and weight of equipment.

**Pabbi-Anti-Terror 2021: India, Pakistan and China to hold anti-terror exercise**



- The eight-member bloc said that the decision to hold the joint exercise ‘**Pabbi-Anti-Terror 2021**’ was announced during the 36th meeting of the Council of the **Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS)** held in **Tashkent, Uzbekistan**. Members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, including India, Pakistan and China, will hold a joint anti-terrorism exercise this year.
- “Decisions have been made to improve cooperation between the competent authorities of the SCO member states in identifying and suppressing channels that finance terrorist activities.
- Delegations of the competent authorities of **India, Kazakhstan, China, the Kyrgyz Republic, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and the RATS Executive Committee** attended the meeting.

**Indian Coast Guard Ship ‘Vajra’ commissioned to the Indian Coast Guard**



- L&T-built Offshore Patrol Vessel (OPV) **ICGS**



**Vajra** was commissioned into the **Indian Coast Guard (ICG)** by General **Bipin Rawat**, Chief of Defence Staff, at Chennai.

- ICGS Vajra is the **sixth** vessel in the series of seven OPVs being built by L&T under a Ministry of Defence contract signed in the year **2015**. Like the five OPVs in the series, ICGS Vajra was also delivered ahead of the contractual schedule.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Director-General of Indian Coast Guard: Krishnaswamy Natarajan.
- Indian Coast Guard Headquarters: New Delhi.

**India conducts a first-ever joint patrol in Madagascar EEZ**



- For the first time, the Indian and Madagascar navies patrolled Madagascar's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) together and conducted a Passage Exercise (PASSEX).
- The first-ever joint patrol between the navies illustrates the two Indian Ocean neighbours' growing defence relations, which are aimed at ensuring maritime security in the Indian Ocean region (IOR).
- As part of the First Training Squadron's (1TS) Overseas Deployment, the Indian Naval Ship INS Shardul made a port call in Antsiranana,

Madagascar. A Passage Exercise was conducted between the INS Shardul and the MNS Trozona of the Malagasy Navy (PASSEX). The Joint exercise bears testimony to the growing bonds between the maritime forces of both the nations and aimed at common objectives of ensuring maritime security by India and Madagascar and interoperability between the two navies.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Madagascar Capital: Antananarivo;
- Madagascar President: Andry Rajoelina;
- Madagascar Currency: Malagasy ariary.

**India, US Carry Out Joint Military Drill In Himachal Pradesh**



- The **11th edition** of **Indo-US** joint special forces exercises **Vajra Prahar 2021** was conducted at Special Forces training school located at **Bakloh, in Himachal Pradesh**. The exercise 'Vajra Prahar' is aimed at sharing best practices and experiences in areas such as joint mission planning and operational tactics.
- The exercise was aimed at improving interoperability between the special forces of the two countries. The armies of participating nations jointly train, plan and execute a series

of operations for neutralisation of threats of varied nature with a common aim of countering threats of international terrorism through mutual training and jointness.

## Topic 8: Economy

### Fitch Ratings Projects India's GDP to 12.8% for FY22



- American credit rating agency, **Fitch** has revised India's GDP growth estimate for the fiscal 2021-22 to **12.8%**, from its previous estimate of **11%**, in its latest **Global Economic Outlook (GEO)**.
- The improvement in GDP rate is based on factors like a stronger carryover effect, a looser fiscal stance, and better virus containment. Also, for the fiscal year 2022-23, Fitch expects GDP growth at **5.8%**.

#### Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- Fitch Ratings Headquarters: New York, United States.
- Fitch Ratings CEO: Paul Taylor.
- Fitch Ratings Founder: John Knowles Fitch.
- Fitch Ratings Founded: 1914.

#### GST collections up by 7 % to Rs 1.13 lakh cr in February



- The **gross Goods and Services Tax (GST) revenue** collected in the month of **February 2021** is **₹ 1,13,143 crore** of which CGST is ₹ **21,092 crore**, SGST is ₹ **27,273 crore**, IGST is ₹ **55,253 crore** (including ₹ 24,382 crores collected on import of goods) and Cess is ₹ 9,525 crore (including ₹ 660 crores collected on import of goods).
- Revenues for February are **7%** higher than the GST revenues of February 2019. Revenues from the import of goods were **15%** higher than Feb '19.

#### List of GST Collection previous months

- January 2021: ₹ 1,19,847 crore (All-time Highest).
- December- Rs 1,15,174 crore (All-time Highest).
- November: ₹1.04 lakh crore.
- October 2020: ₹ 1,05,155 crore.

#### Crisil: Indian economy to grow at 11% in FY'22



- India’s GDP growth is expected to rebound to **11%** in **FY’22** as people learn to live with the new normal, flattening of the **Covid-19** affliction curve, the rollout of vaccinations, and investment-focused government spending converge, according to rating firm **Crisil**.
- But recovery won’t be easy, with scars of the pandemic deep for small businesses and the urban poor.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- CEO of Crisil: AshuSuyash.
- Crisil Chief Economist: Dharmakirti Joshi.
- Headquarters of Crisil: Mumbai.

**OECD interim economic outlook pegs India’s GDP growth at 12.6% in FY22**



- **Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)** interim economic outlook has pegged India’s gross domestic product (GDP) growth to rebound to **12.6%** in **FY22**,

which will be the fastest in the world, followed by China at **7.8%** growth.

- India’s GDP is expected to grow at **5.4%** in the following financial year, owing to the faster rebound of several large emerging-market economies.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- OECD Headquarters: Paris, France.
- OECD Founded: 30 September 1961.
- OECD Secretary-General: Jose Angel Gurría.

**UNCTAD projects India’s GDP to grow 5% in 2021**



- The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) predicts that India's economy will contract by 6.9% in 2020 due to the coronavirus pandemic, but will recover and rise by 5% in 2021.
- Furthermore, the UNCTAD forecasts that the global economy will expand by 4.7% in 2021.
- According to the report, India's stronger recovery in 2021 is due in part to a deeper than anticipated decline in 2020. According to a United Nations study, the country's current fiscal year budget indicates a move toward demand-side stimulus, with an increase in public spending.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- UNCTAD Headquarters: Geneva, Switzerland.
- UNCTAD Founder: United Nations General

Assembly.

- UNCTAD Founded: 30 December 1964.

**India’s economy projected to grow at 12% in CY 2021:**

**Moody’s**



- The Indian economy is predicted to grow by 12% in calendar year 2021, according to Moody's Analytics. Moody's forecasted a 7.1 percent contraction in real GDP for calendar

year 2020. It's worth remembering that Moody's Analytics forecasts for the calendar year, while Moody's Investors Service forecasts for the fiscal year.

- This forecast equates to real GDP rising by 4.4 percent above pre-COVID-19 levels (as of March 2020) by the end of 2021, or by 5.7 percent above the GDP level in December 2020 by the end of 2021, in level terms.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

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

**Topic 9: International News**

**Russia launches first Arctic-monitoring Satellite ‘Arktika-M’**



- The Russian space corporation **Roscosmos** successfully launched its first satellite to monitor the **Arctic’s climate and environment**. The satellite called “**Arktika-M**”, was launched on February 28, 2021, onboard **Soyuz-2.1b** carrier rocket, from the **Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan**.
- This satellite will help to collect information to solve operational meteorology and hydrology

problems, and monitoring the climate and environment in the Arctic region.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Russia President: Vladimir Putin.
- Russia Capital: Moscow.
- Russia Currency: Russian Ruble.

**Ghana becomes the world’s first nation to receive COVAX vaccines**



- **Ghana** has become the first country in the world to receive vaccines acquired through the United Nations-backed **COVAX initiative** with a delivery of 600,000 doses of the **AstraZeneca** vaccine made by the **Serum Institute of India**.
- Ghana is one of 92 low- and middle-income countries providing free vaccinations thanks to COVAX. If they want to obtain vaccines via COVAX, another 90 countries and eight territories have agreed to pay.
- The vaccines, which were distributed by UNICEF, are part of the first wave of Covid-19 vaccines sent by COVAX, an international cooperative programme established to ensure that low- and middle-income countries have equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines. COVAX is led by the United Nation’s World Health Organization; Gavi, a vaccine group; and the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations, or CEPI.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Ghana President: Nana Akufo-Addo.
- Ghana Capital: Accra.
- Ghana Currency: Ghanaian cedi.

**UN body recommends Bangladesh graduation from LDC**



**Committee for Development Policy (CDP)**

- The **United Nations Committee for Development Policy (CDP)** has recommended

the graduation of **Bangladesh** from the category of **Least Developed Country (LDC)**. Bangladesh has fulfilled the eligibility criteria in terms of per capita income, human assets and economic and environmental vulnerability.

- This is the second consecutive time since **2018** that the CDP has made the recommendation for Bangladesh for graduation from the LDC category. **Myanmar and Lao PDR** also met the criteria for the 2nd time.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

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

**Israel officially receives first-ever UAE ambassador**



- **Israel’s president** has formally received the **first-ever ambassador** from the **United Arab Emirates**, following last year’s historic agreement between the countries to normalise ties. UAE envoy **Mohamed Al Khaja**, who arrived in Israel, delivered his credentials to Israeli President **Reuven Rivlin** at a ceremony in **Jerusalem**.
- Under the Abraham Accords, a pact brokered by former US President Donald Trump, the UAE was the first nation to agree to full diplomatic relations with the Jewish state.
- Following Egypt in 1979 and Jordan in 1994, the UAE became the third majority Arab nation to

create official relations with Israel. The Abraham Accords have since been signed by Bahrain, Morocco, and Sudan. The agreements broke with the longstanding Arab consensus that there should be no normalisation with Israel until it reaches a comprehensive peace deal with the Palestinians.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

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

**Australia building world’s first platypus sanctuary**



- **Australian conservationists** have unveiled plans to build the world’s first refuge for the **platypus**, to promote breeding and rehabilitation as the duck-billed mammal faces extinction due to climate change.
- The **Taronga Conservation Society Australia** and the New South Wales State government said they would build the specialist facility, mostly ponds and burrows for the semi-aquatic creatures, at a zoo 391 km from Sydney, by 2022.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Australia Capital: Canberra.
- Australia Currency: Australian dollar.

- Australia PM: Scott Morrison.

**Google Launched “Women Will” Web Platform**



- On March 8, 2021, on the occasion of "International Women's Day," Google released a new online platform named "Women Can." With the help of accelerator programmes, business tutorials, and mentorship, this platform will help 1 million rural women in India become entrepreneurs.
- This web portal is available in both English and Hindi. It will provide guidance to aspiring women in villages who want to turn their passion or hobby into a business, such as beauty services, tailoring, home tuition, food processing, and so on.
- To begin with, Google will work with **2,000 ‘Internet Saathis’** to help other women with this resource to start their entrepreneurial journey.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Google CEO: Sundar Pichai.
- Google Founded: 4 September 1998, California, United States.
- Google Founders: Larry Page, Sergey Brin.

**Bangladesh to commemorate 50th anniversary of 1971 Liberation war**



- In the **50th year of Indian** victory over **Pakistan** in the **1971 Liberation war**, Indian Naval Ships arrived in the port town of **Mongla** for a three-day visit to **Bangladesh**. The Indian Naval Ships is on a three-day visit between March 8 to 10. This is the first time ever that any Indian Naval Ship is visiting the port of Mongla in Bangladesh.
- The basic aim of this visit is to pay homage to the Bangladeshi and Indian combatants and citizens who laid down their lives during the **Liberation War of 1971 against Pakistan**.
- The ships will take part in the ongoing Swarnim Vijay Varsh celebrations to commemorate 50 years of the Liberation War of 1971 and reiterating the historic Indo-Bangladeshi friendship.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

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

**Switzerland votes to ban full-face coverings in public places**

- Switzerland has voted in favour of a resolution that would bar full-face coverings, such as the burqa and niqab, from being worn in nearly all public areas. Around 51.21 percent of voters backed the divisive initiative in the public referendum.
- Following the vote, full face covering would be prohibited in all publicly accessible areas in Switzerland, including the highways, public transit, government offices, restaurants, and stores, as well as in the countryside.
- In places of worship and other religious sites, full-face covering would be permitted. For health and safety purposes, as well as in cases where it is a local tradition, such as carnivals, it would be tolerated. According to the proposal by the **Swiss Federal Government**, there will be no additional exceptions such as for tourists.
- **France** was the first European nation to ban burqas and niqabs in public places in **2011**. The European Court of Human Rights had upheld the ban in **2014**.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Switzerland Currency: Swiss franc.
- Switzerland Capital: Bern.

**Niger’s President Mahamadou Issoufou wins Africa’s top prize**



- **Mahamadou Issoufou**, the incumbent President of **Niger** has won the “**2020 Ibrahim Prize for Achievement in African Leadership**”, the world’s largest leadership prize, worth **\$5 million**.
- He is the sixth winner of the Ibrahim Prize since it was introduced in **2006**, by Sudanese billionaire Mo Ibrahim’s foundation to promote good governance in the world’s poorest continent.
- The 69-year-old Issoufou is stepping down as president of Niger in April 2021, after serving two terms in office. He first took office in **2011** and was then re-elected in **2016**.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Niger Capital: Niamey.
- Niger Currency: West African CFA franc.

**China and Russia Inks MoU to jointly build Lunar Space Station**



- China's and Russia's space agencies signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on behalf of their respective governments to jointly construct a lunar space station that would be available to all nations.
- On March 9, 2021, the Chinese space agency, China National Space Administration (CNSA), and the Russian space agency, Roscosmos, signed a Memorandum of Understanding.
- The centre, dubbed the "International Scientific Lunar Station (ISLS)," will be a "complex of experimental and research facilities" built on the moon's surface and/or in lunar orbit. The goal of setting up ISLS is strengthening research cooperation and promoting the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes in the interests of all mankind.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- China Capital: Beijing.
- China Currency: Renminbi.
- China President: Xi Jinping.
- Russia President: Vladimir Putin.
- Russia Capital: Moscow.
- Russia Currency: Russian Ruble.

**World’s Most Powerful Supercomputer Fugaku is ready for use**





- The **Japanese** scientific research institute called **RIKEN and Fujitsu** started developing the “**Fugaku**” six years ago. It is the world’s most powerful supercomputers. Fugaku has been named after an alternative name for **Mount Fuji**.
- Now that this supercomputer has been completely developed and tested in Japan, it is available for research use. This supercomputer was created with the aim of being the backbone of Japan's computing infrastructure.
- The computer's programme efficiency is 100 times that of the K supercomputer.
- It was created with high-resolution, large-scale, and long-duration simulation in mind. It started development in the year 2014 as the successor to the K computer. It is built with the **Fujitsu A64FX microprocessor**.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

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

**WHO declares El Salvador malaria-free**



- **El Salvador** is the first country in Central America to be certified **malaria-free** by the **World Health Organization**.
- WHO grants a certification of malaria

elimination when a country proves “beyond a reasonable doubt” that there has been no indigenous transmission of the disease nationwide for the previous three consecutive years.

- El Salvador hasn’t had a malaria outbreak since 1996 and has reported no indigenous cases since 2017. In 1990, the country had 9,000 cases per year, a figure that declined to 26 by 2010.
- WHO credited El Salvador’s sustained domestic funding for malaria prevention, detection, and treatment for success.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- El Salvador President: Nayib Bukele.
- El Salvador Capital: San Salvador; Currency: El Salvador colon.

**World’s Largest Floating Solar Farms being built in Singapore**



- The **largest floating solar farm** in the world is being built in **Singapore**. The country has resorted to set up energy plants off the coasts and reservoirs across it.
- This floating solar farm is being set up in the light that despite being one of the smallest countries across the world, it is one of the biggest per capita carbon dioxide emitters in India.
- Thus, to cater to the issue of climate change and to cut the greenhouse gas emission it is

building the floating solar farm. This project is being built by Sembcorp Industries.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

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

**Dutch PM Mark Rutte powers to the fourth straight election win**



- **Netherlands** Prime Minister, **Mark Rutte** has won the 2021 parliamentary elections with most seats to be sworn in as the **Prime Minister for the fourth straight term**.
- Earlier Rutte and his entire Cabinet offered their resignation on 15 January 2021 in response to a scandal relating to child welfare fraud, however, Rutte remained in office till the conclusion of the 2021 election. Rutte has been Prime Minister of the Netherlands since **October 2010**.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

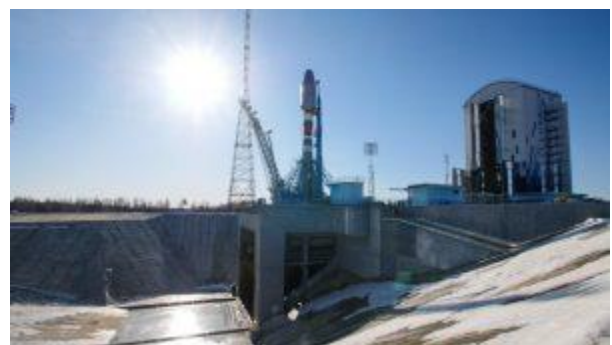
- Netherlands  
Capital: Amsterdam; Currency: Euro

**SamiaSuluhu Hassan sworn in as Tanzania’s first woman President**



- **SamiaSuluhu Hassan** was sworn in as the sixth President of **Tanzania**, becoming the first female leader of the East African country.
- The 61-year-old Hassan assumed the presidency, following the death of previous President **John Magfulu**, due to a heart condition. She will finish Magfulu’s second five-year term, which will run until 2025.
- Prior to taking charge as President, Hassan was the Vice-President of Tanzania, also being the first female vice-president of the country, since November 2015.

**Russia Launches 38 Satellites From 18 Countries Into Space**



- Onboard a Soyuz-2.1a carrier rocket launched from Kazakhstan's Baikonur cosmodrome, Russian space agency Roskosmos successfully launched 38 foreign satellites into orbit. South Korea, Japan, Canada, Saudi Arabia, Germany, Italy, and Brazil were among the 18 countries represented by the 38 satellites.

- The Telnet telecommunications group developed one of these satellites, dubbed "Challenge-1," which was the first-ever satellite made entirely in Tunisia.
- In **2018**, a Soyuz rocket carrying a Russian cosmonaut and a NASA astronaut failed mid-flight, forcing the crew to carry out an emergency landing. Both survived without injuries.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Russia President: Vladimir Putin.
- Russia Capital: Moscow.
- Russia Currency: Russian Ruble.

**Sri Lanka inks 3 years USD 1.5 billion currency swap deal with China**



- Sri Lanka and China have agreed to a currency swap worth 10 billion yuan (roughly USD 1,5 billion) with the aim of promoting bilateral trade and direct investment.
- The three-year agreement between the Central Bank of Sri Lanka and the People's Bank of China was signed.
- Sri Lanka's largest source of imports is still China. Imports from China totaled USD 3.6 billion in 2020, accounting for just over 22% of Sri Lanka's total imports.
- The agreement comes as Sri Lanka grapples

with COVID-19, which has wreaked havoc on the country's economy, especially its USD 4.5 billion tourism industry.

- Sri Lanka also must pay nearly USD 4.5 billion in foreign debts annually until 2025.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Sri Lanka Capitals: Sri Jayawardenepura Kotte; Currency: Sri Lankan rupee.
- Sri Lanka Prime Minister: Mahinda Rajapaksa; Sri Lanka President: Gotabaya Rajapaksa.

**World's first Ship Tunnel to be built in Norway**



- The Norwegian Coastal Administration has been given permission to begin work on the world's first tunnel, which will be constructed exclusively for ships.
- The tunnel will be constructed underneath the mountainous Stadhavet peninsula in northwestern Norway, and would be known as the "Stad Ship Tunnel."
- The 1.7-kilometer tunnel will be capable of handling ships carrying up to 16,000 tonnes and will provide ships with a safer passage through the dangerous Stadhavet Sea.
- The tunnel would have a height of 49 metres (161 feet) and a width of 36 metres (118 feet).
- The construction of this ship tunnel is projected to cost at least 2.8 billion Norwegian kroner (NZ\$460 million). The construction would begin in **2022** and would take three to four years to

complete.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Norway Currency: Norwegian krone.
- Norway Capital: Oslo.
- Prime Minister of Norway: Erna Solberg.

**Republic of Congo President Sassou Nguesso wins the election**



- The longtime president of the **Republic of Congo, Sassou Nguesso** is set for another five-year term after getting over 88% of the vote. The election day was marred by the death of his main opponent, **Guy Brice Parfait Kolelas**.
- The African leader is one of the world’s longest-serving presidents, earning him the nickname “emperor.” He has led Congo for a total of 36 years. The former paratrooper first became president in 1979 and remained in power for three consecutive terms.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Republic of Congo Capital: Brazzaville;
- Republic of Congo Currency: franc.

**Bangladesh celebrates 50 years of independence**



- On March 26, Bangladesh marks the 50th anniversary of its independence and National Day, which falls on the same day as the centenary of the birth of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the Father of the Country.
- Sheikh Mujibur Rahman declared Bangladesh an independent nation on March 26, 1971, sparking the Bangladesh Liberation War, which pitted Pakistani and Bangladesh liberation forces against each other, with Indian support.
- On the night of March 25, 1971, Pakistan's military launched a brutal crackdown on Dhaka, then part of East Pakistan, in order to put down a growing nationalist movement demanding independence for what is now Bangladesh.
- The fight for independence can be traced back to Britain’s colonial rule of the Indian subcontinent and the new nations that were carved out after its end in 1947.
- There were India and Pakistan, the latter split into **West Pakistan and East Pakistan**. The war would rage until December when India joined on the side of Bangladesh.
- Finally, on **December 16, 1971**, Pakistan forces surrendered and Bangladesh celebrated its freedom.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Prime Minister of Bangladesh: Sheikh Hasina;

Capital: Dhaka; Currency: Taka.

- President of Bangladesh: Abdul Hamid.

## Topic 10: Miscellaneous News

### International Yoga festival begins in Rishikesh



- The **International Yoga Festival** was inaugurated by the Agriculture Minister of Uttarakhand Subodh Uniyal, head of Akhil Bharatiya Akhada Parishad (ABAP) Narendra Giri and Patanjali Yogpeeth chairman Acharya Balakrishna in **Rishikesh**.
- The festival is being jointly organised by **Uttarakhand Tourism Development Board (UTDB)** and **Garhwal Mandal Vikas Nigam (GMVN)**.
- Yoga has played a very vital role in boosting immunity especially during the time of Covid. The regular practice of Yoga has helped in keeping the diseases away from the body. Yoga is also a cure for many diseases that are hard to treat using medical science.” The aim of Yoga is not only to keep us fit but also to end the negativity within human beings.

#### Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

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

### Land Ports Authority of India Celebrates its 9th

### Foundation Day



- The **Land Ports Authority of India (LPAI)** has celebrated its **9th Foundation Day** on 01 March 2021.
- The Land Ports Authority of India or LPAI is a statutory body working under the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India is responsible for creating, upgrading, maintaining and managing border infrastructure in India. It manages several Integrated Check Posts all across Borders of India.

#### Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- Land Ports Authority of India Chairman: Aditya Mishra.
- Land Ports Authority of India Founded: 1 March 2012.
- Land Ports Authority of India Parent organization: Ministry of Home Affairs.
- Land Ports Authority of India Headquarters: New Delhi.

### Thaawarchand Gehlot launches “Sugamya Bharat App”



- Union Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment, **Thaawarchand Gehlot** has launched the **“Sugamya Bharat App”**, through a video conference in New Delhi. The minister also launched a handbook entitled **“Access – The Photo Digest”**.
- The App and the handbook have been developed by the **Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD)** under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.
- It's a Crowdsourcing Mobile App that allows people with disabilities, including the elderly, to report accessibility issues.
- The app's goal is to raise awareness and improve accessibility in India's built environment, transportation sector, and ICT ecosystem, which are the three pillars of the Accessible India Campaign.
- This handbook is a series of images from various states and UTs intended to serve as a reference and guide for stakeholders, informing them about ten basic features of accessibility and related good and bad practises in a simple pictorial format.

**Virat Kohli becomes the first cricketer to have 100 million followers on Instagram**



- India captain **Virat Kohli** became the first cricketer in the world to have **100 million** followers on the social media platform **Instagram**. The 32-year-old Kohli is also the **fourth most** followed sportsperson on Instagram.
- Portugal football star **Cristiano Ronaldo** tops the chart with **265 million followers**, ahead of Argentina football captain and FC Barcelona legend **Lionel Messi** and Brazil's **Neymar**, who are second and third in the list with 186 million and 147 million followers respectively.
- The others in 100 million club are Hollywood actor and former pro-wrestler **Dwayne (The Rock) Johnson**, American singer-songwriter **Beyonce**, and **Ariana Grande**.

**India to commemorate 'Chabahar Day' on 4 March**



- The **Ministry of External Affairs India** will commemorate **'Chabahar Day'** on March 4 on the sidelines of the **Maritime India Summit**

**2021** being held in **New Delhi**.

- The virtual event will see the participation of ministers from Afghanistan, Armenia, Iran, Kazakhstan, Russia and Uzbekistan.
- The Summit is being held from March 2-4, 2021. The ministerial-level opening session would be followed by two webinar sessions namely the **‘Boosting Business through Trade Promotion and Regional Connectivity’** and **‘Development of Port Infrastructure: Unleashing Opportunities’**.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Minister of External Affairs: Subrahmanyam Jaishankar.

**Delhi govt approves formation of separate board in city**



- **Delhi government** has approved the formation of a separate school board for nearly **2,700 schools in the city**.
- There are around **1,000 Delhi government schools** and **about 1,700 private schools**, most of them affiliated to the CBSE, in the city. The new Board will have a governing body headed by the **Education Minister of the Delhi government** and an executive body headed by a chief executive officer.
- The DBSE will be aimed at imparting such education that prepares **“fiercely patriotic”** and self-dependent students who serve the society

and the country in a selfless manner. The Board will bring in best international practices and high-end techniques in school education. It will impart education as per the aptitude of the students.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

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

**Indian Railways install Mobile Train Radio Communication system**



- **Indian Railways’ Western Railway zone** has introduced a **mobile train radio communication (MTRC) system** to facilitate direct and continuous communication between the train crew and the control centre and station master.
- Through effective communication, this technologically advanced system will help in averting train accidents. This new communication system has already been deployed in **105 rakes**, operating between **Churchgate to Virar over Mumbai’s** suburban segment.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Union Minister of Railways: Piyush Goyal.

**Uttarakhand CM Trivendra Singh Rawat resigns**



- **Trivendra Singh Rawat** has resigned as the chief minister of Uttarakhand, a year before the hill state is scheduled to go to polls. Rawat, who became the CM after the BJP swept the assembly elections here in early **2017**, tendered his resignation after meeting governor **Baby Rani Maurya**.
- According to reports, the party is mulling bringing in a deputy chief minister, the frontrunners for the post include State Education Minister **Dhan Singh Rawat, MP Ajay Bhatt and Satpal Maharaj**.

**Delhi govt presents Rs 69000 Cr ‘Deshbhakti’ Budget**



- The Delhi government presented a **Rs 69,000-crore** budget themed on ‘patriotism’ or ‘**Deshbhakti**’ for the financial year 2021-22. The budget was presented by the Deputy Chief Minister of Delhi, **Manish Sisodia**.
- While presenting the budget, he announced that the government has decided to celebrate the **75th Independence Day of India**. The Delhi government will hold programmes from March 12, 2021, which will last for 75 weeks.

- The government has proposed to allocate Rupees 45 crores in order to install high masts so as to hoist the national flag at 500 places in Delhi.
- An outlay of **Rs 50 crores** made under ‘**AamAdmiNishulk COVID Vaccine Yojana**. It announced free Covid-19 vaccination to all in its hospitals in the coming phases of the ongoing inoculation drive.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

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

**President Ram Nath Kovind presents Baton of Honor to Kiran Bedi**



- President **Ram Nath Kovind** has presented a **baton of honour** and a letter of appreciation to former Puducherry lieutenant governor **Kiran Bedi** at Rashtrapati Bhavan.
- The former Puducherry lieutenant governor received a Baton of Honor decorated with the emblem of the Indian Republic and the appreciation letter recognizing her service in the Union Territory of Puducherry.
- Kiran Bedi was removed as the Lieutenant Governor of Puducherry on **February 16** by the President of India and **Tamilisai Soundararajan** took additional charge as the Lieutenant Governor on February



18.

### Deepika Padukone joins WEF list of Young Global Leader



- Actor **Deepika Padukone** has joined the list of the **Young Global Leaders (YGLs)** compiled by the **World Economic Forum**. The list also includes several Indian citizens and India-origin persons.
- They join a group of Nobel Prize recipients, Pulitzer winners, heads of state and chief executive officers committed to improving the state of the world.
- The Forum of Young Global Leaders was founded in **2005 by Klaus Schwab**, founder and executive chairman of the WEF, to create a world where leaders take responsibility for a sustainable future while meeting increasingly complex and interrelated challenges.

#### Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- World Economic Forum Headquarters: Cologny, Switzerland.
- World Economic Forum Founder: Klaus Schwab.
- World Economic Forum Founded: January 1971.

#### 2021 Dandi March to mark 75 years of Independence



- On March 12, Prime Minister Narendra Modi flagged off the 91st Dandi March in Ahmedabad to commemorate India's 75th anniversary of independence.
- The Salt March, which took place between March and April 1930, was a civil disobedience movement led by Mahatma Gandhi to oppose British rule in India.
- The event starts at Mahatma Gandhi's Sabarmati Ashram and is part of the State government's initiative to commemorate "Azadi Ka Amrut Mahotsav."
- The Dandi March or Salt March as part of Mahatma Gandhi's non-violent protest against the British monopoly on the production of salt. Led by Gandhi, **78 people** started the 24-day march on **March 12** and reached Dandi on **April 5, 1930**. After making salt at Dandi, Gandhi headed to Dharasana Salt Works, 40 km south, but was arrested on May 5.

#### J&K celebrates festival of Shivratri 'Herath'



- In the Union Territory of **Jammu and Kashmir**, the festival of Shivratri '**Herath**' is being celebrated across Jammu and Kashmir. Festival Mahashivratri locally known as Herath in Kashmir is being celebrated across J&K by Kashmiri Pandit Community with religious fervour by offering "**Watak Nath Pooja**".
- The festival assumes colossal importance among the Kashmiri Pandit Community who celebrate it to mark the wedding of "**Lord Shiva with Goddess Parvati**". This festival symbolizes the values of devotion and harmony, which are the hallmarks of the glorious tradition & cultural ethos of Jammu and Kashmir.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Lieutenant Governor of J&K: Manoj Sinha.

**Tata Motors launches 'Wheels of Love' to support parenthood**



- **Tata Motors** has launched '**Wheels of Love**', a holistic programme that supports new parents

in the workforce. This is a move to promote a progressive culture of care, inclusion and sensitisation within the organisation across levels.

- A specially curated book, also aptly titled, **Wheels of Love**, puts forth various beliefs to enable new and expectant parents to successfully manage the needs of a growing family while also fulfilling their career goals.
- This guide book also provides valuable insights for managers to support their team members as they progress through the various stages of parenthood.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Tata motors HQ: Mumbai; CEO: Guenter Butschek.

**Govt launches Mera Ration Mobile App**



- In order to facilitate the '**One Nation-One Ration Card**' system in the country, the government has launched '**Mera Ration**' mobile app to benefit citizens in identifying the nearest fair price shop. This app will benefit especially those ration card holders who move to new areas for livelihoods.
- The app is developed by the government in association with NIC "to facilitate various "One Nation-One Ration Card" related services among the **National Food Security Act (NFSA)** beneficiaries, particularly migrant beneficiaries, fair price shop dealers and other

relevant stakeholders.

- With the help of the app, the beneficiaries can easily check details of food grain entitlement, recent transactions and the Status of their Aadhaar seeding.
- The migrant beneficiaries can also register their migration details with the help of the application. Beneficiaries can also enter their suggestions or feedback.

**WEF honours ReNew Power named as Global Lighthouse Network**



- **ReNew Power** has been named to the **World Economic Forum’s (WEF) Global Lighthouse Network**, which recognises companies using new technologies to achieve environmentally sustainable, community supportive, profitable growth.
- ReNew Power is an Indian renewable energy company. It has an asset base of over 8 GW, with around 5 GW operational. ReNew Power is one of the two Indian companies to be recognised by the **Global Lighthouse Network** this year.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

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

- World Economic Forum Founded: January 1971.

**POWERGRID Launches Certified E-Tendering Portal “PRANIT”**



- **Power Grid Corporation of India (POWERGRID)** has launched an “e-Tendering Portal” called ‘PRANIT’ to make the tendering process more transparent. The portal “PRANIT” will involve less paperwork and allow ease of operation, which in turn will make the tendering process more transparent.
- The portal has been certified by Standardisation, Testing and Quality Certification Directorate (STQC), under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, GoI.
- POWERGRID is the only organization in India to have an e-procurement solution on SAP Supplier Relationship Management (SRM), complying with all applicable requirements relating to security and transparency as stipulated by STQC.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Power Grid Corporation of India Founded: 23 October 1989.
- Power Grid Corporation of India Headquarters: Gurgaon, India.

**Ramesh Pokhriyal inaugurates Shaheed Bhagat Singh Smarak in New Delhi**



- The Union Minister of Education, Shri **Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank'**, virtually inaugurated the **Shaheed Bhagat Singh Smarak** in **New Delhi** on March 23, 2021.
- The inauguration took place on the occasion of a programme organised by the University of Delhi on 'Shaheed Diwas' to pay homage and commemorate 90 years of the martyrdom of our national icons of the Indian National Movement –**Shaheed Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev Thapar and Shivaram Rajguru**.

**J&K LG Manoj Sinha e-inaugurates 73 AYUSH Health & Wellness Centres**



- In Jammu and Kashmir Manoj Sinha has e-inaugurated 73 AYUSH Health & Wellness Centers across the UT as part of Ayushman Bharat. These centres are committed to promoting good health and increasing access to comprehensive primary healthcare facilities for the people of Jammu and Kashmir.
- The Lt Governor stated that AYUSH Health

&Wellness Centres will be a game-changer in the UT of J&K, particularly in terms of promoting the AYUSH sector, by providing comprehensive primary health care to the community based on AYUSH principles and practises, in order to achieve the basic goal of holistic wellness by encouraging community members to practise self-care and use home remedies. Some of the features of AYUSH Health & Wellness Centres include medicinal plants garden, yoga space, providing training and suggestions for home treatment, promoting Dincharya (Art of healthy Living), Ritucharya (Wellness calendar) and a personalized healthcare approach.

**IIT Kharagpur wins CoreNet Global Academic Challenge 6.0**



- A team of four undergraduate students from the **Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur** emerged as winners at the **CoreNet Global Academic Challenge 6.0**, sponsored by Cushman and Wakefield, KI and IA: Interior Architects.
- The team comprised Siddhant Samarth, Pratim Majumdar, Rishita Raj and Utkarsh Agrawal and were guided by Prof. Jenia Mukherjee (Department of Humanities and Social Sciences).
- CoreNet Global is a non-profit association, headquartered in Atlanta, Georgia (US), representing more than 11,000 executives in 50 countries with strategic responsibility for the

real estate assets of large corporations.

- The organization’s mission is to advance the practice of corporate real estate through professional development opportunities, publications, research, conferences, designations and networking in 46 local chapters and networking groups globally.

**Education Minister inaugurates ‘Anandam: The Center for Happiness’ at IIM Jammu**



- Union Education Minister, **Ramesh Pokhriyal** has inaugurated “**Anandam: The Center for Happiness**” at the **Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Jammu** virtually.
- The centre will help people overcome mental stress and help spread positivity and it will encourage and propagate holistic development for all the stakeholders at IIM Jammu.
- Lieutenant Governor, Jammu, and Kashmir, Manoj Sinha; Founder, Art of Living Foundation, Sri Sri Ravi Shankar virtually graced the occasion.

**Topic 11: National News**

**India describes Sri Lanka ‘Priority One’ partner in defence**



- The Indian High Commission in Colombo has identified Sri Lanka as its "Priority One" defence partner and reaffirmed India's commitment to full cooperation in the field of defence and security.
- The point comes as the Sri Lanka Air Force

(SLAF) prepares to celebrate its 70th anniversary on March 2nd.

- On March 2, the SLAF will mark its 70th anniversary, and to mark the occasion, a Fly Past and an Aerobatic Display will be held for the first time in the country on a grand scale. A total of 23 Indian Air force (IAF) and Indian Navy aircraft will also partake in the event. Indian High Commission has called the participation indicative of the growing cooperation, camaraderie and friendship between the armed forces of the two nations.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Sri Lanka Capitals: Colombo, Sri Jayawardenepura Kotte.
- Sri Lanka President: Gotabaya Rajapaksa.
- Sri Lanka Currency: Sri Lankan rupee.

**Dr Harsh Vardhan inaugurates Global Bio India 2021**



- The Union Minister for Science & Technology, Earth Sciences and Health & Family Welfare **Dr Harsh Vardhan** inaugurated the second edition of **Global Bio-India-2021** in New Delhi through virtual mode. The three-day event will be held from March 01 to 03, 2021, on a digital platform.
- The purpose of the event is to showcase the strength and opportunities of the biotechnology sector of India at the national as well as international level. The Government of India has a target of building a **USD 150 billion** bio-economy by **2025**.
- The theme of Global Bio-India-2021: **“Transforming lives”** with the tag line **“Biosciences to Bio-economy”**.
- The event is co-organised by the Department of Biotechnology under the Ministry of Science & Technology along with its Public Sector Undertaking, and **Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC)** in partnership with industry association Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), **Association of Biotechnology Led Enterprises (ABLE)** and Invest India.

**Lok Sabha TV and Rajya Sabha TV merged into Sansad TV**



- The Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha Television networks, which broadcast the upper and lower Houses of Parliament's proceedings, have been combined into a single body.
- Sansad Television is the name of the new station. This transition will take effect on March 1, 2021.
- Sansad TV has named Ravi Capoor, a former IAS officer from the 1986 batch, as its Chief Executive Officer (CEO) for a year.
- The decision to change the name was jointly taken by Rajya Sabha Chairman **M. Venkaiah Naidu** and Lok Sabha Speaker **Om Birla**.

**Government amends Insurance Ombudsman Rules 2017**



- The Government of India has announced extensive changes to the Insurance Ombudsman Rules, 2017 in order to improve the prompt, cost-effective, and unbiased resolution of policyholder grievances about insurance service deficiencies.
- This will make it easier to settle concerns about insurance service failures in a cost-effective and impartial manner on a timely basis.

- The Executive Council of Insurers was in control of the Ombudsman process. The Council for Insurance Ombudsmen has now been renamed.
- Earlier, the scope of complaints to Ombudsmen was limited to only disputes, but now it has been enlarged to include **deficiencies in service** on the part of insurers, agents, brokers and other intermediaries.
- The insurance brokers have also been brought within the ambit of the Ombudsman mechanism. The Ombudsmen has been empowered to pass **awards against insurance brokers as well**.
- To strengthen the timeliness and cost-effectiveness of the mechanism, policyholders will now be enabled for making **complaints electronically to the Ombudsman**.
- A complaints management system will be created to enable policyholders to track the status of their complaints online.
- The rules also provide that, the ombudsman can use **video-conferencing** to hear the cases.

**UNGA adopts India-led resolution declaring 2023 as Int’l Year of Millets**



- The United Nations General Assembly unanimously approved a resolution sponsored by India and backed by more than 70 countries declaring 2023 the International Year of Millets.

The International Year of Millets aims to raise awareness about the grain's health benefits as well as its adaptability to changing climatic conditions.

- All UN Member States received savoury millet snack murukku from India's Permanent Mission to the United Nations.
- The resolution announcing 2023 as the International Year of Millets was unanimously adopted by the 193-member General Assembly.
- The resolution titled **International Year of Millets 2023** was initiated by India with Bangladesh, Kenya, Nepal, Nigeria, Russia and Senegal and was co-sponsored by over 70 nations.
- The resolution considers the urgent need to raise awareness of the climate-resilient and nutritional benefits of millets and to advocate for diversified, balanced and healthy diets through the increased sustainable production and consumption of millets.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- UN General Assembly President: Volkan Bozkır.
- UN General Assembly Headquarters: New York, United States.
- UN General Assembly Founded: 1945, New York, United States.

**PM Modi addresses ‘JanaushadhiDiwas’ celebrations**



- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** has

addressed ‘JanaushadhiDiwas’ celebrations through video conference. He dedicated to the nation the **7500th Janaushadhi Kendra** at NEIGRIHMS, **Shillong** during the event.

- He interacts with beneficiaries of Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya JanaushadhiPariyojana and also gives awards to stakeholders by recognizing their excellent work. Union Minister for Chemicals & Fertilizers will also be present on the occasion.
- **1st March to 7th March** is celebrated as ‘**Janaushadhi Week**’ across the nation with the theme of “**Jan Aushadhi – SevaBhi, Rozgar Bhi**” for creating awareness about the use of generic medicines.
- Various functions across the country are organized like health checkup camps, Jan AushadhiParicharcha, Teach Them Young, panel discussions with doctors, etc. this week.

**Ramesh Pokhriyal Inaugurates New Delhi World Book Fair 2021**



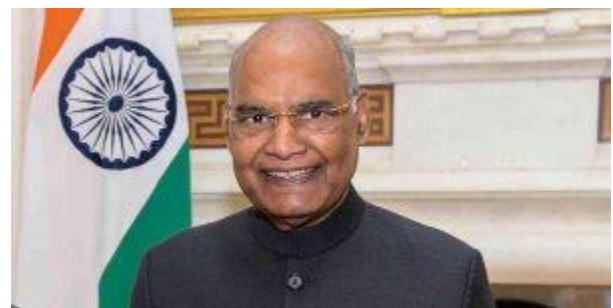
- The Union Education Minister **Ramesh Pokhriyal** has inaugurated the **New Delhi World Book Fair 2021-Virtual Edition**, through video-conferencing. The program has been organized by the **National Book Trust (NBT)**.
- The New Delhi World Book Fair 2021 is the 29th edition of the annual event and for the first time, the fair will be held virtually due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.
- The theme of the 2021 New Delhi World Book

Fair is ‘**National Education Policy-2020**’. The NEP 2020 was passed by the Union Cabinet last year, which proposes several significant changes in the existing education policy.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- National Book Trust Founded: 1 August 1957.
- National Book Trust President: Govind Prasad Sharma.
- National Book Trust Headquarters: Vasant Kunj, Delhi.

**President of India Inaugurates conservation works at Singorgarh Fort in MP**



- The President of India, **Ram Nath Kovind** has laid the foundation stone for the conservation works of **Singorgarh Fort** in Singrampur village of Damoh district, **Madhya Pradesh**. He also inaugurated the newly carved **Jabalpur Circle of Archaeological Survey of India**.
- Apart from this, President Kovind addressed the State Level Tribal Conference ‘**JanjatiyaSammelan**’ at Singrampur village in Damoh. The program was organized jointly by the Ministry of Culture, Government of India and the Tribal Affairs Department of Madhya Pradesh.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

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

**PM Narendra Modi inaugurates ‘MaitriSetu’ between**



**India and Bangladesh**



- Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi used a video conference to inaugurate the 'MaitriSetu' bridge between India and Bangladesh, which will boost connectivity between the two countries, especially in India's north-eastern region.
- Tripura will also become the "Gateway of the North East," with access to Bangladesh's Chittagong Port, which is just 80 kilometres from Sabroom.
- On the Feni river, which runs between the Indian state of Tripura and Bangladesh, the MaitriSetu bridge was constructed.
- Sabroom in India and Ramgarh in Bangladesh will be linked by the 1.9-kilometer bridge.
- The bridge has been constructed by the National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited at a project cost of around **Rs. 133 Crore.**

**Union Cabinet approves Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Nidhi**

- The Union Cabinet has approved the **Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Nidhi (PMSSN)**, as a single non-lapsable reserve fund.
- This has been **approved for the share of Health from proceeds of Health and Education Cess** which is **levied under the Section 136-b of Finance Act, 2007.**
- This is a non-lapsable reserve fund for the Health in the Public Account. This fund will comprise of the proceeds from the share of health in the Health and Education Cess.
- This revenue in the fund will be used for the flagship schemes of the Health Ministry including the National Health Mission, Ayushman Bharat – Health and Wellness Centres, Ayushman Bharat – Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana and for the emergency & disaster preparedness and responses in cases of health emergencies.

**Cabinet Approves Amendments in Insurance Act 1938**



- The **Union Cabinet** has given its nod for amendments in the **Insurance Act**, paving way for **74 per cent** foreign direct investment in the sector. Currently, the permissible FDI limit in life and general insurance stands at **49 per cent** with ownership and management control with Indian.
- According to sources, the Cabinet in its meeting has approval for amendments in the **Insurance Act, 1938**. It was in 2015 when the government hiked the FDI cap in the insurance sector from **26 per cent to 49 per cent**.
- The majority of directors on the board and key management persons would be resident Indians, with at least **50 per cent of directors** being independent directors, and a specified percentage of profits being retained as a general reserve.
- An increase in FDI will help improve life insurance penetration in the country. Life insurance premium as a percentage of GDP is 3.6 per cent in the country, way below the global average of 7.13 per cent, and in the case of general insurance, it is even worse at 0.94 per cent of GDP, as against the world average of 2.88 per cent.
- The government has earlier allowed **100 per cent** foreign direct investment in insurance intermediaries.

**Govt to launch “AtmanirbharNiveshak Mitra Portal”**



- The central government is working to establish a portal called "AtmanirbharNiveshak Mitra Portal" for information dissemination, hand-holding, and facilitation of domestic investors, according to the commerce and industry ministry.
- The AtmanirbharNiveshak Mitra portal is currently being checked. By May 1, 2021, it will be operational. The ministry is also developing a mobile app and a website that will be available in regional languages.
- This portal is being built to help improve efforts to encourage domestic investment. The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade is working on it (DPIIT).
- The portal will help in providing daily updates on several things including the policies and new initiatives by the central and state governments, information regarding the approvals, licenses, clearances several schemes & incentives. It will also be providing information regarding the manufacturing clusters and land availability.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Minister of Commerce and Industry: Piyush Goyal.

**PM Narendra Modi Launches Kindle Version Of Bhagavad Gita**



- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** has launched

the Kindle version of **Swami Chidbhavananda's 'Bhagavad Gita'** via video conferencing. The event has been organised to commemorate the sale of over 5 lakh copies of the Swami Chidbhavanandaji's Bhagavad Gita.

- Swami Chidbhavanandaji is the founder of **Sri Ramakrishna Tapovanam Ashram** at Thirupparaithurai, Tiruchirapalli, Tamil Nadu. Chidbhavananda Ji was devoted to India's regeneration. He noted that Swami Vivekananda's Madras lectures inspired Swami Chidbhavananda Ji to put the nation above everything else and serve the people.

**Supreme Court seeks govt.'s response on plea against Places of Worship Act**



- The Supreme Court has asked the government to respond to a plea challenging the Places of Worship Act enacted in 1991.
- A notice is issued by a Bench led by Chief Justice of India Sharad A. Bobde to the Union Ministries of Home, Law and Culture on a plea filed by advocate Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay against various provisions of the Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act of 1991.
- The petition said Sections of the Act that dealt with the bar on legal claims were against the principles of secularism.
- The religious character of a place of worship shall continue to be the same as it was on 15 August 1947.

- No person shall convert any sort of place of worship of any religious denomination into one of a different denomination or section.

**Govt announces new scheme for tourist vehicle operators**



- The **Ministry of Road Transport and Highways** has announced a new scheme for tourist vehicle operators, under which any tourist vehicle operator may apply for an **"All India tourist authorization and permit"** through online mode.
- The new set of rules will be known as **"All India Tourist Vehicles Authorization and Permit Rules, 2021"**. This will come into effect from April 01, 2021.
- The new rules for permits are aimed at promoting tourism across the states in our country, while simultaneously, helping to grow the revenue of state Governments.
- The permits will be issued, after relevant documents are submitted and fees deposited, within **30 days** of submission of such applications.
- The authorization/permit will be granted, for a period of **three months or its multiples thereof, not exceeding three years at a time.**

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Minister of Road Transport and Highways: Nitin Gadkari.

**J&K Govt approves setting up of JVC “Ratle Hydroelectric Power Corporation”**



- The government of Jammu and Kashmir has approved the formation of a joint venture company (JVC) called "Ratle Hydro-electric Power Corporation." To build the 850 MW Ratle Hydro-Electric Project (HEP) on the Chenab River in the Kishtwar district of Jammu & Kashmir's Union Territory (UT) (J&K).
- The Government of Jammu and Kashmir, the National Hydroelectric Power Corporation (NHPC), and the J&K State Power Development Corporation Ltd have formed a joint venture (JKSPDC).
- The NHPC will contribute 51% of the equity, while JKSPDC will contribute 49%.
- The proposed JVC will have an authorised capital of **Rs 1,600 crore** with initial paid-up capital of **Rs 100 crore**.
- The **850 MW Ratle HEP** will be developed at an estimated cost of **Rs 5,281.94 crore**.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Lieutenant Governor of Jammu and Kashmir: Manoj Sinha.

**J&K LG Manoj Sinha inaugurates project “Awaam Ki Baat”**

- Union Territory of **Jammu and Kashmir**, Lieutenant Governor, **Manoj Sinha**, initiated the project “**Awaam Ki Baat**” – a Radio program by launching its website at Raj Bhavan, Jammu.
  - The half-an-hour long Radio program to be aired **every third Sunday of the month** (to start from April), is one of the many sequential steps of a broader program aimed at disseminating the progressive steps taken by the government and providing the public with a platform to speak, write and interact with the administration, thereby voicing their suggestions, ideas and creative proposals.
  - Awaam Ki Baat is the novel initiative of the Office of the Lieutenant Governor, Jammu and Kashmir which aims at disseminating the progressive steps taken by the administration and seeks public feedback to make the process interactive, participative and people-centric. The platform appreciates the heterogeneity of our Union Territory.
1. **GoI launched “Gram Ujala Scheme” for Rural Areas**



- The government of India has launched the “Gram Ujala Scheme” to provide the cheapest LED bulbs in rural areas. The scheme was launched by the Union power and new and renewable energy minister, **Raj Kumar Singh**.
- In the first phase, the scheme was launched from Arrah district in Bihar. In this phase, around 15 million LED bulbs will be distributed in the villages of Arrah (Bihar), Vijayawada (Andhra Pradesh), Varanasi (Uttar Pradesh), Nagpur (Maharashtra), and western Gujarat.
- The Gram Ujala Scheme is an ambitious scheme that offers the world’s cheapest LED bulbs in rural areas. This is the first such scheme in India. It provides the LED Bulbs in these areas at a mere ₹10.
- This scheme also furthers its climate change strategy and strengthen the self-reliance credentials. The scheme does not come with the government’s support or subsidy.

#### PM Modi launches ‘Catch the Rain’ campaign



- Prime Minister Shri **Narendra Modi** has launched the ‘**Jal Shakti Abhiyan: Catch the Rain**’ campaign on March 22, 2021, on the occasion of World Water Day for conserving water. PM urged that every penny of **MGNREGA (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act) funds** be spent on rainwater conservation till the monsoon arrives.
- The ‘Catch the Rain’ campaign will be implemented across the country, in both rural and urban areas from **March 22 to November 30, 2021** (the pre-monsoon and monsoon period in the country).
- The main aim of the campaign is to take water conservation at the grass-root level through people’s participation and urge stakeholders to create rainwater harvesting structures suitable to the climatic conditions and subsoil strata, to ensure proper storage of rainwater.

#### CJI SA Bobde recommends Justice NV Ramana as his successor



- Chief Justice of India (CJI) **SA Bobde** has recommended Justice **NV Ramana's** name as his successor after he retires next month. CJI Bobde is set to retire on **23 April**.
- In a letter to the Law Ministry, CJI SA Bobde recommended Justice Ramana as his successor.
- Justice NV Ramana is the most senior judge in the apex court after CJI Bobde.
- On appointment, Justice NV Ramana will be the **48th Chief Justice of India** and he will have a long tenure as CJI for over 16 months.

**Nirmala Sitharaman launches Central Scrutiny Centre and IEPFA mobile App**



- Nirmala Sitharaman, the Union Minister for Finance and Corporate Affairs, practically unveiled the Central Scrutiny Centre (CSC) and the Investor Education and Security Fund Authority (IEPFA) Mobile App.
- The Ministry of Corporate Affairs has launched two tech-enabled initiatives to use digital solutions to achieve Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of a "Digitally Empowered India."
- The Mobile App would promote financial literacy among investors by growing investor understanding, education, and security.
- The Mobile App was designed to facilitate citizen participation and knowledge dissemination among investors.
- The Central Scrutiny Centre will scrutinize certain **Straight Through Process (STP)** Forms

filed by the corporates on the **MCA21 registry** and flag the companies for more in-depth scrutiny.

**Indo-Korean Friendship Park Inaugurated at Delhi Cantonment**



- India's First **Indo-Korean Friendship Park** was jointly inaugurated at **Delhi Cantonment** by Hon'ble Raksha Mantri, Shri **Rajnath Singh**, and Hon'ble Minister of National Defence, Republic of Korea **Mr Suh Wook**.
- The park has been developed in joint consultation with the Ministry of Defence, the Government of India, the Indian Army, the Delhi Cantonment Board, the Embassy of Korea and the Korean War Veterans Association of India.
- Besides being a symbol of strong India-South Korea friendly relations, this park will also act as a monument to India's contributions as part of 21 countries that participated in the **Korean war 1950-53**, under the aegis of the United Nations.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- South Korea Capital: Seoul
- South Korea President: Moon Jae-in
- South Korea Currency: South Korean won

## Topic 12: Obituaries

### Lok Sabha MP Nandkumar Singh Chauhan passes away



- **Nand Kumar Singh Chauhan**, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MP from Khandwa in Madhya Pradesh, has passed away.
- He was a six-term MP, who was elected as the **Lok Sabha MP** for the first time in **1996** and got re-elected in **1998, 1999, 2004, 2014** and **2019**.

### Renowned Kannada poet Lakshminarayana Bhatta passes away



- Noted Kannada poet, critic and translator **NS Lakshminarayana Bhatta** has passed away. Popularly known as 'NSL' in the Kannada literary world, he was born in 1936 in the Shivamogga district.
- A was recipient of the **Karnataka Sahitya Akademi award** and **Kannada**

**Rajyotsava Award** among others, his popular works include **Thayeninnamadilali**.

- Bhatta had translated about 50 famous sonnets of **William Shakespeare (Suneeta)**, the poetry of TS Elliot and works of the noted poet **William Butler Yeats (ChinnadaHakki)** into Kannada.
- He had also translated several other prominent English literary works into Kannada. He served as a Professor at Bengaluru University, working in the Kannada Literature department, and is revered for popularizing the works of saint-poet Shishunala Sharif.

### Muthoot Group Chairman M G George Muthoot passes away



- **M G George Muthoot**, the Chairman and Whole Time Director of **The Muthoot Group**, has passed away. He was the mentor and visionary leader who played a pivotal leadership role through his long career in building one of the most trusted financial powerhouses in the country.
- Mr George became the managing director of Muthoot Group in 1979 and its chairman in 1993. Muthoot Finance Ltd is one the largest gold loan NBFCs in India, headquartered in Kochi, Kerala.

### Dhyan Chand Awardee Veteran Indian Athlete Ishar Singh Deol passes away



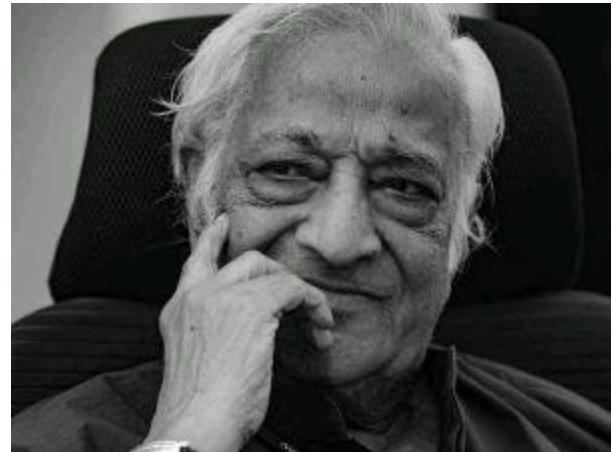
- Dhyan Chand National Sports Award-winning veteran Indian athlete **Ishar Singh Deol**, has passed away. Punjab-based Deol won the **Dhyan Chand National Award in 2009** for his lifelong contribution towards sports.
- He was specialised in the field sports of discus and shot put. He had competed in the first three Asian Games and won a bronze medal in the second Asian Games held in Manila, the Philippines in 1954.

**Former Rajasthan Governor Anshuman Singh Passes Away**



- Justice Shri **Anshuman Singh**, the former **Governor of Rajasthan & Gujarat**, has passed away. Anshuman Singh was a retired Justice who served as the Governor of Rajasthan from January 1999 till 2003. Prior to that, he was appointed as the Governor of Gujarat state in 1998.

**Veteran Marathi Actor Shrikant Moghe Passes Away**



- The Marathi stage and film actor, **Shrikant Moghe** has passed away. He was popular for his work in both Marathi and Hindi languages. He was born at Kirloskarwadi in the Sangli district of Maharashtra.
- He is known for his performances in Marathi films like Madhuchandra, Sinhaasan, GammatJammat and Umbaratha, and plays such as VaryavarchuVaraat and TuzeAaheTujapashi.

**Ivory Coast Prime Minister Hamed Bakayoko passes away**



- The incumbent Prime Minister of **Ivory Coast**, **Hamed Bakayoko**, has passed away due to cancer. He was named prime minister in July 2020 following the sudden death of his predecessor, Amadou Gon Coulibaly.
- President of Ivory Coast, **Alassane Ouattara**, has named **Patrick Achi** as interim prime minister in place of Bakayoko. Patrick



Achi was serving as the chief of defence staff of the country.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

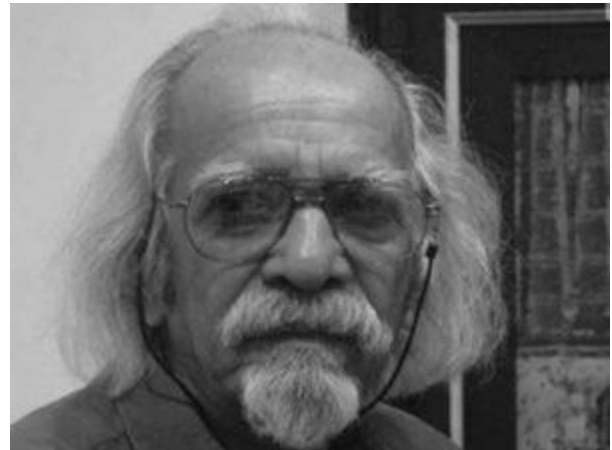
- Ivory Coast President: Alassane Ouattara.
- Ivory Coast Capital: Yamoussoukro.
- Ivory Coast Currency: West African CFA franc.

**Former Boxing Champion ‘Marvelous’ Marvin Hagler Passes Away**



- The former undisputed middleweight boxing legend “**Marvelous**” **Marvin Hagler** has passed away.
- Hagler, the American legend, ruled as the undisputed middleweight champion from 1980 to 1987. He was inducted into the **International Boxing Hall of Fame** and the **World Boxing Hall of Fame** in 1993.

**Renowned Padma Bhushan winning painter Laxman Pai passes away**



- Renowned Indian artist and painter **Laxman Pai** has passed away. The Goa-based painter was a recipient of the Padma Bhushan, India’s third-highest civilian honour.
- The former principal of the Goa College of Art had several laurels under his name including **Padma Bhushan, Padma Shri, Nehru Award, and Lalit Kala Akademi Award.**

**Noted Kathakali Dancer ChemancheriKunhIRaman Nair passes away**



- Veteran Kathakali artist **ChemancheriKunhIRaman Nair** has passed away in Kozhikode, Kerala. He was 105-year old. He was awarded Padma Shri in 2017 for his contributions to the dance form of Kathakali.
- Besides this, Chemencheri was also the recipient of several other awards like the Kerala Sangeeta Nataka Award in 1979, the Kerala Kalamandalam award in 2001, Kalaratnam award in 2009, Mayilpeeli award and Sangeet

NatakAcademi Tagore award.

**Audio cassette tape inventor Lou Ottens passes away**



- The Dutch inventor of audio cassette tapes, **Lou Ottens** passed away. Dutch engineer credited with inventing the cassette tape and playing a major role in the development of the first CD.
- In 1963, Ottens presented the first cassette tape at the Berlin Radio Show electronics fair. After the fair deal signed between Sony and Philips to patent his creation that gained worldwide popularity. Ottens also worked on the CD development project.

**Former Bangladesh PM Moudud Ahmed passes away**



- **Barrister Moudud Ahmed**, who held various political offices for short stints in the Government of Bangladesh, has passed away.
- He had served as the **Prime Minister of Bangladesh (1988–1989)**, Vice President of Bangladesh (1989–1990), Deputy Prime Minister (1976–1978 and 1987–1988), and Minister of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs (2001–2006). He was also a standing

committee member of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP).

**Former Union Minister Dilip Gandhi passes away**



- Former Union Minister and BJP leader, **Dilip Gandhi** passed away, due to coronavirus. He had served as the **Union Minister of State, Ministry of Shipping** from 29 January 2003 to 15 March 2004.
- He won the Lok Sabha elections three times since 1999 from Ahmednagar South constituency in Maharashtra. First in 1999 in 13th Lok Sabha, followed by 15th Lok Sabha in 2009 and then 16th Lok Sabha in 2014.

**Tanzanian President John Magufuli passes away**



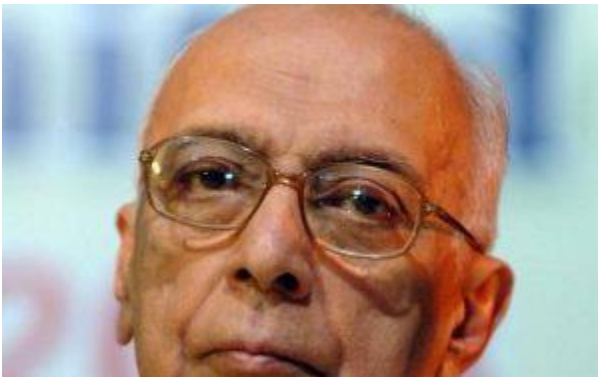
- The President of **Tanzania, John Magufuli** has passed away following a heart ailment. Popularly nicknamed the **“Bulldozer”**, Magufuli served as the **fifth President** of Tanzania from 2015 until his death in 2021.
- He first won the presidential election in October

2015 and was sworn in on 5 November 2015. He was re-elected in 2020.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Tanzania President: SamiaSuluhu.
- Tanzania Capital: Dodoma.
- Tanzania Currency: Tanzanian shilling.

**Former Sebi chairman GV Ramakrishna passes away**



- Former Sebi chairman **GV Ramakrishna** passed away. He was appointed as the chairman of markets regulator Sebi in **1990** when it lacked legal status.
- He headed that body till **1994** and then became the first chairman of the **Disinvestment Commission in 1996**.

**Noted filmmaker and writer Sagar Sarhadi passes away**



- Noted writer and filmmaker **Sagar Sarhadi**, known for films like **“Kabhi Kabhie”**,

**“Silsila”, and “Bazaar”**, has passed away. He began his career as Urdu short stories writer and entered Bollywood through Yash Chopra’s 1976 **“Kabhi Kabhie”**, which had Amitabh Bachchan and Raakhee in the lead role.

- He turned director with **“Bazaar”** in 1982. He had written dialogues for various acclaimed films like **“Silsila”, “Chandni”, “Deewana” “Kaho Na Pyaar Hai”** etc.

**Acclaimed Egyptian feminist Nawal Saadawi passes away**



- **Nawal Saadawi**, a renowned **Egyptian feminist, psychiatrist and novelist**, whose writings have stirred controversy for decades in an overwhelmingly conservative society passed away. She was a fierce advocate of women rights in Egypt and the Arab world.
- In 2005, she was awarded the Inana International Prize in Belgium, a year after she received the North-South prize from the Council of Europe. In 2020, Time Magazine named her on their 100 Women of the Year list. She was the founder and head of the Arab Women’s Solidarity Association and co-founder of the Arab Association for Human Rights.

**Acclaimed Polish Poet Adam Zagajewski passes away**



- Renowned Polish poet **Adam Zagajewski** has passed away. He was a leading figure in **Poland’s New Wave or Generation ’68**, a literary movement of the late 1960s that called for a simple language to relate directly to reality.
- Zagajewski’s **“Try to Praise the Mutilated World,”** was translated into English by Clare Cavanaugh and published in The New Yorker.



- Noted Odissi dancer **Laxmipriya Mohapatra**, the wife of legendary classical dancer Kelucharan Mohapatra, passed away. She started her dancing career at the **Annapura Theatre in Puri in 1947**.
- She has also acted in four Odia movies. Though he was an expert in Odissi and Gotipua dance forms, Kelucharan was then performing as a tabla player in the theatre.

**Noted Odissi dancer Laxmipriya Mohapatra passes away**

## Topic 13: Ranks & Reports

### Elon Musk Tops Hurun Global Rich List 2021

THE RICH & FAMOUS: Hurun Global Rich List 2021					
Rank		Wealth (\$bn)	Change YOY	Company	Country of residence
1*	Elon Musk	197	328%	Tesla	USA
2↓	Jeff Bezos	189	35%	Amazon	USA
3↓	Bernard Arnault	114	7%	LVMH	France
4↓	Bill Gates	110	4%	Microsoft	USA
5-	Mark Zuckerberg	101	20%	Facebook	USA
6↓	Warren Buffet	91	-11%	Berkshire Hathaway	USA
7*	Zhong Shanshan	85	New	YST	China
8↑	Mukesh Ambani	83	24%	Reliance	India
9-	Steve Ballmer	80	19%	Microsoft	USA
9*	Bertrand Puech & family	80	45%	Hermes	France

Source: 10th Edition of Hurun Global Rich List 2021 Report

- The **10th Edition of Hurun Global Rich List 2021** was released, which ranked 3228 billionaires from 2,402 companies and **68 countries**. The report showed that despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the world added 8

billionaires every week in 2020 and 421 in a year, taking their total number to a record 3,288.

- Tesla chief **Elon Musk** bagged the top spot on the Hurun Global Rich List for the first time after adding a massive **\$151 billion** during the year 2020 to take his net worth to **\$197 billion**.
- Asia’s richest person and Reliance Industries chairman **Mukesh Ambani** is ranked eighth on the **Hurun Global Rich List 2021**. The total wealth of Ambani surged by 24% to **\$83 billion** (approximately Rs 6.09 lakh crore).

### Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- Hurun Report Chairman and Chief Researcher: Rupert Hoogewerf (Hu Run).
- Hurun Report Headquarters: Shanghai, China.
- Hurun India MD and Chief Researcher: Anas

Rahman.

- Hurun India Headquarters: Mumbai, Maharashtra.

**Ease of Living Index 2020 released**



- **Bengaluru** emerged as the top city on the government’s **Ease of Living Index 2020** that was released by Housing and Urban Affairs Minister **Hardeep Singh Puri**. **Pune** was second and **Ahmedabad** was ranked third among **111 cities**.
- A total of 111 cities under the Smart Cities Program, participated in the assessment exercise that was conducted in 2020.

**Million+ category**

- **Bengaluru** emerged as the top performer in this category.
- This was followed by Pune, Ahmedabad, Chennai, Surat, Navi Mumbai, Coimbatore, Vadodara, Indore, and Greater Mumbai respectively.

**Less than Million category**

- In this group, **Shimla** was ranked the highest in ease of living.
- This was followed by Bhubaneshwar, Silvassa, Kakinada, Salem, Vellore, Gandhinagar,

Gurugram, Davangere, and Tiruchirappalli.

**11th QS World University Rankings 2021 released**



- The **11th edition** of the **QS World University Rankings** was released on March 04, 2021. The QS World University Rankings 2021 ranks the top 1,000 universities from around the world, covering 80 different locations. There are 47 new entrants on the list.
- The **Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)**, the **United States** has retained its top position as the best university for the ninth year in a row.
- **Stanford University**, the United States and the **University of Cambridge**, United Kingdom are the second and third best University globally in QS World University Rankings 2021.
- The **Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay** has emerged as the best institution. It is placed at 172 positions. No institute in India is in the top 100.

**Indore and NDMC tops Municipal Performance Index (MPI) 2020**



- The **Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs** has released the final rankings of the **Municipal**

**Performance Index (MPI) 2020.** The ranking has classified municipalities into two categories based on their population which are: million-plus category and the less than million categories.

- The Municipal Performance Index will help Municipalities in better planning and management, filling the gaps in city administration, and improving the liveability of cities for its citizens.

**Million plus population category**

- **Indore** has topped this list, followed by Surat and Bhopal.

**Less than a million category**

- **New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC)** emerged as the leader, followed by Tirupati and Gandhinagar.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

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

**India downgraded from ‘free’ to ‘partly free’ in democracy report**

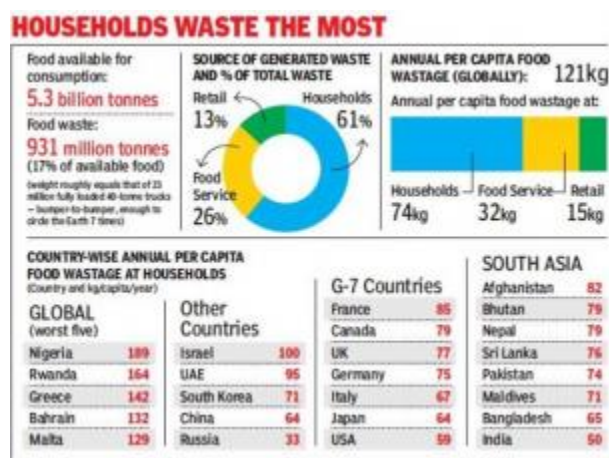


- **India’s** status as a democracy and free society has been downgraded to **“partly free”** in the latest annual report on global political rights and liberties by Freedom House, a US government-funded NGO that studies political freedom around the world.
- The report titled **“Freedom in the World 2021 –**

**Democracy under Siege”.** India’s fall “from the upper ranks of free nations could have a particularly damaging impact on global democratic standards”.

- India had been rated as **“free”** in Freedom House’s reports for **2018, 2019 and 2020**, though its scores on a scale of 100 had declined during this period from **77 to 71**. In the latest report, India had a score of **67 out of 100**.

**UNEP Food Waste Index Report 2021**



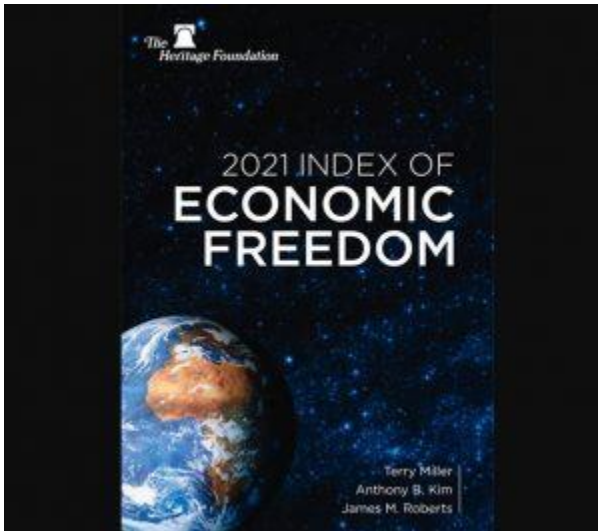
- The **United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)** and WRAP released the **Food Waste Index Report 2021** and highlights that food wastes by different countries in 2019. As per the report, Over **931 million tonnes** of food were wasted globally in 2019.
- **In India**, the household food waste estimate is **50 kg per capita** per year, or **68,760,163 tonnes** a year.
- The household food waste estimate in the US is 59 kg per capita per year, or 19,359,951 tonnes a year.
- China these estimates are 64 kg per capita per year or 91,646,213 tonnes a year.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- UNEP Headquarters: Nairobi, Kenya.

- UNEP Head: Inger Andersen.
- UNEP Founder: Maurice Strong.
- UNEP Founded: 5 June 1972, Nairobi, Kenya.

**Economic Freedom Index 2021 announced**



- The “Economic Freedom Index” was recently unveiled by the Heritage Foundation, a conservative think tank in the United States. This time, the index was developed by looking at 184 countries from July 2019 to June 2020.
- The index is being published for the first time since the COVID-19 pandemic wreaked havoc on lives and economies around the world, and the scoring represents only a small part of how governments reacted to the health crisis.
- Singapore has dominated the global ranking for the second year in a row in the index.
- In the 2021 Index, **India** came in around the middle of the pack among Asia-Pacific countries ranking **26th** out of 40 countries, scoring 56.5 points. Globally, the Foundation rates India’s economy as the **121st freest**. Although its overall score is unchanged, improvements were made in business freedom. This was offset by declines in judicial effectiveness and other scores.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Heritage Foundation  
Headquarters: Washington, D.C., US.
- Heritage Foundation Founded: 16 February 1973.
- Heritage Foundation Chairperson: Thomas A. Saunders III.

**Hurun India Wealth Report 2020 announced**



- On March 16, 2020, Hurun India Wealth Report 2020 was released. The study describes a new household group in India known as the "New Middle Class," which has an annual savings rate of Rs 20 lakh.
- According to the study, these households invest heavily in physical assets such as primary residential property and automobiles. The total number of such cumulative households in India, according to the survey, is 633,000.
- According to the report, there are approximately 4,12,000 dollar-millionaire households or affluent households in India with a net worth of Rs 7 crore. The Hurun Rich Listers, according to the study, have a combined wealth of Rs 1,000 crores.
- This category of the report comprises 3000 number of cumulative households in India. The ‘Indian middle class’ has earnings of over **Rs 2.5-lakh** per annum while they have a net worth of less than Rs 7 crore. The **‘Indian Middle Class’** category accounts for **56400,000 families in India**.

**India's arms imports down by 33%, says Sipri report**



- **India's arms imports fell 33%** between 2011-15 and 2016-20, said a report released by the **Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (Sipri)**.
- The report on international arms transfers attributed the drop in India's arms imports mainly to an attempt to reduce its dependence on **Russian arms** and complex procurement processes. Russia was the most affected supplier, although India's imports of US arms also fell by **46%**.
- India's top three arms suppliers during 2016-20 were **Russia (accounting for 49% of India's imports), France (18%) and Israel (13%), the report.** Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Mauritius were the top recipients of Indian military hardware, the report.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Sipri Headquarters: Oslo, Norway.
- Sipri Founded: 6 May 1966.
- Sipri Director: Dan Smith.

**New Delhi Ranked as World's most polluted capital city**



- **New Delhi** has been adjudged as the **world's most polluted capital city** for the third straight year in the **2020 World Air Quality Report** by Swiss organisation, **IQAir**. Globally, **New Delhi** is ranked as the **10th** most polluted city in the world.
- The topmost polluted city in the world is **Xinjiang in China**. This is followed by nine Indian cities as the most polluted cities in the world, which are **Ghaziabad, Bulandshahar, Birsakh Jalalpur, Noida, Greater Noida, Kanpur, Lucknow and Bhiwari**.
- The IQAir report measures air quality levels based on the concentration of lung-damaging airborne particles known as **PM 2.5**, which is measured by ground-based monitoring stations.

**India ranks 139th in World Happiness Report 2021**



- **India** has been placed at **139th** position out of **149 countries** in the **UN World Happiness Report 2021** released. In 2019, India was ranked **140th**. The World Happiness Report 2021 has been topped by **Finland**, for the fourth consecutive year.



- The 2021 report is the ninth World Happiness Report and focuses on the effects of COVID-19 and how people all over the world have fared.
- Finland is followed by Iceland, Denmark, Switzerland, The Netherlands, Sweden, Germany, Norway, New Zealand and Austria.
- People in Afghanistan (149) are the most unhappy with their lives, followed by Zimbabwe (148), Rwanda (147), Botswana (146) and Lesotho (145).
- The World Happiness Report is issued by the **UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network**, to rank countries by how happy their citizens perceive themselves to be.
- The countries of the world are ranked on the basis of questions from the Gallup World Poll. The results are then correlated with other factors, like gross domestic product per person, healthy life expectancy and the opinions of residents.

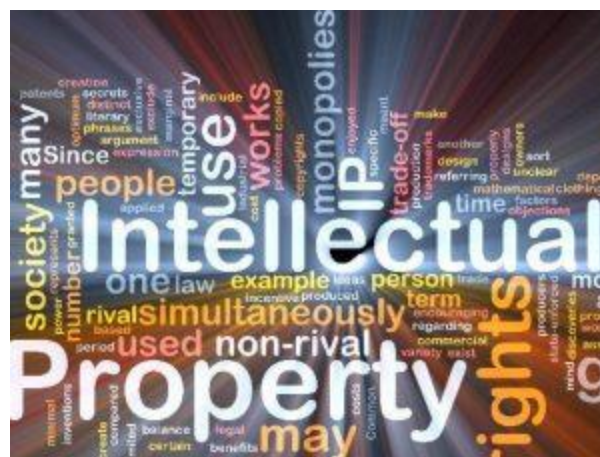
**India slips to 56th rank in Global Home Price Index**



- **India** has moved down 13 spots in the latest global home price index to finish last at **56th rank** in the quarter ending December 2020. Against its **43rd rank** a year ago, India saw a decline of **3.6%** year-on-year (YoY) in home prices, leading to the drop in global position, showed **Knight Frank’s Global House Price Index**.

- India was the weakest-performing country during the fourth quarter of 2020, with a decline of 3.6% in home prices, followed by Morocco with a drop of 3.3%. According to the report, markets like **New Zealand (19%), Russia (14%), the US (10%), Canada and UK (both 9%)** have recorded accelerated growth in rankings in the last three months due to a growth in housing demand.

**India ranks 40th on International Intellectual Property Index**



- **India** ranked **40** among **53** global economies on the latest annual edition of the **International Intellectual Property (IP) Index** released.
- The US Chamber of Commerce **Global Innovation Policy Centre (GIPC)**, the Index evaluates Intellectual Property rights in 53 global economies from patent and copyright policies to commercialisation of IP assets and ratification of international treaties.
- The 2021 Index illustrates that economies with the most effective IP frameworks are more likely to achieve the socio-economic benefits needed to combat COVID-19, including greater access to venture capital, increased private sector investment in research and development, and over 10 times more clinical trial activity.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- World Intellectual Property Organization  
Headquarters: Geneva, Switzerland.
- World Intellectual Property Organization  
Head: Daren Tang.

**Topic 14: Schemes & Committee**

**Gol Sets up 259-Member panel to Commemorate 75 Years of India’s Independence**



- The Government of India has set up a **259-member** high-level national committee, to be headed by Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** to commemorate **75 years of India’s independence**.
- The committee will provide policy direction and guidelines for the formulation of programmes for the commemoration of the 75th anniversary of Indian Independence, at the national and international levels.
- The celebrations are proposed to be launched 75 weeks prior to **August 15, 2022**, on March 12, 2021, which is the **91st anniversary** of the historic **Salt Satyagraha** led by Mahatma Gandhi. The celebrations will be held at the national and international level in the form of ‘Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav’. The high-level committee will hold its first meeting on March 8, 2021.

**Jammu and Kashmir launches Super-75 Scholarship Scheme**



- The **Jammu and Kashmir** Lieutenant Governor **Manoj Sinha** has launched “**Super-75**” scholarship schemes for meritorious girls, on the occasion of International Women’s Day 2021. The basic aim of this scholarship scheme is to facilitate the education and entrepreneurship of women.
- The super-75 scholarship scheme will support the education of meritorious girls from poor families, so that they can excel in streams like medicine, engineering, ITI (Industrial training institutes) and humanity and contribute to nation-building.
- Apart from this, Lt Governor Sinha also announced a new scheme named ‘**Tejaswini**’. This scheme has been launched under ‘**Mission Youth-J&K**’.
- Under Tejaswini, financial assistance of **Rs 5 lakhs** will be provided to the girls between the age group of **18 to 35 years** to start their business.

**Gol forms experts committee for Startup India Seed Fund Scheme**



- For the overall execution and supervision of the Startup India Seed Fund Scheme, the government has created an expert advisory committee. H K Mittal of the Department of Science and Technology will lead the committee.
- Members of the DPIIT, the department of biotechnology, science and technology, electronics and IT, Niti Aayog, and expert members from the startup ecosystem will be among the committee's other representatives.
- The committee will assess and select incubators for funding under the scheme, track progress, and take all appropriate steps to ensure that funds are used effectively to achieve the scheme's goals.

#### RBI sets up external advisory committee for evaluating banking applications



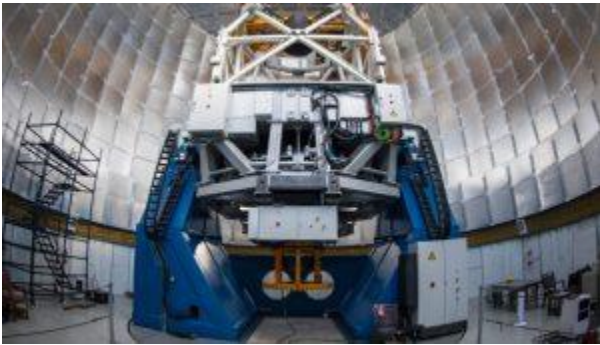
- The **Reserve Bank of India** has announced the names of the members of the **Standing External Advisory Committee (SEAC)** for evaluating applications for Universal Banks as well as Small Finance Banks.
- The committee has five members, with former RBI deputy governor **Shyamala Gopinath** as the chairperson. The panel will have a tenure of three years.
- According to guidelines, applications for universal banks and SFBs will first be evaluated by the RBI to ensure prima facie eligibility of the applicants, after which the newly formed committee will evaluate the applications.

#### Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

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

## Topic 15: Science & Technology

#### Indigenously developed "Spectrograph" commissioned in Nainital



- Indian Scientists at **Aryabhata Research Institute of observational sciences (ARIES), Nainital**, have indigenously designed and developed a low-cost optical **Spectrograph** named as **Aries-Devasthal Faint Object Spectrograph & Camera (ADFOSC)**.
- It has been commissioned on the **3.6-m Devasthal Optical Telescope (DOT)**, in the Nainital district of Uttarakhand.
- The ADFOSC spectroscope is the largest of its kind among the existing astronomical spectrographs in India.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- ARIES Founded: 20 April 1954.

**Udaipur Science Centre inaugurated at Udaipur in Tripura**



- The Governor of Tripura, **Ramesh Bais** has inaugurated the **Udaipur Science Centre**, at **Udaipur, Tripura**.
- The Udaipur Science Centre has been

developed at a cost of **Rs 6 crore** funded jointly by the Ministry of Culture, Government of India and Department of Science, Technology and Environment, Tripura Government and with this; the **National Council of Science Museums (NCSM)** has now set-up science centres in all the northeastern states.

- Science Centres play a vital role in developing a scientific temper in society and inculcating a culture of Innovation among the masses, particularly among students.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Chief Minister of Tripura: Biplab Kumar Deb; Governor: Ramesh Bais.

**SpaceX successfully tests Starship SN10 prototype rocket**



- After two unsuccessful attempts, Elon Musk's private rocket company SpaceX successfully tested its Starship prototype rocket "SN10." SpaceX launched the rocket concept to a height of 10,000 kilometres before falling down to Earth. However, about six minutes after landing, the rocket exploded.
- The SN10 is a prototype of SpaceX's Starship Mars rocket, which is designed to transport people and payloads to the moon, Mars, and other far-flung destinations.
- This rocket is also part of the company's plan to phase out other flight hardware, such as the

Falcon 9 and Falcon Heavy rockets, as well as the Dragon cargo and crew capsules, and instead rely on Starship.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- SpaceX founder & CEO: Elon Musk.
- SpaceX president & COO: Gwynne Shotwell.
- SpaceX Founded: 2002.
- SpaceX Headquarters: California, United States of America.

**ISRO Develops Joint Earth Observation Satellite Mission Radar With NASA**



- **ISRO** has completed the development of a **Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR)** capable of producing extremely high-resolution images for a joint earth observation satellite mission with the US space agency **NASA**. **NASA-ISRO SAR (NISAR)** is a joint collaboration for a dual-frequency L and S-band SAR for earth observation.
- NISAR will be the first satellite mission to use two different radar frequencies (**L-band and S-band**) to measure changes in our planet’s surface less than a centimetre across.
- The mission is targeted to launch in early **2022** from ISRO’s Sriharikota spaceport in Andhra Pradesh’s Nellore district, about **100 km north of Chennai**.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- ISRO Chairman: K.Sivan.
- ISRO Headquarters: Bengaluru, Karnataka.
- ISRO established: 15 August 1969.
- Acting Administrator of NASA: Steve Jurczyk.
- Headquarters of NASA: Washington D.C., United States.
- NASA Founded: 1 October 1958.

**DoT Launches Online Certificate Course on 5G Technology**



- The **Department of Telecommunications (DoT)** has launched a new online certificate course on **5G technology** to be conducted by the **National Telecommunications Institute for Policy Research, Innovation and Training (NTIPRIT)**, which is the training institute of DoT.
- The course, which will be conducted from 9 March 2021 onwards, is 36 hours long and will be conducted over a period of 12 weeks every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 3:30 pm to 4:30 pm. Participants will also be allowed to record the session if they happen to miss it.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

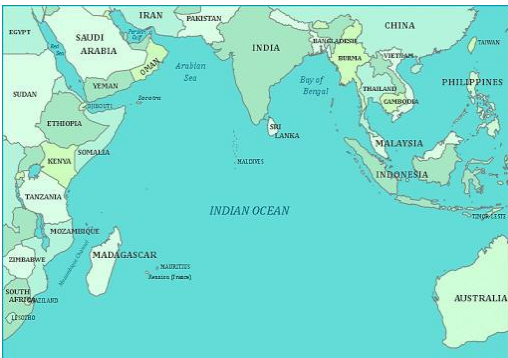
- Minister of Communications: Ravi Shankar Prasad.

**Odisha Farmer’s Solar Car Gets Thumbs-Up Online**



- Sushil Aggarwal of the Mayurbhanj district of Odisha designed a four-wheeler with an 850 Watt motor and a battery capacity of 100 Ah/54 Volts.
- The vehicle can fly up to 300 kilometres after being fully charged. During the COVID-19 lockout, he said he designed this car in a workshop at his home.
- All of the work on his vehicle was done in my workshop, including motor winding, electrical fitting, and chassis work, with the assistance of two other mechanics and a friend who advised me on electrical work.
- They are powered by electricity through the use of solar energy. Sun’s energy is directly converted into electrical energy by the Photovoltaic (PV) cells.

**First project Genome Mapping in Indian Ocean will be launched**



- In the **Indian Ocean**, the **National Institute of Oceanography (NIO)** will launch the first-of-its-kind project of Genome Mapping.

- Indian Ocean covers about **20%** of the Earth’s water surface and so is the third largest water body in the world.
- Its objective is to gather samples of genome mapping of microorganisms in the Indian Ocean.
- It is also necessary to understand the biochemistry and the response of the Ocean to climate change, nutrient stress and increasing pollution.
- The cost of the project and duration is **Rs 25 crore** and will take around three years to complete.

**ISRO launches sounding rocket RH-560 to study altitudinal variations**



- **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** has launched the sounding rocket (**RH-560**) to study altitudinal variations in the neutral winds and plasma dynamics, at **Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC), Sriharikota Range (SHAR)**.
- ISRO has developed a series of sounding rockets called Rohini series, important among them being **RH-200, RH-300 and RH-560**, number in the name indicating the diameter of the rocket in mm, according to the Bengaluru-headquartered space agency.
- Sounding rockets are one or two-stage solid propellant rockets used for probing the upper atmospheric regions and for space research. They also serve as easily affordable platforms to test or prove prototypes of new components or

subsystems intended for use in launch vehicles and satellites.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

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

**Samsung sets up Innovation Lab at Delhi Technological University**



- Samsung India has opened a Samsung Innovation Lab at Delhi Technological University (DTU), which will concentrate on collaborative research and training. As part of its new #PoweringDigitalIndia vision, Samsung has established an innovation lab as part of its Samsung Innovation Campus initiative.
- With this addition, Samsung's Samsung Innovation Campus programme, which was previously known as Samsung Digital Academy, now has eight technical labs spread throughout the world.
- As part of the lab, engineers at **Samsung R&D Institute, Noida (SRI-N)** will work with students and faculty at DTU on collaborative research projects on smartphone domains.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Samsung Founder: Lee Byung-chul.
- Samsung Founded: 1 March 1938, Seoul, South

Korea.

- Samsung Headquarters: Seoul, South Korea.

**Nokia to Develop New 5G Radio Solutions**



- Nokia, a Finnish telecom equipment manufacturer, revealed on March 16 that it has formed a new cloud-based 5G radio solution with Microsoft, Amazon Web Services, and Google. Its radio access network (RNA) technology will be used to create this solution. This collaboration was developed with the intention of generating new business cases.
- A mobile telecommunication system includes a radio access network (RAN). Radio access technology is used in this framework. A RAN connects two machines, such as a computer, a cell phone, or any system that can be operated remotely. It also serves as a connection to the core network.
- Based on the standard mobile phones and other wireless connected devices are called user equipment, terminal equipment or mobile station etc. The functionality of RAN is typically provided by the silicon chip which resides in both the core network and the user equipment.
- The single handset or phone can be connected to multiple radio access networks simultaneously.
- The Handsets which are capable of this feature are called dual-mode handsets. For example, a

handset can commonly support both **GSM and UMTS or “3G” radio access technologies**. Such devices also transfer the ongoing call across different radio access networks without any disruption to users.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Nokia CEO: PekkaLundmark.
- Nokia Founded: 12 May 1865.
- Nokia Headquarters: Espoo, Finland.

**ISRO Demonstrates India’s First Free-Space Quantum Communication**



- In a first-of-its-kind initiative, the **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** successfully demonstrated free-space **Quantum Communication** over a distance of **300 metres**, with several technologies developed within the country.
- The demonstration included live video conferencing using quantum-key-encrypted signals, at **Space Applications Centre (SAC)**, Ahmedabad, between two line-of-sight buildings within the campus.
- The experiment was done at night to ensure that there is no interference from the direct sunlight. This is a major milestone achievement for unconditionally secured satellite data-communication using quantum technologies.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

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

**Topic 16: Sports News**

**VineshPhogat wins gold in Ukraine wrestling event**



- Star Indian wrestler, **VineshPhogat** has defeated 2017 world champion **Vanesa Kaladzinskay** of Belarus to win a **gold medal** at the **XXIV Outstanding Ukrainian Wrestlers and**

**Coaches Memorial tournament**, held in Kiev, Ukraine.

- Haryana’s Bhiwani-based Vinesh won in the 53kg bout with a 10-8 lead. She is the only Indian woman wrestler to have qualified for the Tokyo Olympics Games in the **53 kg category**.

**Mumbai City FC win ISL League Football Winners Shield**





- **Mumbai City FC** has scripted a **2-0 triumph** over **ATK Mohun Bagan (ATKMB)** at the GMC Stadium in Goa to bag the **ISL League Winners Shield** and the coveted AFC Champions League spot that comes with it.
- Mumbai and ATKMB finished level on 40 points, but the former claimed first place with a better head-to-head record. Mumbai City FC became the second-ever Indian club to qualify to the group stages of the AFC Champions League.

**Indian shuttlers Varun, Malvika win Uganda International titles**



- India's **Varun Kapur** and **Malvika Bansod** clinched the **men's and women's singles titles** respectively at the **2021 Uganda International Badminton tournament in Kampala**.
- Varun beat compatriot Sankar Muthusamy 21-18, 16-21, 21-17 in the men's singles final. Malvika beat compatriot Anupama Upadhyaya in the women singles summit clash 17-21, 25-

23, 21-10.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Uganda Capital: Kampala.
- Uganda Currency: Ugandan shilling.
- Uganda President: Yoweri Museveni.

**Kieron Pollard becomes 3rd Man to Hit 6 Sixes in an over**



- **Kieron Pollard** hit six sixes in an over to guide **West Indies** to a comprehensive four-wicket win against **Sri Lanka** in the first game of their three-match **T20 series**.
- Pollard joins former India batsman **Yuvraj Singh** as the only other player to hit six sixes in an over in T20 cricket, and just the third man to hit six sixes in an international match, emulating **Herschelle Gibbs (South Africa)** and **Yuvraj Singh (India)**.
- Pollard achieved the feat when he hit **Sri Lanka's AkilaDananjaya** out of the park 6 times in the 6th over of West Indies' successful chase in the first T20I at the **Coolidge Cricket Ground in Antigua**.
- Sri Lanka leg-spinner AkilaDananjaya (3-62) was the unfortunate bowler, pummelled in all directions by Pollard, and this coming after he had taken a hat-trick in his previous over.

**J&K tops medals tally at Khelo India Winter National Games**



- In the second edition of the Khelo India Winter National Games, the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir took home the most medals. J&K took home 11 gold medals, 18 silver medals, and 5 bronze medals.
- The five-day mega sports event, which began on February 26th and ended on February 28th in the popular ski resort of Gulmarg in north Kashmir's Baramulla district, came to a close on February 28th. Prime Minister Narendra Modi e-inaugurated the ceremony.
- The second edition of the Khelo India winter games is a significant move toward making Jammu and Kashmir a winter sports centre.
- More than 1,000 athletes from 27 states and territories participated in the sport.
- The event was organised by the Union Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports in collaboration with the J&K Sports Council and the Winter Games Association of Jammu and Kashmir.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Lieutenant Governor of Jammu and Kashmir: Manoj Sinha.

**Bajrang Punia bags gold in Matteo Pellicon World ranking series**

- In wrestling, the World Championship bronze medallist **Bajrang Punia** won a gold medal at the **Matteo Pellicone ranking series** held in **Rome, Italy**. He defeated Mongolia's TulgaTumurOchir 2-2 by criteria in the 65kg freestyle event final.
- It is the second successive gold medal for 27 years Haryana wrestler, who had won the previous gold at this competition in 2020 by beating Jordan Oliver of the USA in the final.
- Apart from this, the ace India woman wrestler **Vinesh Phogat** won the gold medal in the 53kg title. The 26-year-old Vinesh beat Canada's Diana Weicker 4-0.

**India qualify for ICC World Test Championship Final**

POINTS TABLE						
AS ON 6 MARCH 2021						
	PCT (%)	POINTS	SERIES	WIN	MATCHES LOST	DRAWN
INDIA	72.2	520	5	12	4	1
NEW ZEALAND	70.0	420	5	7	4	0
AUSTRALIA	69.2	352	4	8	4	2
ENGLAND	61.4	442	6	11	7	3
PAKISTAN	43.3	286	5.5	4	5	3
WEST INDIES	33.3	160	4	3	6	0
SOUTH AFRICA	30.0	144	4	3	8	0
SRI LANKA	16.7	80	4	1	6	1
BANGLADESH	0.0	0	2.5	0	5	0

- **Indian Cricket Team** have qualified for the inaugural **ICC World Test Championship final** after beating **England** in an innings and 25 runs in the fourth and final Test in Ahmedabad on 6th March.
- **New Zealand** had already qualified for the WTC final with 420 points from 11 Tests with 7 wins and 4 losses. The World Test Championship final

will be played at the **Lord’s Cricket Ground in London from June 18.**

**India-New Zealand World Test Championship final in Southampton**



- **India** will play their inaugural **World Test Championship final** against **New Zealand** at **Southampton’s Ageas Bowl Stadium, England** from June 18-22.
- Initially, the final was supposed to be held at the **Lord’s** but Southampton, with a five-star facility inside the stadium, will make it easier for both the ICC and the England and Wales Cricket Board to create a bio-bubble for the two teams.

**PV Sindhu wins silver in BWF Swiss Open Super 300**



- India’s ace shuttler **PV Sindhu** has won a silver medal in the **BWF Swiss Open Super 300** in the final of the women’s singles event held at **Basel, Switzerland.**
- The World No. 7 Sindhu lost to World No. 3 and reigning Olympic champion **Carolina Marin.**

**Winners List of Swiss Open 2021**

- Men’s Singles : **Viktor Axelsen** (Denmark) beat Kunlavut Vitidsarn (Thailand).
- Women’s Singles: **Carolina Marin** (Spain) beat PV Sindhu (India).
- Men’s Doubles: **Kim Astrup and Anders Skaarup Rasmussen** (Denmark) beat Mark Lamsfuss-Marvin Seidel (Germany).
- Mixed Doubles: **Thom Gicquel-Delphine Delrue** (France) beat Denmark pair, Mathias Christiansen-Alexandra Boje.

**Mithali Raj becomes 1st Indian woman cricketer to score 10K Int’l runs**



- The veteran Indian women’s cricketer **Mithali Raj** has become the first Indian woman cricketer that has completed **10,000 international runs** in all the cricket formats.
- She also becomes the second woman cricketer at the international level to complete 10000 runs. She achieved the milestone of 10,000 after she hit a boundary off the Anne Bosch in 28th over of Indian innings in the ongoing third ODI match against **South Africa.**
- She won the **Arjuna Award** in the year 2003 and **Padma Shri** in the year 2015.

**Mumbai City FC beat ATK Mohun Bagan to win their maiden ISL title**



- **Mumbai City FC** has defeated **ATK Mohun Bagan** 2-1 in the ISL 2020-21 final to lift yet another trophy this year. Mumbai had earlier secured the ISL Shield along with a spot in the AFC Champions League group stage by finishing first in the standings in the regular season.

**Related Awards**

- **Golden Ball Award** (Best Player of ISL 2020-21): ATK Mohun Bagan forward **Roy Krishna**.
- **Emerging Indian Player of the Year**: NorthEast United midfielder **Lalengmawia**.
- **Golden Boot Award** (Top goal-scorer): FC Goa striker **Igor Angulo** for 14 goals.
- **Golden Glove Award** (Best Goalkeeper): ATK Mohun Bagan custodian **Arindam Bhattacharya** for ten clean sheets.

**Bhavani Devi becomes first ever Indian fencer to qualify for Olympics**



- **Bhavani Devi** became the first-ever **Indian fencer to qualify for the Olympics**. The sabre fencer secured an Olympic spot due to events in

the ongoing Fencing World Cup. Hosts Hungary lost in the quarterfinals of the team event, allowing Korea to progress to the semis.

- Therefore, Bhavani Devi qualifies through the Adjusted Official Ranking (AOR) Method. Currently, she is ranked 45th in the world. In 2017 She won India’s 1st international gold medal in fencing.

**Virat Kohli becomes the first player to score 3000 runs in men’s T20I**



- Indian captain **Virat Kohli** has breached the **3000-run mark in Twenty20 Internationals** with his last shot in the second T20I against **England**. Kohli’s knock of 73 runs, which came off 49 balls, also helped India to level the five-match T20I series.
- He also became the third captain in international cricket to score **12000 runs** as a captain. He joined legendary captains **Ricky Ponting** and **Graeme Smith** in the elite list.

**UAE’s Mohammad Naveed, Shaiman Anwar banned for 8 years from all cricket**



- The **International Cricket Council (ICC)** has imposed eight years ban on former UAE players **Mohammad Naveed** and **Shaiman Anwar Butt** from all cricket, for trying to fix matches during the T20 World Cup qualifiers in 2019. The ICC Anti-Corruption Tribunal had found them guilty of breaching the Anti-Corruption Code in January 2021.
- The bans are backdated to 16 October 2019, when they were provisionally suspended for attempting to corrupt matches of the ICC Men’s T20 World Cup Qualifier 2019 in the UAE. Naveed was the captain and leading wicket-taker. Anwar was the opening bat. Both had long international careers and were well versed in the threat from match-fixers.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

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

**Dhanalakshmi beats Dutee Chand to win Federation Cup gold**



- Sprinter **S Dhanalakshmi** beat national record holder **Dutee Chand** to win women’s 100m sprint final in the **Federation Cup Senior National Athletics Championships** in Patiala.
- The 22-year-old Dhanalakshmi of Tamil Nadu clocked 11.39 seconds to become the fastest woman of the championships. Odisha-based Dutee clocked 11.58 seconds to be placed in second place.
- Another Tamil Nadu runner **Archana Suseendran** was third in 11.76 seconds. **Hima Das** was disqualified after a false start. In men’s 100m final category, **Gurindervir Singh of Punjab** won gold in 10.32 seconds, while Elakkiyadasan Kannada of Tamil Nadu (10.43) and Maharashtra’s Satish Krishnakumar (10.56) were second and third respectively.

**Hashmatullah Shahidi becomes 1st afghan player to score Test double century**



- Hashmatullah Shahidi of Afghanistan became the first batsman from his country to score a

double century in Test cricket. On the second day of the second Test against Zimbabwe in Abu Dhabi, he scored his first double century. As Afghanistan put up a gigantic 545 for 4 in their first innings, he scored 200 not out off 443 balls with 21 fours and one six.

- Since making his international debut in an ODI against Kenya, Shahidi has played five Tests and 42 One-Day Internationals for Afghanistan. In 2018, he made his Test debut against India in Bengaluru, in Afghanistan's first-ever Test match. So far, the 26-year-old left-handed batsman has 347 runs in five Tests and 1155 runs in 42 One-Day Internationals.

**Athlete Avinash Sable Sets New National Record In Men’s 3000m Steeplechase**



- The Indian athlete **Avinash Sable** set a new national record in the men’s **3000m steeplechase** event in the ongoing **Federation Cup Senior National Athletics Championships** in Patiala, with timing of **8:20.20**.
- With this, the 26-year-old Avinash broke his own record of **8:21.37** which he set in 2019, after finishing 13th in the final of the World Athletics Championships in Doha.
- The army man from the arid Beed district of Maharashtra broke the national record for the fifth time in his career. Sable has already secured a berth in the Tokyo Olympics 2020 in men’s 3000m steeplechase during the 2019

World Athletics Championships.

**ISSF WC: Yashaswini wins first gold for India**



- **Yashaswini Deswal** bagged the first gold medal for India in the **Women’s 10M Air Pistol** final of the **International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) World Cup Rifle/Pistol/Shotgun**.
- Deswal accumulated 238.8 points to lead in her category. Another Indian shooter Manu Bhaker won a silver medal with 236.7 points. World number one shooter **Divyansh Singh Panwar** clinched the bronze medal in 10m Air Rifle (men’s category) and opened India’s medal account in the competition.

**India Legends wins 2020-21 Road Safety World Series T-20**



- In Cricket, **India Legends** defeated **Sri Lanka Legends** by 14 runs to clinch the **Road Safety World Series final title**, held at **Shaheed Veer Narayan Singh International Stadium in Raipur, Chhattisgarh**.

- India Legends put up a total of 181/4 but Sri Lanka Legends could manage 167/7. **Sachin Tendulkar** was the captain of the India Legends.

**Related awards:**

- **Player of the Match:** Yusuf Pathan (India Legends)
- **Player of the Series:** Tillakaratne Dilshan (Sri Lanka Legends)
- **Most Runs:** Tillakaratne Dilshan
- **Most Wickets:** Tillakaratne Dilshan

**Nozomi Okuhara bags women’s singles titles at All England Open**



- Japan’s **Nozomi Okuhara** has won the **All England Badminton Championships women’s title** as she defeated **Pornpawee Chochuwong** 21-12, 21-16 in the finals.
- In the men’s category, Malaysia’s **Lee Zii Jia** has won the All England Badminton Championships title as he defeated Denmark’s Viktor Axelsen in the summit clash. With this win, Malaysia’s title drought came to an end and it is after four years, that someone from the country has managed to win the All England Open. Lee Chong Wei had last won the All England Open for Malaysia in 2017.

**Shreyas Iyer Signs Up With Lancashire For Royal London Cup 2021**



- English county **Lancashire** has announced the overseas signing of India batsman **Shreyas Iyer** for the **2021 Royal London Cup**. Iyer becomes 6th Indian to sign for Lancashire. Iyer will arrive at Old Trafford on July 15 ahead of the start of the 50-over tournament and will remain with Lancashire for the duration of the month-long group stage.
- The top-order batsman is regarded as one of the most attacking and fluent stroke players in Indian cricket and he has played in 21 ODIs and 29 T20 Internationals for his country. The signing of Shreyas Iyer signals the latest step in Lancashire’s long association with Indian cricket, which stretches back more than 50 years when India wicketkeeper-batsman Farokh Engineer joined the county in 1968.
- He would go on to become a Lancashire legend and now serves as a vice-president of the club. Since Engineer retired, four other Indian players — Murali Kartik, Dinesh Mongia, VVS Laxman, and Sourav Ganguly — have represented Lancashire.

**India’s Singhraj wins gold in Para Shooting World Cup 2021**



- Indian para-athlete **Singhraj** won the gold medal in the **2021 Para Shooting World Cup** at **Al Ain in the UAE**. He defeated Uzbekistan’s **Server Ibragimov** to get the top honour in the P1 – Men’s 10m Air Pistol SH1 final.
- Singhraj pipped Rio 2016 bronze medallist Ibragimov by a thin margin of 2.8 points. The final score read 236.8-234. Turkey’s former Paralympic champion **Muharrem Korhan Yamaç** took the bronze with 214.4 points.
- With this, India has moved to third place in the medals table. India has now two medals on its list – one gold and one bronze.

**ISSF World Cup: India’s Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar Wins Gold**



- At the ISSF World Cup in New Delhi, India's Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar won gold in the men's 50m Rifle 3 Positions event. In the 3 Positions game, the 20-year-old became the youngest person in history to win a World Cup gold medal in shooting. Sanjeev Rajput, the sixth-place finisher, and Niraj Kumar, the last-

place finisher, were the other two Indian shooters in the final.

- In the current World Cup, this was India's eighth gold medal. With 15 medals so far, India continues to lead the medal count. In addition to the eight gold medals, India has won three silver and four bronze medals.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- International Shooting Sport Federation Headquarters: Munich, Germany;
- International Shooting Sport Federation President: Vladimir Lisin;
- International Shooting Sport Federation Founded: 1907.

**Yogasana Included in Khelo India Youth Games 2021**



- Sports Minister **Kiren Rijiju** has included **Yogasana** in **Khelo India Youth Games 2021** in a bid to develop it as a competitive sport. Yogasana sport for both male and female categories have been included in Khelo India Youth Games, 2021.
- Rijiju has written a reply in the Lok Sabha that the government has also given recognition to the National Yogasana Sports Federation (NYSF) for the promotion and development of Yogasana in the country.
- An **International Yogasana Sports Federation** was formed under the presidency



of yoga guru **Baba Ramdev** with **HR Nagendra** as secretary-general in **November 2019**.

**Khelo India Scheme extended till 2025-26**



- Sports Minister **Kiren Rijiju** has decided to extend the **Khelo India scheme** from **2021-22** to **2025-26**. The Ministry has furnished an **Expenditure Finance Committee (EFC)** memorandum to the Ministry of Finance for extension/continuation of the **Khelo India Scheme from 2021-22 to 2025-26**.
- An amount of **Rs 8750 crore** has been estimated as the financial implication of the new Khelo India Scheme (2021-22 to 2025-26) in the EFC memorandum furnished to the Ministry of Finance. An amount of **Rs 657.71 crore** has been al

**‘Girl Gang’ Announced Official Song Of ICC Women’s World Cup 2022**



- **Girl Gang**, a track by **New Zealand singer Gin Wigmore**, has been announced as the official song of the **2022 ICC Women’s World Cup**. The

tournament is set to be hosted in **New Zealand** from **March 4 to April 3, 2022**.

- Originally scheduled to be held from February 6 to March 7, 2021, the World Cup was postponed by a year due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

**RahiSarnobat, Chinky Yadav and Manu Bhaker clinch Gold at ISSF Shooting World Cup**



- In Shooting, India won gold in the **women’s 25m Pistol Team** event at the **ISSF World Cup** in **Delhi**.
- India beat Poland in the final to win the country’s 10th gold. The Indian women’s team of **RahiSarnobat, Chinky Yadav and Manu Bhaker** beat Poland’s Joanna Iwona Wawrzonowska, Julita Borek and Agnieszka Korejwo 17-7 in the gold medal match.
- Earlier in the day, the Indian women’s team in the 50m Rifle 3 Positions event had to settle for a silver as they lost 43-47 to Poland in the gold medal match. India is dominating the standings with **21 medals, including 10 gold medals**.

**India tops the medals tally with 15 gold at Delhi ISSF Shooting World Cup**



- **India** finished at the top of the medals table at the **2021 ISSF World Cup New Delhi**, held from 18 to 29 March 2021 at the Dr Karni Singh Shooting Range in New Delhi. India secured 30 medals which included **15 gold, 9 silver and 6 bronze**.
- The USA came second with eight medals including four gold, three silver and one bronze.

## Topic 17: State News

**Uttarakhand CM launches "GharokiPechan, Chelik Naam" scheme**



- Uttarakhand Chief Minister **Trivendra Singh Rawat** has launched "**GharokiPaachan, Chelik Naam**" (**daughter's name is a home's identity**) programme and development schemes worth **Rs 42 crore** in **Nainital**.
- Initially, the scheme has been launched in Nainital and later is set to be extended to the entire Uttarakhand.
- The government is working towards **women empowerment and 32,000 women groups** of the state are being linked with self-employment to make them self-reliant. The state government is also set to implement many public welfare schemes for the benefit of the

youth.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

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

**Digital platform 'Jagrut Tripura' launched by CM to boost e- governance**



- The **Tripura government** has come up with a digital platform '**Jagrut Tripura**' to help people get benefits from various schemes of the Centre and the state government. At least 102 schemes of various departments of both governments are available on the platform.
- The 'Jagrut Tripura' will empower citizens of the

northeastern state. The digital platform is one of the many proactive initiatives undertaken by the state government to spur a technology-led innovation ecosystem to make **‘Atmanirbhar’ (self-reliant) Tripura.**

- The project was developed by EasyGov, a Jio Group company, and it will be available to all the residents of Tripura. “With ‘Jagrut’, we want to empower people to get the benefits they deserve, and the focus is on building a family-centric, progressive model having ‘one data one source’ and privacy at the core.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Chief Minister of Tripura: Biplab Kumar Deb; Governor: Ramesh Bais.

**India’s first ‘Transgender Community Desk’ opens in Telangana**



- At the Gachibowli Police Station in Hyderabad, Telangana, the Cyberabad Police have opened India's first-ever Transgender Community Desk. This desk is one of the country's first gender-inclusive community policing programmes.
- In a ceremony attended by over 200 transgender people, Cyberabad Police Chief VC Sajjanar formally inaugurated the desk on Saturday.
- Earlier in **2014**, the **Supreme Court** recognised the transgender community as a third gender along with male and female and ruled that they

have equal privilege over the fundamental rights enshrined in the Indian Constitution.

- It is the world’s first-ever help desk for the transgender community and it will be managed by a Police Liaison Officer and a member of the transgender community who is designated as a community coordinator.
- It will also be the focal point for all grievance redressal among the transgender community in Cyberabad Commissionerate.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

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

**India’s first forest healing centre inaugurated in Uttarakand’s Ranikhet**



- The country's first forest healing centre was founded in Ranikhet, Uttarakhand.
- After conducting research on the healing properties of forests and their revitalising effects on overall health and well-being, the Uttarakhand Forest Department's Research Wing established the forest healing centre. It occupies a total area of around 13 acres.
- This healing centre was constructed in a pine-dominated forest since it has been discovered in various studies that conifers, such as pine trees, emit certain oil compounds called

phytoncides to protect themselves from various microbes and pathogens.

- It has been found in various researches that these compounds help to multiply natural killer (NK) cells in our blood, which help in fighting infections and cancerous growth and enhance overall immunity.
- It has been found that because of typical molecular vibration patterns of trees, tree-hugging has a beneficial impact on the increase in the level of feel-good hormones like oxytocin, serotonin and dopamine, creating the pleasant effect and in countries like Iceland forest department has been making efforts to facilitate this activity for benefit of health purpose of local citizens.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Governor of Uttarakhand: Baby Rani Maurya.

**Tirath Singh Rawat becomes new Chief Minister of U'khand**



**Himachal CM inaugurates Swarnim International Shivratri Fair**



- The famous **Swarnim International Shivratri Fair** has begun with Chief Minister **Jai Ram Thakur** formally launching it at the historic Paddal ground, Himachal Pradesh. Thousands of people dressed in their traditional attire participated in the procession carrying their local deities dancing all the way up to Paddal ground.
- Over 150 deities participated in the 'Jaleb', the traditional Shobha Yatra from almost all parts of the district. Earlier, the Chief Minister participated in the Pagri Ceremony and performed Puja at Shri Raj Madhav Rai Temple.
- Chief Minister felicitated the people of the State on the auspicious occasion of International Shivratri festival, which was being celebrated this year as Swarnim International Shivratri Fair to mark glorious fifty years of Statehood.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

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

**Maharashtra farmers start fresh fruit cake 'movement'**



- Fruit growers in rural **Maharashtra** have started an innovative ‘**movement**’ to promote fresh **fruit cakes** as a healthier option, instead of the traditional bakery-made cakes.
- According to farmers and agrarian experts, the aim of this ‘spontaneous’ movement is to encourage farmers and their families to increase the intake of fruits in their diet and to find a new way of selling their produce in times of the pandemic.
- As part of the movement, farmers, their families and various organisations of cultivators are encouraging cakes made locally using fruits like watermelon, muskmelon, grapes, orange, pineapple and banana while celebrating special events.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

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

**Jharkhand launches ‘SAAMAR’ campaign to fight malnutrition**

- Jharkhand's state government has launched the SAAMAR campaign to fight malnutrition in the state.
- The acronym SAAMAR stands for Strategic Action for Malnutrition and Anemia Reduction. The initiative was initiated with a 1000-day goal in mind, with annual surveys being performed to monitor progress.
- The campaign will put together different departments to recognise anaemic women and malnourished children so that the problem can be effectively addressed in a state where malnutrition is a major issue.
- Most importantly, the campaign, as per the note, also tries to target **Primarily Vulnerable Tribal Groups**. Stating that there is no research-based information available on their food and nutritional habits, it encourages research and proposes fellowships on the nutritional behaviour of these groups for effective implementation.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Chief Minister of Jharkhand: Hemant Soren;  
Governor: Shrimati Droupadi Murmu.

**Bihar becomes the first state to have its own ethanol policy**



- **Bihar Cabinet** has approved the **Ethanol Production Promotion Policy, 2021**, becoming the 1st Indian State to have an **ethanol promotion policy**.
- The policy allows the extraction of ethanol, which was restricted to sugarcane, from surplus quantities of maize as well. The new policy would permit ethanol production in Bihar from all feedstocks permitted by National Policy on Biofuels, 2018, and subsequently by the National Biofuel Coordination Committee
- The **Ethanol Production Promotion Policy, 2021**, of Bihar promotes new standalone ethanol manufacturing units by providing them additional capital subsidy at **15%** of the cost of plant and machinery up to a maximum of **₹5 crores**.
- The new policy also provides an additional subsidy for special class investors like SCs, STs, EBCs, women, differently-abled, war widows, acid attack victims and third gender entrepreneurs.
- In their case, the capital subsidy will be **15.75%** of the cost of plant and machinery up to a maximum of **Rs. 5.25 crore**. The policy lays significant emphasis on issuing licences and clearances in a timebound manner for new standalone ethanol units.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Chief Minister of Bihar: Nitish Kumar; Governor:

Phagu Chauhan.

- The Bharatiya Janata Party’s member of Parliament from Pauri Garhwal, **Tirath Singh Rawat**, will be the **next chief minister of Uttarakhand**. This was announced by outgoing chief minister Trivendra Singh Rawat, who resigned. Tirath Singh Rawat will be sworn in as the new chief minister of Uttarakhand.
- **Tirath Singh Rawat** was the chief of the party in **Uttarakhand in 2013-15** and also an MLA from the state in the past. His name was picked over prominent candidates including Union Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank and Uttarakhand Minister **Dhan Singh Rawat**.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Governor of Uttarakhand: Baby Rani Maurya.

**Andhra Pradesh to launch India’s first Govt-Run Animal Ambulance Network**



- Andhra Pradesh's state government has agreed to establish "India's first government-run animal ambulance network." This decision was made in order to help the state's animal husbandry and veterinary industries develop even further.
- One of the key missions of the Ambulance Network is to assist with reaching out to injured animals and providing them with adequate animal healthcare. The Animal Husbandry Department was given the task of establishing a Mobile Ambulance Veterinary Clinic in each

assembly constituency.

- A total of **175 mobile ambulances (veterinary) clinics** will be placed at Assembly Constituency Level on the lines of **108 Services** for providing Veterinary services at the doorstep.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

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

**World TB Day 2021: Kerala’s TB eradication programme bags national honour**



- **Kerala’s tuberculosis eradication programme** had won national honour as the state bagged the Union government’s award for reducing the prevalence of the disease through various systematic initiatives. Kerala is the only state had chosen for recognition in the state category.
- The southern state has reduced the TB prevalence rate by **5 per cent** in the last five years as part of achieving sustainable development goals.
- The nation has set an ambitious goal to achieve **“End Tuberculosis”** by reducing the incidence of new TB cases by **80% by 2025**, five years ahead of UN Sustainable Development Goals.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Kerala CM: Pinarayi Vijayan.

- Kerala Governor: Arif Mohammad Khan.

**Hardeep Singh Puri inaugurates Kurnool Airport in Andhra Pradesh**



- Hardeep Singh Puri, Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Civil Aviation, has practically inaugurated the Kurnool Airport in Andhra Pradesh. Kurnool airport will begin operating flights on March 28, 2021.
- The Regional Connectivity System, UdeDesh Ka AamNagrik, was used to construct this airport (RCS-UDAN).
- By providing direct flight operations to Bangalore, Vishakhapatnam, and Chennai, Kurnool airport would bring the area closer to major South Indian hubs.
- Kurnool is the 6th airport in Andhra Pradesh to become functional after **Kadapa, Visakhapatnam, Tirupati, Rajahmundry & Vijayawada.**

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

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

**Vizag gets mobile water from air kiosk and Water Knowledge Centre**



- The Hyderabad-based startup, **MaithriAquatech** has set up the world’s first **mobile water-from-air kiosk** and ‘**Water Knowledge Centre**’ in the smart city of **Visakhapatnam**.
- This initiative is supported by Greater Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation (GVMC) and project SEWAH (Sustainable Enterprises for Water and Health) – an alliance between USAID and SWN (Safe Water Network).
- The kiosk will provide clean potable water from the air by making use of **Maithri Aquatech’s Meghdoot solution** as a source to generate water with no dependency on groundwater as well as surface water resources.
- The kiosk will also function as a **Water Knowledge Resource Centre (WRKC)** by creating awareness and imparting necessary information to members of the local underserved communities as well as nearby schools on the benefits of good **water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) practices**.

**Maharaja Chhatrasal Convention Centre inaugurated at Khajuraho**



- The Minister of State for Tourism and Culture (Independent Charge) **Shri Prahlad Singh Patel**, and the Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh **Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan** jointly inaugurated the ‘**Maharaja Chhatrasal Convention Centre at Khajuraho, Madhya Pradesh**’.
- The Convention Centre has been developed under the **Swadesh Darshan Scheme** of the Ministry of Tourism, adding another feather to the **UNESCO World Heritage** site at Khajuraho.
- This new venue will cater to the business needs, by hosting meetings and conferences. The Convention Centre is equipped with all modern amenities and infrastructure to offer a secure space to host corporate banquets for teams both large and small amidst a soothing decor and ambience.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

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



## Topic 18: Summits & Conferences

### India-Sweden Virtual Summit 2021



- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** has participated in the **virtual India-Sweden summit**, with the Prime Minister of Sweden, **Stefan Lofven**.
- The virtual summit was organised to exchange views on regional and global issues and to discuss the bilateral relations between the two countries. This was the **fifth** interaction between the two leaders since **2015**.
- Both the leaders underlined that the longstanding close relations between India and Sweden were based on shared values of **democracy, rule of law, pluralism, equality, freedom of speech, and respect for human rights**.
- Prime Minister Modi welcomed Sweden's decision to join the **International Solar Alliance (ISA)**.

#### Important takeaways for all competitive exams:

- Stockholm is the capital of Sweden.
- The krona is the official currency of Sweden.
- The current PM of Sweden is Stefan Lofven.

#### Dr Harsh Vardhan addresses the inaugural session of Techbharat 2021



- Union Minister for Health & Family Welfare, **Dr Harsh Vardhan** has addressed the inaugural session of **TechBharat 2021**. Laghu Udyog Bharati and IMS Foundation have organized the 2nd edition of the conclave bringing together stakeholders from the HealthTech&Edutech sector on a virtual platform.
- Techbharat is facilitating interactions & deliberations between thousands of domestic & global participants, including policymakers, government representatives, industry members, investors & start-ups to nurture resourceful partnerships and boost growth in the sectors.
- The Pradhan Mantri AatmanirbharSwasth Bharat Yojana, with a massive outlay of over 64 thousand crore rupees over the next six years, will develop capacities of primary, secondary and tertiary care, health care systems.

#### India Chaired the First Meeting Of BRICS CGETI



- Under the chairship of **India**, the First Meeting of the BRICS **Contact Group on Economic and Trade Issues (CGETI)** was held from 9th March 2021 to 11th March 2021.
- The 2021 theme of the BRICS is **“BRICS@15: Intra BRICS Cooperation for Continuity, Consolidation, and Consensus”**.
- India presented the calendar of events for BRICS CGETI 2021, this includes the priority areas for deliverables, schedule and scope of the MSME roundtable conference workshop on Services Statistics, and the **BRICS Trade Fair**. A series of presentations on the proposed deliverables during India’s chairship under the BRICS CGETI track was made in a separate session by the concerned departments of the government of India.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- BRICS Establishment: 2009.
- BRICS Members: Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa.
- The First BRICS Ministerial Meeting was held on 20th September 2006.

**PM Modi Virtually Attends First Quad Summit 2021**



- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi**, US President **Joe Biden**, Australian Prime Minister **Scott Morrison** and Japan Prime Minister **Yoshihide Suga** come together for the first **QUAD Summit**.
- The meeting was held virtually during which the four participants will exchange views on different areas of cooperation like maintaining a free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific region, COVID-19, emerging and critical technologies, maritime security, and climate change.
- The forum is maintained by semi-regular summits, military drills and information between member countries. The idea of QUAD was first brought up by the then Japanese Prime Minister **Shinzo Abe** back in **2007**. Since then the representatives from the member countries have met regularly and worked together. However, this was the first-ever meeting between the national heads of the **QUAD countries**.

**India-Finland Virtual Summit 2021**



- The **India-Finland Virtual Summit** was held on

March 16, 2021, with the participation of Prime Minister Shri **Narendra Modi** and Prime Minister of the Republic of Finland Ms **Sanna Marin**.

- The virtual summit was organised to discuss the entire gamut of bilateral issues as well as other regional and multilateral issues of mutual interest.
- The two leaders reviewed the ongoing bilateral engagements and committed to further expand and diversify the relationship across sectors such as trade and investment, innovation, education, emerging technologies including **Artificial Intelligence, 5G/6G, and quantum computing**.
- The two leaders also discussed the **Covid-19 situation** including their respective vaccination drives and emphasized the importance of global efforts for urgent and affordable access to vaccines across all nations.
- The leaders exchanged views on regional and global issues, including the India-EU partnership, cooperation in the Arctic region, **WTO and UN reforms**. Both sides noted the potential for India and Finland to cooperate in undertaking developmental activities in Africa.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

- Finland: Capital: Helsinki; Currency: Euro.

**6th India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA) Women’s Forum held Virtually**



- The **Sixth India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA) Women’s Forum** meeting was held virtually. The Forum discussed key issues that contribute towards the transformation of women’s lives.
- At the end of the conference, a joint declaration was also issued highlighting the shared IBSA goals and commitments for achieving gender equality in all spheres of life.
- The **India-Brazil-South Africa Trilateral Cooperation Forum** is a unique platform that brings together India, Brazil and South Africa, three large democracies and major economies from three different continents.
- The meeting was led by the **Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India**.
- IBSA is committed to inclusive sustainable development, in pursuit of the well-being of its citizens & those from other developing nations.
- The principles, norms and values underpinning the IBSA Dialogue Forum are participatory democracy, respect for human rights, the Rule of Law and the strengthening of multilateralism. IBSA lays efforts in South-South cooperation beyond the conventional areas of exchange of experts and training.

**Important takeaways for all competitive exams:**

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

# SECTION 2

## Detailed Analysis of Important Events

## TOPIC 1: Economics

### Minimum Selling Price for Sugar

Mains Paper 3: Issues Related To Farm Subsidies & Msp

#### Note4Students

From UPSC perspective, the following things are important :

**Prelims level:** Minimum Selling Price (MSP) for Sugar

**Mains level:** Not Much

The Indian Sugar Mills' Association (ISMA) has asked for an increase in the Minimum Selling Price of Sugar.

#### Try this PYQ:

**Q. The Fair and Remunerative Price (FRP) of sugarcane is approved by the:**

- (a) Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs
- (b) Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices
- (c) Directorate of Marketing and Inspection, Ministry of Agriculture
- (d) Agricultural Produce Market Committee

### Minimum Selling Price (MSP) for Sugar

- The price of sugar is market-driven & depends on the demand & supply of sugar.
- However, with a view to protecting the interests of farmers, the concept of MSP of sugar has been introduced since 2018.
- MSP of sugar has been fixed taking into account the components of Fair & Remunerative Price (FRP) of sugarcane and minimum conversion cost of the most efficient mills.

### How is the pricing of Sugarcane done?

- With the amendment of the Sugarcane

(Control) Order, 1966, the concept of Statutory Minimum Price (SMP) of sugarcane was replaced with the Fair and Remunerative Price (FRP) of sugarcane in 2009-10.

- The cane price announced by the Central Government is decided on the basis of the recommendations of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACAP).
- This is done in consultation with the State Governments and after taking feedback from associations of the sugar industry.

### What are AT1 Bonds?

Mains Paper 3: Effects Of Liberalization On The Economy, Changes In Industrial Policy and their effects on Industrial Growth

#### Note4Students

From UPSC perspective, the following things are important :

**Prelims level :** AT1 Bonds

**Mains level :** Not Much

The decision of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) to slap restrictions on mutual fund (MF) investments in additional tier-1 (AT1) bonds has raised a storm in the MF and banking sectors.

### What are AT1 Bonds?

- AT1 Bonds stand for additional tier-1 bonds. These are unsecured bonds that have perpetual tenure. In other words, the bonds have no maturity date.
- They have a call option, which can be used by the banks to buy these bonds back from investors.
- These bonds are typically used by banks to

bolster their core or tier-1 capital.

- AT1 bonds are subordinate to all other debt and only senior to common equity.
- Mutual funds (MFs) are among the largest investors in perpetual debt instruments and hold over Rs 35,000 crore of the outstanding additional tier-I bond issuances of Rs 90,000 crore.

**What action has been taken by the Sebi recently and why?**

- In a recent circular, the Sebi told mutual funds to value these perpetual bonds as a 100-year instrument.
- This essentially means MFs have to make the assumption that these bonds would be redeemed in 100 years.
- The regulator also asked MFs to limit the ownership of the bonds to 10 per cent of the assets of a scheme.
- According to the Sebi, these instruments could be riskier than other debt instruments.

**Try this PYQ:**

**Consider the following statements:**

1. *The Reserve Bank of India manages and services the Government of India Securities but not any State Government Securities.*
2. *Treasury bills are issued by the Government of India and there are no treasury bills issued by the State Governments.*
3. *Treasury bills offer are issued at a discount from the par value.*

**Which of the statements given above is/are correct?**

(a) 1 and 2 only

(b) 3 Only

(c) 2 and 3 only

(d) 1, 2 and 3

**How MFs will be affected?**

- Typically, MFs have treated the date of the call option on AT1 bonds as the maturity date.
- Now, if these bonds are treated as 100-year bonds, it raises the risk in these bonds as they become ultra long-term.
- This could also lead to volatility in the prices of these bonds as the risk increases the yields on these bonds rises.
- Bond yields and bond prices move in opposite directions and therefore, the higher yield will drive down the price of the bond, which in turn will lead to a decrease in the net asset value of MF schemes holding these bonds.
- Moreover, these bonds are not liquid and it will be difficult for MFs to sell these to meet redemption pressure.

**What’s the impact on banks?**

- AT1 bonds have emerged as the capital instrument of choice for state banks as they strive to shore up capital ratios.
- If there are restrictions on investments by mutual funds in such bonds, banks will find it tough to raise capital at a time when they need funds in the wake of the soaring bad assets.
- A major chunk of AT1 bonds is bought by mutual funds.

**Why has the Finance Ministry asked Sebi to review the decision?**

- The FM has sought withdrawal of valuation norms for AT1 bonds as it might lead to mutual funds making losses and exiting from these bonds, affecting capital raising plans of PSU banks.

- The government doesn't want a disruption in the fund mobilization exercise of banks at a time when two PSU banks are on the privatization block.
- Banks are yet to receive the proposed capital injection in FY21 although they will need more capital to face the asset-quality challenges in the foreseeable future.
- Fitch's own estimate pegs the sector's capital requirement between \$15 billion-58 billion under various stress scenarios for the next two years, of which state banks account for the bulk.

### **Draft E-Commerce Policy**

Mains Paper 3: Effects Of Liberalization On The Economy, Changes In Industrial Policy and their effects on Industrial Growth

### **Note4Students**

From UPSC perspective, the following things are important :

**Prelims level :** Not Much

**Mains level :** E-commerce regulation in India

The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) will soon come out with a common acceptable draft e-commerce policy.

### **Earlier policy**

- The previous draft in July last year had proposed a regulator, an e-commerce law, periodic audit of companies that store or mirror Indian users' data overseas.
- The latest draft calls for streamlining of regulatory processes to ease the burden of compliance for activities related to e-commerce and regulations for data that will provide for sharing mechanism.

### **What are the provisions of the new law?**

#### **Data Usage**

- According to a revised draft, the government would lay down principles for the usage of data for industrial development, where such norms do not already exist.
- They aim to put in place safeguards to prevent misuse and access of data by unauthorized persons.
- Such safeguards may include regulating the cross-border flow of data pertaining to Indians and transactions taking place in India and the requirement of adequacy audits to be carried out by Indian firms.
- As per the recent draft policy, violation of safeguards shall be viewed seriously and attract heavy penalties.

#### **Regulation, exports**

- Conformity assessment procedures will be put in place to verify that goods and services sold on e-commerce platforms meet required standards and technical regulations.
- The government shall collect information from e-commerce platforms to aid it in making necessary decisions.
- In order to ensure that e-commerce is not used to defraud customers, registration with an authority identified by the Government shall be mandatory.
- The policy shall bring e-commerce exports on par with non-e-commerce exports by enabling online grant of drawbacks, advance authorization and GST refund.

#### **Consumer protection**

- As per the draft, e-commerce operators must ensure to bring out clear and transparent policies on discounts, including the basis of

discount rates funded by platforms.

- Such a move aims to ensure fair and equal treatment.
- It said consumers have a right to be made aware of all relevant details about the goods and services offered for sale including country of origin, value addition in India etc.
- In case the seller fails to establish the genuineness of his products within a reasonable time frame, the e-commerce platform shall delist the seller.



**Places in news: Baralacha Pass**

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

**Note4Students**

From UPSC perspective, the following things are important :

**Prelims level :** Baralacha Pass

**Mains level :** Himalayan passes and tunnels of strategic importance

For the first time ever, the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) has started work on reopening the crucial Baralacha Pass in Himachal Pradesh much before schedule to restore connectivity to Leh in Ladakh.

**Note all the Himalayan passes from their N-S sequences.**

**Baralacha Pass**

- Baralacha La also known as Baralacha Pass is a high mountain pass in the Zaskar range connecting the Lahaul district in Himachal Pradesh to Leh district in Ladakh.
- It is situated along the Leh–Manali Highway.
- The Bhaga river, a tributary of the Chenab river, originates from Surya Taal lake, which is situated a few kilometres from the pass towards Manali.
- The native name of Chenab “Chandrabhaga” represents the union of Chandra and Bhaga rivers downstream.
- The pass also acts as a water-divide between the Bhaga River and the Yunan River.

**Why is this pass so important?**

- The BRO had kept crucial passes open for a longer duration to enable the Army to undertake advanced winter stocking for the thousands of additional troops deployed in Ladakh.
- The team has traversed a total distance of 20 km in super high-altitude conditions scrupulously crossing the Baralacha La in the Zaskar range on foot amidst sub-zero freezing conditions.



- Frequent avalanches and slides with 15 to 20 feet of snow accumulation.

### Emerging crisis of obtaining Helium in India

Mains Paper 3: Effects Of Liberalization On The Economy, Changes In Industrial Policy and their effects on Industrial Growth

### Note4Students

From UPSC perspective, the following things are important :

**Prelims level :** Helium and its practical uses

**Mains level :** Helium imports of India

India imports helium for its needs and with the U.S. appearing set to cut off exports of helium since 2021, the Indian industry stands to lose out heavily.

*Helium is not just for balloons but it is the key ingredient for India's high technology and the most sophisticated medical diagnosis.*

### Helium on Earth

- Helium is a chemical element with the symbol He and atomic number 2.
- It is a colourless, odourless, tasteless, non-toxic, inert, monatomic gas, the first in the noble gas group in the periodic table. Its boiling point is the lowest among all the elements.

### Its discovery

- In 1906 a young Englishman by the name of Moris Travers arrived in Bangalore, to take up the position of the Director of Indian Institute of Science.
- Travers extracted helium in small quantity by heating up monazite sand abundantly available in Kerala beach, in a pioneering effort.
- Dutch physicist Kamerlingh Onnes liquefied Helium by cooling the gas to -270 degrees

Celsius.

- It is known that Onnes collected helium gas from the springs of Bath in Baden Baden, Germany for his liquefaction experiment.

### Helium in India

- India's Rajmahal volcanic basin is the storehouse of helium trapped for billions of years, since the very birth of our Earth from the Sun.
- At present, researchers are mapping the Rajmahal basin extensively for future exploration and harnessing of helium.

### Why India needs Helium?

- Every year, India imports helium worth Rs 55,000 crores from the U.S. to meet its needs.
- Helium is used in medicine, scientific research, for blimp inflation, party balloons as well as having welding applications.
- It finds many applications, mainly in magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scans, in rockets and in nuclear reactors.

### US monopoly in Helium

- The U.S. became the most important exporter of helium across the world.
- It was soon realized that the U.S. was also the biggest storehouse of helium.
- The US is now planning to switch off the export of helium from 2021.
- Qatar is a possible exporter but acute political and diplomatic wrangles have made Qatar unreliable.

### What is the 2008 Lehman Crisis?

Mains Paper 3: Effects Of Liberalization On The Economy, Changes In Industrial Policy and their effects

on Industrial Growth

### Note4Students

From UPSC perspective, the following things are important :

**Prelims level :** Lehman Crisis

**Mains level :** Not Much

The fire sale of about \$20 billion of Archegos assets, comprising Chinese and US stocks, has sent jitters in the global financial markets, raising worries that the event could be a possible “Lehman moment”.

### What is the Lehman Crisis?

- The bankruptcy of Lehman Brothers on September 15, 2008, was the climax of the subprime mortgage crisis.
- After the financial services firm was notified of a pending credit downgrade due to its heavy position in subprime mortgages, the Federal Reserve summoned several banks to negotiate to finance for its reorganization.
- These discussions failed, and Lehman filed a petition that remains the largest bankruptcy filing in US history, involving more than US\$600 billion in assets.

**Note:** *The subprime mortgage crisis occurred when the real estate market collapsed and homeowners defaulted on their loans.*

### What defines the moment?

- It signalled a limit to the government’s ability to manage the crisis and prompted a general financial panic.
- Money market mutual funds, a key source of credit, saw mass withdrawal demands to avoid losses, and the interbank lending market tightened, threatening banks with imminent failure.
- The government and the Federal Reserve system responded with several emergency measures to contain the panic.

### Other terminologies:

#### Margin Call

- Typically, a margin call occurs when the value of an investor’s margin account falls below the broker’s required amount during a market correction or sell-off.
- As the margin account contains securities bought with borrowed money, a margin call occurs when lenders demand that an investor deposit additional money or securities into the account so that it is brought up to the minimum value.
- A margin call is usually an indicator that the securities held in the margin account have decreased in value.
- When a margin call occurs, the investor must choose to either deposit more money in the account or sell some of the assets held in their account.
- If the investor fails to pay up the margin amount, the lender will resort to the sale of assets lying in the investor’s account.

**TOPIC 2: Enviro & Diversity**

**Nag River Pollution Abatement Project**

Mains Paper 3: Conservation, Environmental Pollution & Degradation, Eia

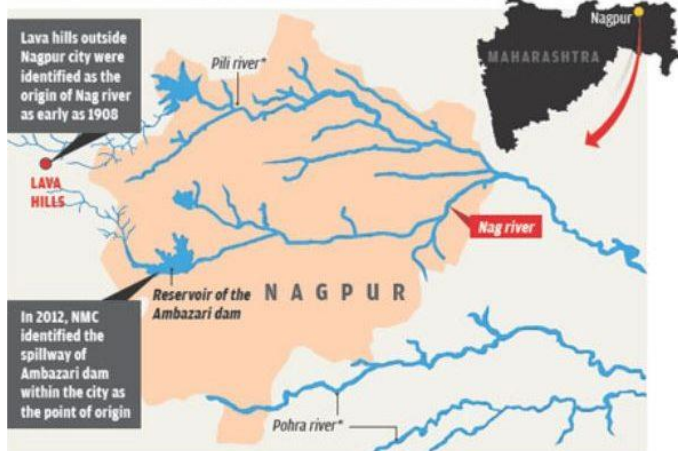
**Note4Students**

From UPSC perspective, the following things are important :

**Prelims level :** Nag River, Godavari Basin and its tributaries

**Mains level :** River rejuvenation

Government bodies had attempted to denotify the upper stretch of the Nag and had identified a dam as its point of origin



The Nag River Pollution Abatement Project has been approved under the National River Conservation Plan.

**Try this PYQ:**

**Q. On the planet earth, most of the freshwater exists as ice caps and glaciers. Out of the remaining freshwater, the largest proportion:**

(a) is found in the atmosphere as moisture and clouds

(b) is found in freshwater lakes and rivers

(c) exists as groundwater

(d) exists as soil moisture

**Nag River**

- The Nag River is a river flowing through the city of Nagpur in Maharashtra.
- It is known for providing the etymology for the name Nagpur. It is a part of the Kanhan-Pench river system.
- The Kanhan River is an important right-bank tributary of the Wainganga River draining a large area lying south of the Satpura range in central India.
- Along its 275 km run through Maharashtra & Madhya Pradesh, it receives its largest tributary – Pench River, a major water source for the metropolis of Nagpur.
- It joins the Wardha River, the united stream, which is known as the Pranahita River, empties into the Godavari River at Kaleshwaram, Telangana.

**About the Project**

- The Nag River which flows through Nagpur city, thus giving its name to the city, is now a highly polluted water channel of sewage and industrial waste.
- The project, approved under the National River Conservation Plan, will be implemented by the National River Conservation Directorate.
- It will reduce the pollution level in terms of untreated sewage, flowing solid waste, and other impurities flowing into the Nag River and its tributaries.

**Seabuckthorn plantations in Himachal Pradesh**

Mains Paper 3: Major Crops & Cropping Patterns

#### Note4Students

From UPSC perspective, the following things are important :

**Prelims level :** Seabuckthorn

**Mains level :** Not Much



The Himachal Pradesh government has decided to start planting Seabuckthorn in the cold desert areas.

#### What is Seabuckthorn?

- It's a shrub that produces an orange-yellow coloured edible berry.
- In India, it is found above the tree line in the Himalayan region, generally in dry areas such as the cold deserts of Ladakh and Spiti.
- In Himachal Pradesh, it is locally called **Himalayan chharma** and grows in the wild in Lahaul and Spiti and parts of Kinnaur.
- According to the Seabuckthorn Association of India, around 15,000 hectares in Himachal, Ladakh, Uttarakhand, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh are covered by this plant.

**Try this PYQ from CSP 2019:**

**Q. Recently, there was a growing awareness in our country about the importance of Himalayan nettle (*Girardinia diversifolia*) because it is found to be a**

**sustainable source of**

- (a) anti-malarial drug
- (b) biodiesel
- (c) pulp for paper industry
- (d) textile fibre

#### Benefits of the Seabuckthorn plant

##### (1) Medicinal benefits

- As a folk medicine, Seabuckthorn has been widely used for treating stomach, heart and skin problems.
- In the last few decades, scientific research worldwide has backed many of its traditional uses.
- Its fruit and leaves are rich in vitamins, carotenoids and omega fatty acids, among other substances, and it can help troops in acclimatizing to high-altitude.

##### (2) Ecological benefits

- Besides being an important source of fuelwood and fodder, Seabuckthorn is a soil-binding plant that prevents soil-erosion, checks siltation in rivers and helps preserve floral biodiversity.
- In the Lahaul valley, where willow trees are dying in large numbers due to pest attack, this hardy shrub is a good alternative for protecting the local ecology.

##### (3) Commercial benefits

- Seabuckthorn also has commercial value, as it is used in making juices, jams, nutritional capsules etc.
- But wild Seabuckthorn cannot sustainably supply raw material to the industry, and the plant needs to be cultivated on a large scale as is being done in China.

**What is the latest project?**

- The Seabuckthorn association wants the forest departments of various Himalayan states/UTs to plant Seabuckthorn on arid and marginal lands using compensatory afforestation or CAMPA funds.
- Recently, the union ministry of environment, forest and climate change asked these states to submit proposals for taking up such plantations.
- This is in the light of reduced water flow from Himalayan glaciers and their impact on ecology.

**2001 FO32: the largest asteroid passing by Earth**

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

**Note4Students**

From UPSC perspective, the following things are important :

**Prelims level :** 2001 FO32

**Mains level :** Study of asteroids and meteors



On March 21, the largest asteroid predicted to pass by Earth in 2021 will be at its closest. It is called 2001 FO32.

**Try this PYQ:**

**Q. Which of the following is/are cited by the scientists as evidence/evidence for the continued expansion of**

**the universe?**

1. *Detection of microwaves in space*
2. *Observation of redshift phenomenon in space*
3. *Movement of asteroids in space*
4. *Occurrence of supernova explosions in space*

**Codes:**

(a) 1 and 2 only

(b) 2 only

(c) 1, 3 and 4

(d) None of the above can be cited as evidence.

**2001 FO32**

- There is no threat of a collision with our planet now or for centuries to come.
- Scientists know its orbital path around the Sun very accurately since it was discovered 20 years ago and has been tracked ever since.
- It won't come closer than 2 million km to Earth, but it will present a valuable scientific opportunity for astronomers who can get a good look at a rocky relic that formed at the dawn of our Solar System.

**Proximity to Earth**

- For comparison, when it is at its closest, the distance of 2 million km is equal to 5¼ times the distance from Earth to the Moon.
- Still, that distance is close in astronomical terms, which is why 2001 FO32 has been designated a "potentially hazardous asteroid".
- The reason for the asteroid's unusually speedy close approach is its highly eccentric orbit around the Sun, an orbit that is tilted 39° to Earth's orbital plane.
- This orbit takes the asteroid closer to the Sun

than Mercury, and twice as far from the Sun as Mars.

- Later, the asteroid slows after being flung back out into deep space and swinging back toward the Sun. It completes one orbit every 810 days (about 2¼ years).

### Studying the visitor

- This asteroid will provide an opportunity for astronomers to get a more precise understanding of the asteroid's size and albedo (i.e. how bright, or reflective, its surface is), and a rough idea of its composition.
- When sunlight hits an asteroid's surface, minerals in the rock absorb some wavelengths while reflecting others.
- By studying the spectrum of light reflecting off the surface, astronomers can measure the chemical "fingerprints" of the minerals on the surface of the asteroid.

### Curbing Benzene Emission

Mains Paper 3: Conservation, Environmental Pollution & Degradation, Eia

### Note4Students

From UPSC perspective, the following things are important :

**Prelims level :** Benzene pollution

**Mains level :** Not Much

A joint committee appointed by the National Green Tribunal (NGT) to study air pollution in Kerala has pointed out that petrol refuelling stations were a major source of benzene emissions and volatile organic compounds (VOCs).

Why such a move?

- Benzene is a major constituent of evaporative

emission due to its high volatility.

**Try this PYQ:**

**Q.Consider the following:**

1. Carbon monoxide
2. Methane
3. Ozone
4. Sulphur dioxide

**Which of the above are released into atmosphere due to the burning of crop/biomass residue?**

(a) 1 and 2 only

(b) 2, 3 and 4 only

(c) 1 and 4 only

(d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

**What is Benzene?**

- Benzene is a chemical that is a colourless or light yellow liquid at room temperature. It has a sweet odour and is highly flammable.
- It evaporates into the air very quickly. Its vapour is heavier than air and may sink into low-lying areas.
- It dissolves only slightly in water and will float on top of the water.

**Its formation and uses**

Benzene is formed from both natural processes and human activities.

- Natural sources of benzene include volcanoes and forest fires. Benzene is also a natural part of crude oil, gasoline, and cigarette smoke.
- Some industries use benzene to make other chemicals that are used to make plastics, resins, and nylon and synthetic fibres.

- It is also used to make some types of lubricants, rubbers, dyes, detergents, drugs, and pesticides.

**Benzene emission**

- The major sources of benzene exposure are tobacco smoke, automobile service stations, exhaust from motor vehicles, and industrial emissions.
- Benzene is present in both exhaust and evaporative emissions. Motor vehicles account for approximately 85% of the total benzene emissions.
- However, ingestion and dermal absorption of benzene can also occur through contact with contaminated water.



**Project RE-HAB**

Mains Paper 3: Conservation, Environmental Pollution & Degradation, Eia

**Note4Students**

From UPSC perspective, the following things are important :

**Prelims level :** Project RE-HAB

**Mains level :** Man-animal conflict

The forest authorities intend to mitigate human-elephant conflict by installing bee boxes along the periphery of the forest and the villages under the Project RE-HAB.

**On similar lines, try this PYQ:**

**Q. The term 'M-STRIPES' is sometimes seen in the news in the context of:**

- (a) Captive breeding of Wild Fauna
- (b) Maintenance of Tiger Reserves
- (c) Indigenous Satellite Navigation System
- (d) Security of National Highways

**Project RE-HAB**



- Project RE-HAB stands for Reducing Elephant-Human Attacks using Bees. It is an initiative of the Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC).
- It intends to create “bee fences” to thwart elephant attacks in human habitations using honeybees.
- Bee boxes have been placed on the ground as well as hung from the trees.
- The boxes are connected with a string so that when elephants attempt to pass through, a tug causes the bees to swarm the elephant herds and dissuade them from progressing further.
- This idea stems from the elephants’ proven fear of the bees.

**Areas covered by the project**

- The pilot project was launched at four locations around Chelur village in the Kodagu district of Karnataka.
- These spots are located on the periphery of

Nagarahole National Park and Tiger Reserve, known conflict zones.

**Benefits offered**

- The biggest advantage of Project RE-HAB is that it dissuades elephants without causing any harm to them.
- It is extremely cost-effective as compared to various other measures such as digging trenches or erecting fences.

**What are the Diatoms?**

Mains Paper 3: Conservation, Environmental Pollution & Degradation, Eia

**Note4Students**

From UPSC perspective, the following things are important :

**Prelims level :** Diatoms

**Mains level :** Not Much

The Maharashtra Anti-Terrorism Squad has relied on a forensic test known as diatom tests for leads in an alleged murder case of a person inviting high stage political drama.

**What are Diatoms?**



- Diatoms are photosynthesizing algae that are found in almost every aquatic environment including fresh and marine waters, soils, in fact, almost anywhere moist.
- Diatoms have cell walls made of silica, each species has a distinct pattern of tiny holes in the cell wall (frustule) through which they absorb nutrients and get rid of waste.



- A diatom is a photosynthetic, single-celled organism which means they manufacture their own food in the same way plants do.

**Diatoms are important as they:**

- provide the basis of the food chain for both marine and freshwater micro-organisms and animal larvae
- are a major source of atmospheric oxygen responsible for 20-30% of all carbon fixation on the planet
- can act as environmental indicators of climate change
- form the basis of some household goods such as pest/mite prevention and mild abrasive

**Never underestimate UPSC. Try this PYQ before you reach any conclusion.**

**Q. Which one of the following is the correct sequence of a food chain?**

- (a) Diatoms-Crustaceans-Herrings
- (b) Crustaceans-Diatoms-Herrings
- (c) Diatoms-Herrings-Crustaceans
- (d) Crustaceans-Herrings-Diatoms

**What is a diatom test?**

- Diagnosis of death by drowning is deemed as a difficult task in forensic pathology.
- A number of tests have been developed to confirm the cause of such deaths with the diatom test emerging as one of the most important tests.
- The test entails findings if there are diatoms in the body being tested.

**The science behind**

- A body recovered from a water body does not

necessarily imply that the death was due to drowning.

- If the person is alive when he enters the water, the diatoms will enter the lungs when the person inhales water while drowning.
- These diatoms then get carried to various parts of the body, including the brain, kidneys, lungs and bone marrow by blood circulation.
- If a person is dead when is thrown in the water, then there is no circulation and there is no transport of diatom cells to various organs.

**Indian monsoon 25 million years ago resembled present day Australia’s**

Mains Paper 1: Geographical Features & Their Location

**Note4Students**

From UPSC perspective, the following things are important :

**Prelims level :** Drift of Indian plate from Gondwanaland

**Mains level :** History of Indian Monsoon



Using leaf fossils, researchers have found that the Indian monsoon 25 million years ago resembled present-day Australia’s.

**Try this PYQ:**

**Q. Which one of the following is the appropriate reason for considering the Gondwana rocks as the most**

**important rock systems of India?**

(a) More than 90% of limestone reserves of India are found in them

(b) More than 90% of India's coal reserves are found in them

(c) More than 90% of fertile black cotton soils are spread over them

(d) None of the reasons given above is appropriate in this context

**India's drift**

- About 180 million years ago, India separated from the ancient supercontinent Gondwana and took a long northward journey of about 9,000 km to join Eurasia.
- During this journey, the subcontinent moved from the southern hemisphere, crossed the Equator to reach its current position in the northern hemisphere.
- Due to these changing latitudes, it experienced different climatic conditions, and a new study has now tried to map these climatic variations using leaf fossils.

**Clueless over the evolution of monsoon**

- The evolution of the monsoonal climate in India is still debatable and not fully understood.
- Though recent data indicates that the monsoon system we experience now dates back to about 25 million years, it is still unclear how the climate was during its long voyage.

**Indian research**

- The researchers analysed the morphological characters of fossil leaves collected from Deccan Volcanic Province, East Garo Hills of Meghalaya, Gurha mine in Rajasthan and Makum Coalfield in Assam.

- The four fossil assemblages were found to be from four different geological ages.
- It has been observed from across the globe that plant leaf morphological characters such as apex, base and shape are ecologically tuned with the prevailing climatic conditions.
- The research applied this model to characterize the past monsoon from fossil leaves.

**It's finding**

- The results indicated that the fossil leaves from India were adapted to an Australian type of monsoon and not the current Indian monsoon system during its voyage.
- The reconstructed temperature data show that the climate was warm (tropical to subtropical) at all the studied fossil sites with temperatures varying from 16.3–21.3 degrees C.
- All the fossil sites experienced high rainfall, which varied from 191.6 cm to 232 cm.

**Places in news: Chilika Lake**

Mains Paper 3: Conservation, Environmental Pollution & Degradation, Eia

**Note4Students**

From UPSC perspective, the following things are important :

**Prelims level :** Chilika Lake

**Mains level :** Ramsar wetlands in India



The Chilika Lake in Odisha, Asia’s largest brackish water lake, was once part of the Bay of Bengal, a study by the marine archaeology department of the National Institute of Oceanography (NIO), Goa, has found.

**Try this PYQ:**

**Q.Consider the following statements:**

1. *In India, the Himalayas are spread over five States only.*
2. *Western Ghats are spread over five States only.*
3. *Pulicat Lake is spread over two States only.*

**Which of the statements given above is/are correct?**

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 3 only
- (c) 2 and 3 only
- (d) 1 and 3 only

**Chilika Lake**

- Chilika Lake is a brackish water lagoon, spread over the Puri, Khurda and Ganjam districts of Odisha.
- It is located at the mouth of the Daya River, flowing into the Bay of Bengal, covering an area of over 1,100 km<sup>2</sup>.

- It is the largest coastal lagoon in India and the largest brackish water lagoon in the world after The New Caledonian barrier reef.
- It has been listed Ramsar Site as well as a tentative UNESCO World Heritage site.

**Its formation**

- The process of the formation of the Chilika might have begun in the latter part of the Pleistocene epoch, around 20,000 years ago.
- India’s peninsular river Mahanadi carried a heavy load of silt and dumped part of it at its delta.
- As the sediment-laden river met the Bay of Bengal, sand bars were formed near its mouth.
- These created a backflow of the seawater into the sluggish fresh water at the estuary, resulting in the huge brackish water lake.
- Marine archaeological studies on the Odisha coast clearly show that the Chilika once acted as a safe harbour for cargo ships bound for Southeast Asia and other parts of the world.

**Historical accounts on Chilika**

The lake has been a useful centre for maritime activities since the third millennium before the Common Era (CE).

- Greek geographer Claudius Ptolemy (150 CE) described Palur as an important port of Kalinga and referred to it as ‘Paloura’.
- This port was situated close to the ‘point of departure’ located outside the southern tip of the lake at Kantiagarh, from where ships used to sail directly for Southeast Asia.
- Stone anchors and hero stones from Manikapatna, Palur and the adjoining onshore regions of the Chilika suggest that the present brackish water lagoon was in fact a part of the Bay of Bengal.
- Chinese pilgrim Xuanzang (7th century CE)

recorded 'Che-li-ta-lo-Ching' as a flourishing port.

- This port was located at Chhatargarh on the banks of the Chilika.
- The *Brahmanda Purana* (10th century CE approximately) says the Chilika was an

important centre of trade and commerce, with ships sailing to Java, Malaya and Ceylon.

- The famous Sanskrit poet Kalidas called the king of Kalinga 'Madhodhipati' or 'Lord of the Ocean'.

## TOPIC 3: Governance

### N K Singh bats for moving Health Sector to Concurrent List

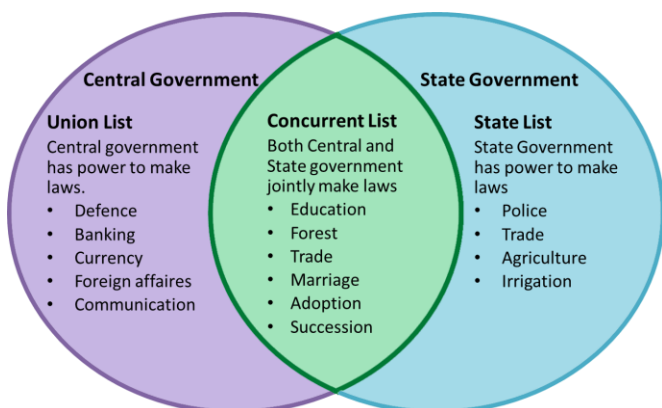
Mains Paper 2: Health & Education

#### Note4Students

From UPSC perspective, the following things are important :

**Prelims level :** Concurrent List

**Mains level :** India's healthcare



Health should be shifted to the Concurrent list under the Constitution, and a developmental finance institution (DFI) dedicated to healthcare investments set up, Fifteenth Finance Commission Chairman N.K.

Singh has said.

#### Other key recommendations

- Bringing health into the Concurrent list would give the Centre greater flexibility to enact regulatory changes and reinforce the obligation of all stakeholders towards providing better healthcare.
- He has urged the government spending to enhance expenditure on health to 2.5% of GDP by 2025.
- He said primary healthcare should be a fundamental commitment of all States in particular and should be allocated at least two-thirds of such spending.

*The Concurrent List or List-III (of Seventh Schedule) is a list of 52 items (though the last subjects are numbered 47) given in the Seventh Schedule to the Constitution of India.*

#### What is the Seventh Schedule?

- This Schedule of the Indian Constitution deals with the division of powers between the Union government and State governments.
- It defines and specifies the allocation of powers

and functions between Union & States. It contains three lists; i.e. 1) Union List, 2) State List and 3) Concurrent List.

**The Union List**

- It is a list of 98 (Originally 97) numbered items as provided in the Seventh Schedule.
- The Union Government or Parliament of India has exclusive power to legislate on matters relating to these items.

**The State List**

- It is a list of 59 (Originally 66) items.
- The respective state governments have exclusive power to legislate on matters relating to these items.

**The Concurrent List**

- There are 52 (Originally 47) items currently in the list.
- This includes items which are under the joint domain of the Union as well as the respective States.

**Healthcare in India**

- The Indian Constitution has incorporated the responsibility of the state in ensuring basic nutrition, basic standard of living, public health, protection of workers, special provisions for disabled persons, and other health standards, which were described under Articles 39, 41, 42, and 47 in the DPSP.
- Article 21 of the Constitution of India provides for the right to life and personal liberty and is a fundamental right.
- Public Health comes under the state list.
- India’s expenditure on healthcare has shot up substantially in the past few years; it is still very low in comparison to the peer nations (at approx. 1.28% of GDP).

**Unique Land Parcel Identification Number (ULPIN) Scheme**

Mains Paper 2: Government Scheme/Policies

**Note4Students**

From UPSC perspective, the following things are important :

**Prelims level :** ULPIN Scheme

**Mains level :** Land records management in India

The Centre plans to roll out the Unique Land Parcel Identification Number (ULPIN) Scheme.

**ULPIN Scheme**

**Land Identity**

**14-DIGIT** ULPIN will provide coordinates of the land

**SIX STATES** will get the unique number in first phase

**IT WILL BE LINKED TO** Aadhaar, revenue system

**HOW WILL IT HELP?**

**LAND ACQUISITION** will become easier

**REAL ESTATE** transactions will be transparent

**PUT AN END** to fraudulent land ownership

- The ULPIN scheme has been launched in ten States this year and will be rolled out across the

country by March 2022, the Department of Land Resources told the Standing Committee on Rural Development.

- It would allot a 14-digit identification number to every plot of land in the country within a year's time.
- It will subsequently integrate its land records database with revenue court records and bank records, as well as Aadhaar numbers on a voluntary basis.
- The scheme will enhance the service deliveries to the citizen of the country and will also function as inputs to the schemes of the other sectors like Agriculture, Finance Disaster Management etc.

**“Aadhaar number” for Land**

- Officials described it as “the Aadhaar for land”, a number that would uniquely identify every surveyed parcel of land and prevent land fraud, especially in the hinterlands of rural India, where land records are outdated and often disputed.
- The identification will be based on the longitude and latitude coordinates of the land parcel and is dependent on detailed surveys and geo-referenced cadastral maps, according to a presentation the Department made to States in September 2020.

- This is the next step in the Digital India Land Records Modernization Programme (DILRMP), which began in 2008 and has been extended several times as its scope grew.

**Try this PYQ:**

**Q.Consider the following statements:**

1. Aadhaar card can be used as proof of citizenship or domicile.
2. Once issued, the Aadhaar number cannot be deactivated or omitted by the Issuing Authority.

**Which of the statements given above is/are correct?**

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

**A cost-effective approach**

- Linking Aadhaar with land records through ULPIN would cost ₹3 per record while seeding and authentication of landowner Aadhaar data would cost ₹5 each.
- It added that the integration of the Aadhaar numbers with the land record database would be done on a voluntary basis.

**TOPIC 4: History**

**Dandi March to mark 75 years of Independence**

Mains Paper 1: Modern Indian History

**Note4Students**

From UPSC perspective, the following things are important :

**Prelims level :** Dandi March

**Mains level :** Civil Disobedience Movement

PM will flag off a commemorative ‘Dandi March’ on March 12 to launch the celebrations of the 75th year of Independence.

**Dandi March**

- The Dandi March was an act of nonviolent civil disobedience in colonial India led by Mahatma Gandhi.
- The twenty-four day march lasted from 12 March 1930 to 5 April 1930 as a direct action campaign of tax resistance and nonviolent protest against the British salt monopoly.
- Another reason for this march was that the Civil Disobedience Movement needed a strong inauguration that would inspire more people to follow Gandhi’s example.
- Growing numbers joined them along the way.
- When Gandhi broke the British Raj salt laws at 6:30 am on 6 April 1930, it sparked large scale acts of civil disobedience against the salt laws by millions of Indians.

**Try this PYQ:**

**Q. Who of the following organized a March on the Tanjore coast to break the Salt Law in April 1930?**

- (a) V. O. Chidambaram Pillai
- (b) C. Rajagopalachari
- (c) K. Kamaraj
- (d) Annie Besant

**Followed by Dharasana Satyagraha**

- After making the salt at Dandi, Gandhi continued southward along the coast, making salt and addressing meetings on the way.
- The INC planned to stage a satyagraha at the Dharasana Salt Works, 40 km south of Dandi.
- However, Gandhi was arrested on the midnight of 4–5 May 1930, just days before the planned action at Dharasana.
- The Dandi March and the ensuing

Dharasana Satyagraha drew worldwide attention to the Indian independence movement through extensive newspaper and newsreel coverage.

- The satyagraha against the salt tax continued for almost a year, ending with Gandhi’s release from jail and negotiations with Viceroy Lord Irwin at the Second Round Table Conference.

**Its aftermath**

- The March to Dandi had a significant influence on American activists Martin Luther King Jr., James Bevel, and others during the Civil Rights Movement for African Americans in the 1960s.
- The march was the most significant organised challenge to British authority since the Non-cooperation movement of 1920–22.
- It directly followed the Purna Swaraj declaration of sovereignty and self-rule by the Indian National Congress on 26 January 1930.
- It gained worldwide attention which gave impetus to the Indian independence movement and started the nationwide Civil Disobedience.

**Govt. reconstitutes panel for studying mythical Sarasvati River**

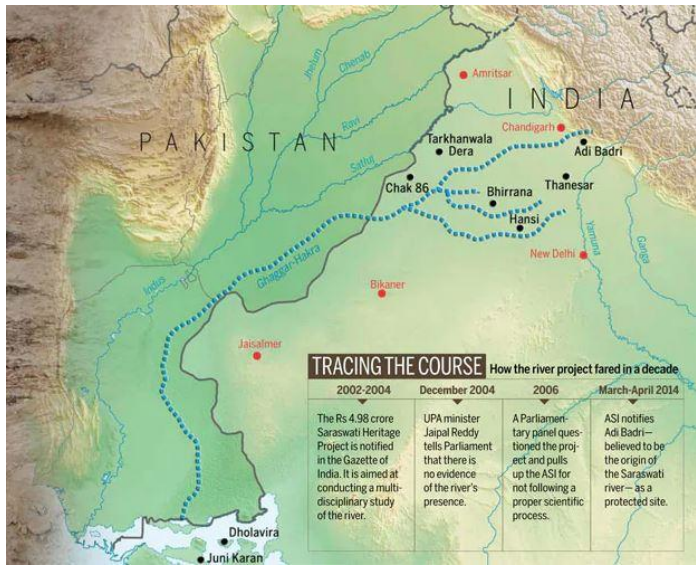
Mains Paper 1: Arts & Culture

**Note4Students**

From UPSC perspective, the following things are important :

**Prelims level :** Rigvedic rivers

**Mains level :** Not Much



The Centre has reconstituted an advisory committee to chalk out a plan for studying the mythical Sarasvati River for the next two years after the earlier panel's term ended in 2019.

**Do you know?**

*Rigveda describes India as a land of SaptaSindhavah.*

*There is a verse in Nadistutisukta of Rigveda , hymn of praise of rivers which mentions the following 10 rivers: Ganga, Yamuna, Sarasvati, Sutudri, Parusni, Asikni, Marudvrdha , Vitasta , Arjikiya , Susoma.*

*The Shutudri was Sutlej, Parushni was Ravi, Asikni was Chenab and Vitasta was Jhelum.*

**Sarasvati River**

- The Sarasvati River is an extinct river mentioned in the Rig Veda and later Vedic and post-Vedic texts.
- As a physical river, it is described as a small river ending in “a terminal lake (Samudra).
- As the goddess Sarasvati, the main referent for the term “Sarasvati” which developed into an independent identity in post-Vedic times, she is described as a powerful river and mighty flood.
- The Sarasvati is also considered by Hindus to

exist in a metaphysical form, in which it formed a confluence with the sacred rivers Ganges and Yamuna, at the Triveni Sangam.

**Vedic reference of the river**

- Rigvedic and later Vedic texts have been used to propose identification with present-day rivers, or ancient riverbeds.
- The Nadistuti hymn in the Rigveda (10.75) mentions the Sarasvati between the Yamuna in the east and the Sutlej in the west.
- Later Vedic texts like the Tandya and Jaiminiya Brahmanas, as well as the Mahabharata, mention that the Sarasvati dried up in a desert.

**What led to its extinction?**

- Since the late 19th-century, scholars have proposed to identify the Rig Vedic Sarasvati river with the Ghaggar-Hakra river system.
- This flows through northwestern India and eastern Pakistan, between the Yamuna and the Sutlej.
- Recent geophysical research suggests that the Ghaggar-Hakra system was glacier-fed until 8,000 years ago, and then became a system of monsoon-fed rivers.
- ISRO has observed that major Indus Valley Civilization sites at Kalibangan (Rajasthan), Banawali and Rakhigarhi (Haryana), Dholavira and Lothal (Gujarat) lay along this course.
- The Indus Valley Civilisation may have declined as a result of climatic change when the monsoons that fed the rivers diminished at around the time civilisation diminished some 4,000 years ago.

**Places on PM Modi's Bangladesh Visit**

Mains Paper 1: Modern Indian History

**Note4Students**



From UPSC perspective, the following things are important :

**Prelims level :** Read the attached story

**Mains level :** NA

PM Modi will be on a two-day visit to Bangladesh where he will take part in commemorations of some epochal events there.

#### **Bangabandhu shrine in Tungipara**

- Located about 420 kilometres from Dhaka, Tungipara was the place of birth of Rahman, the architect of the 1971 Bangladesh War of Independence.
- This is also the place where he lies buried inside a grand tomb called the 'Bangabandhu mausoleum'.
- Millions of people gather here every year on August 15, to observe the day when Rahman was assassinated by a group of disgruntled army officers.

#### **Harichand Thakur's shrine in Orakandi**

- Thakur was the founder of the Matua Mahasangha, which was a religious reformation movement that originated in Orakandi in about 1860 CE.
- At a very early age, Thakur experienced spiritual revelation, following which he founded a sect of Vaishnava Hinduism called Matua.
- Members of the sect were the namasudras who were considered to be untouchables.
- The objective of Thakur's religious reform was to uplift the community through educational and other social initiatives.
- Members of the community consider Thakur as God and an avatar of Vishnu or Krishna.
- After the 1947 Partition, many of the

Matuas migrated to West Bengal.

#### **'Sugandha Shaktipith' (Satipith) temple in Shikarpur**

- Modi is also scheduled to visit the Sugandha Shaktipeeth which is located in Shikarpur, close to Barisal.
- The temple, dedicated to Goddess Sunanda is of immense religious significance to Hinduism.
- It is one of the 51 Shakti Pith temples.
- The Shakti Pith shrines are pilgrimage destinations associated with the Shakti (Goddess worship) sect of Hinduism.

#### **Rabindra Kuthi Bari in Kushtia**

- The Kuthi Bari is a country house built by Dwarkanath Tagore, the grandfather of Nobel laureate and Bengali poetic giant Rabindranath Tagore.
- The latter stayed in the house for over a decade in irregular intervals between 1891 and 1901.
- In this house Tagore composed some of his masterpieces like Sonar Tari, Katha o Kahini, Chaitali etc. He also wrote a large number of songs and poems for Gitanjali here.
- It was also in this house that Tagore began translating the Gitanjali to English in 1912, for which he was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature.

#### **Ancestral home of BaghaJatin in Kushtia**

- Jatindranath Mukherjee, better known as 'BaghaJatin' (tiger Jatin) was a revolutionary freedom fighter.
- He was born in Kayagram, a village in Kushtia district, where his ancestral home is located.
- Jatin acquired the epithet 'Bagha' after he fought a Royal Bengal Tiger all by himself and killed it with a dagger.
- Jatin was the first commander-in-chief of the

'Jugantar Party' which was formed in 1906 as a central association dedicated to train revolutionary freedom fighters in Bengal.

- This was the period when Bengal was seething with nationalist furore against Lord Curzon's declaration of Partition of the province.
- Inspired by Jatin's clarion call, "amra morbo, jagatjagbe" (we shall die to awaken the nation), many young revolutionaries joined the brand of the freedom struggle that the Jugantar Party represented.

#### His legend:

- Jatin is most remembered for an armed encounter he engaged in with the British police at Balasore in Orissa.
- They were expecting a consignment of arms and funds from Germany to lead an armed struggle when the British found out about the plot and raided the spot where the revolutionaries were hiding. A
- Although Jatin lost his life in the Battle of Balasore, his activities did have an impact on the British forces.
- The colonial police officer Charles Augustus Tegart wrote about Jatin: "If Bagha Jatin was an Englishman, then the English people would have built his statue next to Nelson's at Trafalgar Square."

#### Tomar king Anangpal II and his connection with Delhi

Mains Paper 1: Arts & Culture

#### Note for Students

From UPSC perspective, the following things are important :

**Prelims level :** History of Delhi

**Mains level :** Delhi sultanate

The Union government has recently formed a committee to popularize the legacy of 11th-century Tomar king, Anangpal II.

**Revision:** *Delhi Sultanate and their contemporaries*

#### Who was Anangpal II?

- Anangpal II, popularly known as Anangpal Tomar, belonged to the Tomar dynasty that ruled parts of present-day Delhi and Haryana between the 8th and 12th centuries.
- The capital of Tomars changed many times from being initially at Anangpur (near Faridabad) during the reign of Anangpal I (who founded the Tomar dynasty in the 8th century), to Dhillikapuri (Delhi) during the reign of Anangpal II.
- The Tomar rule over the region is attested by multiple inscriptions and coins, and their ancestry can be traced to the Pandavas (of the Mahabharata).
- Anangpal Tomar II was succeeded by his grandson Prithviraj Chauhan, who was defeated by the Ghurid forces in the Battle of Tarain (present-day Haryana) after which the Delhi Sultanate was established in 1192.

#### His connection with Delhi

- Anangpal II is credited to have established and populated Delhi during his reign in the 11th century.
- He was instrumental in populating Indraprastha and giving it its present name, Delhi.
- The region was in ruins when he ascended the throne in the 11th century, it was he who built Lal Kot fort and Anangtal Baoli.
- He was the founder of Dhillikapuri, which eventually became Delhi.

**Who was LachitBorphukan?**

Mains Paper 1: Modern Indian History

**Note4Students**

From UPSC perspective, the following things are important :

**Prelims level :** LachitBorphukan

**Mains level :** Not Much



The Prime Minister (in an election campaign) has called 17th-century Ahom General LachitBorphukan a symbol of India’s “atmanirbhar” military might.

**Try this PYQ:**

**Q.What was the immediate cause for Ahmad Shah Abdali to invade and fight the Third Battle of Panipat:**

(a) He wanted to avenge the expulsion by Marathas of his viceroy Timur Shah from Lahore

(b) The frustrated governor of Jullundhar Adina Beg khan invited him to invade Punjab

(c) He wanted to punish Mughal administration for non-payment of the revenues of the Chahar Mahal (Gujrat Aurangabad, Sialkot and Pasrur)

(d) He wanted to annex all the fertile plains of Punjab upto borders of Delhi to his kingdom

**Who was LachitBorphukan?**

- The year was 1671 and the decisive Battle of Saraighat was fought on the raging waters of the Brahmaputra.
- On one side was Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb’s army headed by Ram Singh of Amer (Jaipur) and on the other was the Ahom General LachitBorphukan.
- He was a commander in the Ahom kingdom, located in present-day Assam.
- Ram Singh failed to make any advance against the Assamese army during the first phase of the war.
- LachitBorphukan emerged victorious in the war and the Mughals were forced to retreat from Guwahati.

**LachitDivas**

- On 24 November each year, Lachit Divas is celebrated statewide in Assam to commemorate the heroism of LachitBorphukan.
- On this day, Borphukan has defeated the Mughal army on the banks of the Brahmaputra in the Battle of Saraighat in 1671.
- The best passing out cadet of National Defence Academy has conferred the Lachit gold medal every year since 1999 commemorating his valour.

## TOPIC 5: International Relations

### US India Artificial Intelligence (USIAI) Initiative

Mains Paper 2: Bilateral, Regional and Global Groupings and agreements involving India

#### Note4Students

From UPSC perspective, the following things are important :

**Prelims level :** USIAI Initiative

**Mains level :** Not Much

The US India Artificial Intelligence (USIAI) Initiative was recently launched.

#### USIAI Initiative

- This initiative focuses on AI cooperation in critical areas that are priorities for both countries.
- It has been launched by the Indo-U.S. Science and Technology Forum (IUSSTF).
- The IUSSTF is a bilateral organisation funded by the Department of Science & Technology (DST), the GOI and the U.S. Department of States.
- USIAI will serve as a platform to discuss opportunities, challenges, and barriers for bilateral AI R&D collaboration, enable AI innovation, help share ideas for developing an AI workforce etc.
- AI R&D is being promoted and implemented in the country through a network of 25 technology hubs working as a triple helix set up under the National Mission on Interdisciplinary Cyber-Physical Systems (NM-ICPS).

### Back2Basics: Artificial intelligence (AI)

- Artificial intelligence (AI) refers to the simulation of human intelligence in machines that are programmed to think like humans and mimic their actions.
- The term may also be applied to any machine that exhibits traits associated with a human mind such as learning and problem-solving.
- The ideal characteristic of artificial intelligence is its ability to rationalize and take actions that have the best chance of achieving a specific goal.
- A subset of artificial intelligence is machine learning, which refers to the concept that computer programs can automatically learn from and adapt to new data without being assisted by humans.
- Deep learning techniques enable this automatic learning through the absorption of huge amounts of unstructured data such as text, images, or video.

### The Afghan Endgame and the US

Mains Paper 2: Bilateral, Regional and Global Groupings and agreements involving India

#### Note4Students

From UPSC perspective, the following things are important :

**Prelims level :** Taliban Peace Deal

**Mains level :** Restoration of democracy in Afghanistan

As the May 1 deadline for pulling out all American troops from Afghanistan nears, US President Joe Biden faces some difficult decisions.

**Key tasks for the US before they exit**

- The U.S. could abide by the promise made in the U.S.-Taliban agreement signed in February 2020 to withdraw the last of the around 2,500 American Marines stationed in Afghanistan.
- However, Mr Biden has said it would be tough given the levels of violence there.
- The US could negotiate with the Taliban for an extension of the agreement, offering other incentives like the release of more prisoners and the delisting of sanctioned Taliban terrorists.
- The other option is to scrap the 2020 agreement and back the Ashraf Ghani government to continue towards a negotiated settlement, even as US troops remain in Afghanistan to stabilize the security situation.

[Burning Issue] The US-Taliban Peace Agreement

**What is the US likely to do?**

- The US exit plan is still underway and that no decision on the length of stay or troop numbers have been made to this point, cleared the US Secy of Defence.
- No U.S. troops have been targeted by Taliban militants in the past year, but violence against Afghan civilians, particularly women, journalists, students and activists has gone up manifold despite the peace agreement.
- More than 3,000 civilians were killed in 2020.
- The US has shown some impatience with the Ghani government as well, believing that it is dragging its feet on intra-Afghan negotiations that began last year in Doha but have stalled for

the moment.

**Plans for Ashraf Ghani**

- A US plan proposes that Mr Ghani step up negotiations with the Taliban for “power-sharing”, discuss principles of future governance and step aside eventually for a “more inclusive” or interim government. The
- The tone of the letter seems to make it clear that the US is not in favour of completely scrapping the 2020 agreement.
- Therefore, it is most likely to pursue the option of negotiating for an extension of the agreement, according to experts, as it builds other dialogue platforms.

**Try this question from our AWE Initiative:**

What are the implications of the outcomes of the ongoing Afghan peace process for India? Also elaborate on the issues with India’s Afghanistan policy as Taliban gains the legitimacy. 10 marks

**What is President Ghani’s plan?**

- Ghani has proposed his own peace plan.
- It would involve a full ceasefire, inviting the Taliban to participate in early elections in Afghanistan, and then for Mr Ghani to hand over power to the elected government.
- He also said no regional talks could be successful if they did not include India, which is a development partner and a stakeholder.

**Where does India stand?**

- India’s position has been to back an “Afghan-owned, Afghan-led, Afghan-controlled” peace process, backing the elected government in Kabul, and it has not yet held talks with the Taliban directly.
- As a result, its option remains to stand with the Ghani government and support the constitution

that guarantees a democratic process and rights of women and minorities, over any plans the Taliban might have if they come to power.

- At the same time, India has not foreclosed on the option of talking to the Taliban if it does join the government in Afghanistan.

- India too has made it clear that it seeks to be an integral part of the process, as the outcomes will have a deep impact on India's security matrix as well.

## TOPIC 6: Parliament

### Live Telecast of Parliament Proceedings

Mains Paper 2: Parliament & State Legislatures

#### Note4Students

From UPSC perspective, the following things are important :

**Prelims level :** LSTV, RSTV

**Mains level :** Parliamentary behavior and decency

Lok Sabha Television (LSTV) and Rajya Sabha Television (RSTV) have been merged into a single 'Sansad TV'.

#### Live telecast of parliament

- Lok Sabha TV is the older of the two — it started operating on July 24, 2006.
- The channel's vision, according to its website, is to reach the "live proceedings of the Parliament House...to every household".
- This is because awareness of citizens towards the working of Member of Parliament in the Parliament House helps in bringing awareness about various efforts of various stakeholders in the governance process.
- The information empowers the citizens to utilise their democratic rights diligently and be part of the democratic ecosystem.

### Do you know?

*The Union Budget allocates funds for the running of channels.*

#### Inception of the idea

- LSTV was the brainchild of former Lok Sabha Speaker Somnath Chatterjee.
- People familiar with the circumstances in which the channel was set up, said that then Rajya Sabha Chairman Bhairon Singh Shekhawat was not really convinced with Chatterjee's proposal.
- It was during his time of Shekhawat's successor, Hamid Ansari, that the separate channel for the Upper House materialized.

#### Before the channels

- Before LSTV started functioning as a channel, select parliamentary proceedings had been televised since December 20, 198.
- On April 18, 1994, the entire proceedings of Lok Sabha started to be filmed.
- And in August that year, a Low Power Transmitter (LPT) was set up and made operational in Parliament House to telecast the proceedings live.
- From December 1994, Question Hour in both Houses was telecast live on alternate weeks on

Doordarshan.

- It was arranged in such a manner that during the telecast of the Question Hour of one House by Doordarshan, the Question Hour of the other House was broadcast by All India Radio.
- When the DD News channel was launched, Question Hour in both Houses started getting telecast simultaneously on DD channels.

### Separate channels

- But it was only after a decade, in December 2004, that a separate dedicated satellite channel was set up for the live telecast of the proceedings of both Houses.
- In 2006, LSTV started airing the proceedings of the Lower House live.
- RSTV was launched in 2011. Apart from telecasting live the proceedings in Rajya Sabha, it also brings analyses of parliamentary affairs and provides a platform for knowledge-based programmes.

## TOPIC 7: Polity

### What is Rule Curve of a river?

Mains Paper 2: Federalism

#### Note4Students

From UPSC perspective, the following things are important :

**Prelims level :** Mullaperiyar Dam

**Mains level :** Interstate river water disputes in India

The Supreme Court has warned the Tamil Nadu Chief Secretary against the failure to give information on the rule curve for Mullaperiyar dam.

#### Do you know?

*The Mullaperiyar dam is located in Kerala on the river Periyar but is operated and maintained by the neighbouring state of Tamil Nadu.*

### What is the Rule Curve?

- A rule curve or rule level specifies the storage or empty space to be maintained in a reservoir during different times of the year.
- Here the implicit assumption is that a reservoir can best satisfy its purposes if the storage levels specified by the rule curve are maintained in the reservoir at different times.
- It decides the fluctuating storage levels in a reservoir.
- The gate opening schedule of a dam is based on the rule curve.
- It is part of the “core safety” mechanism in a dam.

### Why such a move?

- During the high-voltage hearing, the Tamil Nadu government blamed Kerala for delaying the

finalization of the rule curve for the 123-year-old dam.

- Kerala government has accused Tamil Nadu of adopting an “obsolete” gate operation schedule dating back to 1939.

**About Mullaperiyar Dam**

- Mullaperiyar Dam is a masonry gravity dam on the Periyar River in the Indian state of Kerala.
- It is located on the Cardamom Hills of the Western Ghats in Thekkady, Idukki District of Kerala.

- It was constructed between 1887 and 1895 by John Pennycuik and also reached an agreement to divert water eastwards to the Madras Presidency area (present-day Tamil Nadu).
- It has a height of 53.6 m from the foundation, and a length of 365.7 m.
- The Periyar National Park in Thekkady is located around the dam’s reservoir.
- The dam is built at the confluence of Mullayar and Periyar rivers.

**TOPIC 8: Science Tech Art & Culture**

**ISRO places Brazil’s Amazonia-1 satellite**

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

**Note4Students**

From UPSC perspective, the following things are important :

**Prelims level :** Amazonia satellite

**Mains level :** Not Much

**Blazing a trail**  
ISRO's first launch of 2021 in numbers

- 19** satellites, including Brazil's earth observation satellite Amazonia-1, were carried by the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle, PSLV-C51
- 13** satellites were from the U.S.
- 1**st dedicated launch by the NewSpace India Limited (NSIL), a PSU set up under the Department of Space in 2019
- 5** satellites, including the Satish Dhawan Satellite from the Chennai-based Space Kidz India, were built by students
- 53**rd flight of ISRO's workhorse launch vehicle PSLV
- 78**th mission from Sriharikota

■ ISRO has till date launched 342 foreign satellites from 34 countries

■ Amazonia-1, with a mission life of four years, will monitor deforestation in the Amazon region

■ The Satish Dhawan Satellite has an engraving of PM Narendra Modi on the top panel to show solidarity and gratitude for the *aatmanirbhar* initiative and space privatisation

**Deep impact:** PSLV-C51 lifting off from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota on Sunday. • PTI

The successful launch of Brazil’s Amazonia-1 satellite by the Indian Space Research Organisation marks a new high point in space cooperation between the two countries.

*Note why Amazonia-1 Satellite is distinct in itself. It*



paves for statement based MCQs.

**Amazonia-1 Satellite**

- The Amazônia-1 or SSR- is the first Earth observation satellite entirely developed by Brazil.
- It is optimized to peer at the cloud-covered region of its namesake, the Amazon forest since it has infrared capabilities that allow it to look at the forest cover regardless of the weather.
- Brazil plans to use the satellite to “alert deforestation” in the region, Brazil’s National Institute for Space Research (INPE) said in an Amazonia 1 mission description.

**Significance of the launch**

- This confirms the infinite potential of the India-Brazil partnership to overcome our development challenges through high technology.
- The launch also marked the first dedicated mission of ISRO’s commercial arm NewSpace India Ltd. (NSIL).

**Lunar Polar Exploration (LUPEX) Mission**

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

**Note4Students**

From UPSC perspective, the following things are important :

**Prelims level :** LUPEX Mission

**Mains level :** Not Much



India and Japan are working together on a joint lunar polar exploration (LUPEX) mission that aims to send a lander and rover to the Moon’s the South Pole around 2024.

**Try this PYQ from CSP 2020:**

**Q.The experiment will employ a trio of spacecraft flying in formation in the shape of an equilateral triangle that has sides one million km long, with lasers shining between the craft.” the experiment in the question refers to?**

- (a) Voyager-2
- (b) New horizons
- (c) LISA pathfinder
- (d) Evolved LISA

**LUPEX Mission**

- The LUPEX is a robotic lunar mission concept by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA).
- It would send a lunar rover and lander to explore the South Pole region of the Moon in 2024.
- JAXA is likely to provide the under-development H3 launch vehicle and the rover, while ISRO would be responsible for the lander.
- The mission concept has not yet been formally

proposed for funding and planning.

- The Lunar Polar Exploration mission would demonstrate new surface exploration technologies related to vehicular transport and lunar night survival for sustainable lunar exploration in Polar Regions.

**Genetics of Eye Color**

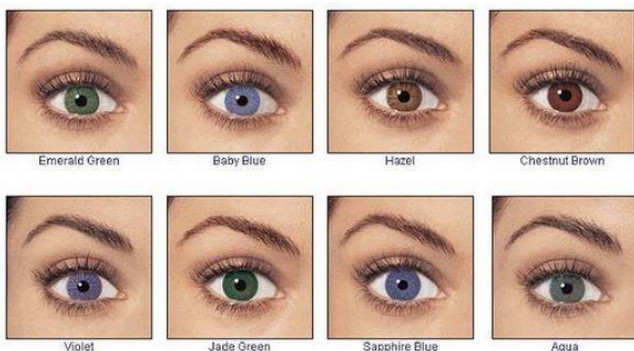
Mains Paper 3: Awareness In The Fields Of It, Space, Computers, Robotics, Nano-Technology, Bio-Technology, Pharma Sector & Health Science

**Note4Students**

From UPSC perspective, the following things are important :

**Prelims level :** Human eye and the applied genetics

**Mains level :** NA



Researchers from London have found that eye colour in Asians with different shades of brown is genetically similar to eye colour in Europeans ranging from dark brown to light blue.

**Human Eye Colour**

- Human eye colour ranges from black, brown to blue, green, and even red.
- Eye colour is primarily determined by melanin abundance within the iris pigment epithelium, which is greater in brown than in blue eyes.
- There are two forms of melanin – eumelanin

and pheomelanin – and the ratio of the two within the iris as well as light absorption and scattering by extracellular components are additional factors that give irises their colour.

- Absolute melanin quantity and the eumelanin–pheomelanin ratio is higher in brown irises, while blue or green irises have very little of both pigments and relatively more pheomelanin.

**Try this PYQ:**

**Q.Recently, LASIK (Lasser Assisted In Situ Keratomileusis) procedure is being made popular for vision correction. Which one of the following statements in this context is not correct?**

- (a) LASIK procedure is used to correct refractive errors of the eye
- (b) It is a procedure that permanently changes the shapes of the cornea
- (c) It reduces a person’s dependence on glasses or contact lenses
- (d) It is a procedure that can be done on the person of any age

**What has the research found?**

- Previously a dozen genes (mainly HERC2 and OCA2) were found to influence eye colour.
- The researchers have now identified 50 new genes for eye colour.
- Genetic analysis of nearly 0.2 million people across Europe and Asia helped the researchers to identify the new genes.
- The findings collectively explain over 53% of eye colour variation using common single-nucleotide polymorphisms.

**Outcome of the research**

- Overall, the study outcomes demonstrate that the genetic complexity of human eye

colour considerably exceeds previous knowledge and expectations.

- These findings will help improve our understanding of eye diseases such as pigmentary glaucoma and ocular albinism where pigment levels play a role.

**Raman Thermometry check on health of power lines**

Mains Paper 3: Achievements Of Indians In S&T

**Note4Students**

From UPSC perspective, the following things are important :

**Prelims level :** Raman Thermometry

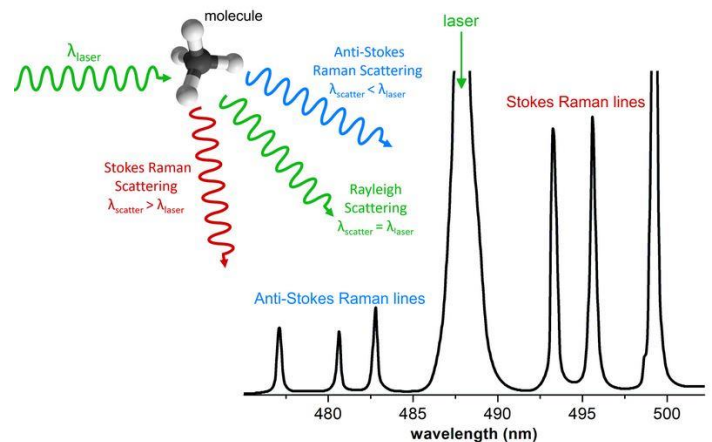
**Mains level :** Discom issues

Researchers at IIT Madras have demonstrated that by using Raman thermometry on fibre optic cables, they can achieve the monitoring of power transmission cables.

**What is Raman Thermometry?**

- Raman spectroscopy is well known as an analytical method for identifying chemical compounds and characterizing the chemical bonding and solid-state structure of materials.
- Perhaps less well known is the fact that one can use Raman spectroscopy to determine the temperature of the material being analyzed.

For that, we need to get familiarized with Raman Effect



- India’s first and so far only Nobel laureate in physics, C.V. Raman, won the prize for his discovery of the Raman Effect.
- This consisted of experimental observations on the scattering of light.
- In the Raman Effect, when light is scattered off an object, say a molecule, two bands are observed, with a higher and lower frequency than the original light, called the Stokes and anti-Stokes bands, respectively.
- By studying the relative intensity of the two bands, it is possible to estimate the temperature of the object that scattered the light.
- The anti-Stokes component of Raman scattering is strongly dependent on the temperature that the material is subjected to.

Thus, by measuring the intensity of the anti-Stokes scattered light we can estimate the temperature. This is Raman thermometry.

**Try this PYQ:**

**Q. Which Indian astrophysicist and Nobel laureate predicted rapidly rotating stars emit polarized light?**

(a) Subrahmanyan Chandrasekhar

(b) CV Raman

(c) Ramanujan

(d) Amartya Sen

**What has IITM achieved?**

- The temperature measurement was performed in not just one location, but in a distributed manner using an optical fibre.
- To achieve this, a pulse of light was launched into the optical fibre and the backscattered radiation was observed.
- The time of flight of the backscattered radiation provided an estimate of the distance from which the light is backscattered.
- This can go up to tens of kilometres. This technique is married to Raman thermometry to get the results for actual measurements over tens of kilometres.

**What makes this experiment special?**

- The distribution Sector considered the weakest link in the entire power sector.
- We are much aware of Transmission and Distribution loss that is incurred to our DISCOMS.
- This IITM technology helps analyze transmission efficiencies in a better way.
- The present method devised by the team is both economical and provides real-time information.

**Martian ‘Blueberries’**

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

**Note4Students**

From UPSC perspective, the following things are important :

**Prelims level :** Martian blueberries

**Mains level :** Mars mission worldwide and their success



In 2004, NASA’s Mars exploration rover ‘Opportunity’ found several small spheres on the planet, informally named Martian blueberries which find a resemblance to the similar formation in India’s Kutch region.

*There have been several missions to the red planet this year. Make a note of all of them.*

**Martian blueberries**

- Opportunity’s mini spectrometers studied mineralogy and noted they were made of iron oxide compounds called haematites.
- This caused excitement, as the presence of haematites suggests that there was water present on Mars.
- The widely accepted formation mechanism of hematite concretion [hard solid mass] is precipitation from aqueous fluids.
- Hematite is known to form in oxidizing environments hence it can be inferred that water must have played a crucial role in the formation of grey hematite on Mars.

**What makes them so special?**

- Indian researchers have been studying hematite concretions in Kutch called the Jhuran formation.
- These formations are 145 and 201 million years old.

- Detailed geochemistry and spectroscopic investigations of the haematite concretions in this area revealed that they resemble the ones on Mars.
- They have similar morphology – spherical, often doublet and triplet – and similar mineralogy – a mixture of haematite and goethite.
- Hence, several types of research have shown that the Kutch area is a potential Martian analogue locality.

**What is Artificial Photosynthesis?**

Mains Paper 3: S&T - Applications In Everyday Life

**Note4Students**

From UPSC perspective, the following things are important :

**Prelims level :** Artificial Photosynthesis

**Mains level :** Carbon sequestration through AP

Scientists have found a method to mimic nature’s own process of reducing carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, namely photosynthesis, to capture excess carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.

**Artificial Photosynthesis**

- Artificial photosynthesis (AP) is a chemical process that mimics the natural process of photosynthesis to convert sunlight, water, and carbon dioxide into carbohydrates and oxygen.
- The term artificial photosynthesis is commonly used to refer to any scheme for capturing and storing the energy from sunlight in the chemical bonds of fuel (a solar fuel).
- Photocatalytic water splitting converts water into hydrogen and oxygen and is a major research topic of artificial photosynthesis.
- Light-driven carbon dioxide reduction is another process studied that replicates natural carbon

fixation.

**Try this PYQ:**

**Which of the following adds/add carbon dioxide to the carbon cycle on the planet Earth?**

1. Volcanic action
2. Respiration
3. Photosynthesis
4. Decay of organic matter

**Select the correct answer using the code given below:**

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

**Challenges in AP**

- Research on this topic includes the engineering of enzymes and photoautotrophic microorganisms for microbial biofuel and biohydrogen production from sunlight.
- This AP harnesses solar energy and converts the captured carbon dioxide to carbon monoxide (CO), which can be used as a fuel for internal combustion engines.
- In AP, scientists are essentially conducting the same fundamental process in natural photosynthesis but with simpler nanostructures.
- However, there are plenty of hurdles to overcome as a successful catalyst to carry out AP.

**What have Indian researchers achieved?**

- Indian researchers have designed and fabricated an integrated catalytic system based on a metal-organic framework (MOF-808)

comprising of a photosensitizer that can harness solar power and a catalytic centre that can eventually reduce CO<sub>2</sub>.

- A photosensitizer is a molecule that absorbs light and transfers the electron from the incident light into another nearby molecule.
- The scientists have immobilized a photosensitizer, which is a chemical called ruthenium bipyridyl complex ([Ru (bpy)<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>]) and a catalytic part which is another chemical called rhenium carbonyl complex ([Re(CO)<sub>5</sub>Cl]).
- They have fabricated it inside the nano space of a metal-organic framework for artificial photosynthesis.

**Outcomes of the research**

- The developed catalyst exhibited excellent visible-light-driven CO<sub>2</sub> reduction to CO with more than 99% selectivity.
- The catalyst also oxidizes water to produce oxygen (O<sub>2</sub>).
- The Photocatalytic assembly, when assessed for CO<sub>2</sub> reduction under direct sunlight in a water medium without any additives, showed superior performance of CO production.
- Being heterogeneous, the integrated catalytic assembly can be reused for several catalytic cycles without losing its activity.

**Back2Basics: Photosynthesis**

- It is the process by which green plants and certain other organisms transform light energy into chemical energy.
- It is a process used by plants and other organisms to convert light energy into chemical energy that, through cellular respiration, can later be released to fuel the organism’s metabolic activities.

- This chemical energy is stored in carbohydrate molecules, such as sugars, which are synthesized from carbon dioxide and water – hence the name photosynthesis.

**Shigmo Festival of Goa**

Mains Paper 1: Arts & Culture

**Note4Students**

From UPSC perspective, the following things are important :

**Prelims level :** Shigmo Festival

**Mains level :** NA

The Shigmo or the Goan Carnival celebrations may be terminated this year due to rising covid cases.

**Try this PYQ from CSP 2017:**

**Q.Consider the following pairs:**

Traditions		Communities
1. Chaliha Sahib Festival	—	Sindhis
2. Nanda Raj Jaat Yatra	—	Gonds
3. Wari-Warkari	—	Santhals

**Which of the pairs given above is/are correctly matched?**

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) None of the above

**What is Shigmo or Shigmotsav?**

- Shigmo is the celebration of a ‘rich, golden harvest of paddy’ by the tribal communities of Goa.
- Agricultural communities including the Kunbis,

Gawdas and Velips celebrate the festival that also marks the onset of spring.

- Shigmo celebrations last over a fortnight in the months of Phalgun-Chaitra months of the Hindu calendar that correspond with March-April every year.

**Various activities in celebrations**

- The festival begins with ‘Naman’ that is the invocation of the local folk deities on the village ‘maand’ or the village stage.
- It is held to the beats of percussion instruments like the Ghumat, Dhol, Mhadle and Tashe by the male folk.
- This is called the ‘romtamell’ that moves from one village to another.
- The celebration is replete with traditional, colourful costumes, mythological installations, painted faces and costumes of various hues.
- Folk dances like Ghodemodini (a dance of equestrian warriors), Gopha and Phugadi are among the many dances performed by the participating communities.

**Early bud-break genes and climate change**

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

**Note4Students**

From UPSC perspective, the following things are important :

**Prelims level :** Genetics and climate change

**Mains level :** Impacts of climate change on plant dynamics



Changing climate has transformed the time spring unfolds in front of us.

**Early bud-break**

- Bud-break — which is when trees leaf out — has undergone a change.
- Several trees initiate bud-break too early or too late, which affects the harvest.
- Spring, for example, arrived earlier than usual in Kashmir this year due to higher temperatures in February and March.
- Gul-tour, a spring-flowering herb started blooming in mid-February in Kashmir. Its yellow flowers would usually blossom in March, heralding Spring.

**Try this PYQ:**

**Q. Other than resistance to pests, what are the prospects for which genetically engineered plants have been created?**

1. To enable them to withstand drought
2. To increase the nutritive value of the produce
3. To enable them to grow and do photosynthesis in spaceships and space stations
4. To increase their shelf life

**Select the correct answer using the code given below**

*(a) 1 and 2 only*

(b) 3 and 4 only

(c) 1, 2 and 4 only

(d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

**Answer: (d)**

**What causes early bud-break?**

- This is why understanding the genetics of bud-break helps scientists modify or select crop varieties that can be more resilient to the climate threat.
- The properties of transcription factors are genes that regulate other genes by binding to deoxyribonucleic acid and giving activation instructions.
- It helps scientists determine what other genes might be involved in a process such as a bud-break.

**EBB genes**

- Researchers of the study had earlier identified transcription factors for early bud-break 1 (EBB1) and short vegetative phase (SVL), which directly interact to control bud-break.
- EBB1 is a positive regulator of bud-break, whereas SVL is a negative regulator of bud-break.
- Now, the research team has identified and characterized the early bud-break 3 (EBB3) gene.

**Identified mechanism of Bud-break**

- EBB3 is a temperature-responsive, positive regulator of bud-break that provides a direct link to activation of the cell cycle during bud-break.
- EBB3 provides a direct link through the signalling pathway for how these cells divide.
- The analysis reveals how particular genes

activate through the season or in response to specific environmental factors.

**Significance of the study**

- New approaches for accelerated tree adaptation to climate change helps ensure bud-break happens at the right time each spring.
- Using their understanding of the genetic pathways that control bud-break, scientists hope to genetically modify crops to adapt to warmer winters and unpredictable frosts.

**Species in news: Hypnea Indica**

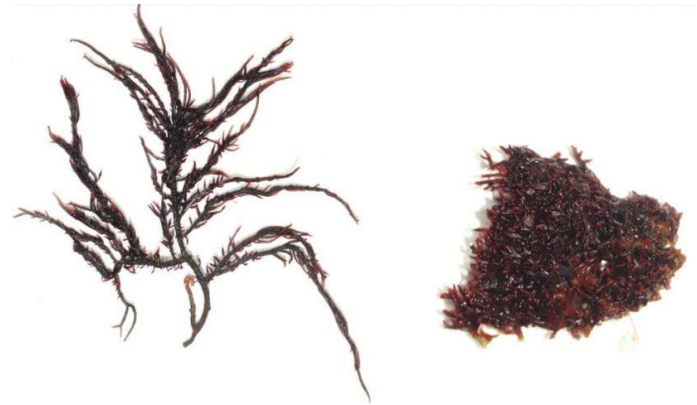
Mains Paper 3: Awareness In The Fields Of It, Space, Computers, Robotics, Nano-Technology, Bio-Technology, Pharma Sector & Health Science

**Note4Students**

From UPSC perspective, the following things are important :

**Prelims level :** Red algae

**Mains level :** Seaweeds and their significance



Two new species of seaweed have been discovered by a group of marine biologists from the Central University of Punjab, Bathinda.

**What are the species?**

- Named *Hypnea indica* (after India) and *Hypnea bullata* (because of the blisterlike marks on its



body – bullate), the seaweeds are part of the genus *Hypnea* or red seaweeds.

- They grow in the intertidal regions of the coast, namely the area that is submerged during the high tide and exposed during low tides.

**Do you know?**

*Red Algae have great ecological importance. They form a vital part of the food chain and are also involved in producing about 40 to 60 per cent of the total global oxygen for both terrestrial habitat and other aquatic habitats.*

**Details of the genus**

- The genus *Hypnea* consists of calcareous, erect, branched red seaweeds.
- While *Hypnea indica* was discovered Kanyakumari in Tamil Nadu, and Somnath Pathan and Sivrajpur in Gujarat, *Hypnea bullata* was discovered from Kanyakumari and Diu island of Daman and Diu.
- There are 61 species of which 10 were reported in India.

**Significance for the food industry**

- Species of *Hypnea* contain the biomolecule carrageenan, which is widely used in the food industry.
- As the two species have been found on the west and south-east coasts of India, it suggests good prospects for their cultivation which can be put to good use economically.
- The extensive calcareous deposit on the body that has been observed also provides room for thought.

**Large Hadron Collider beauty Experiment**

Mains Paper 3: Awareness In The Fields Of It, Space, Computers, Robotics, Nano-Technology, Bio-

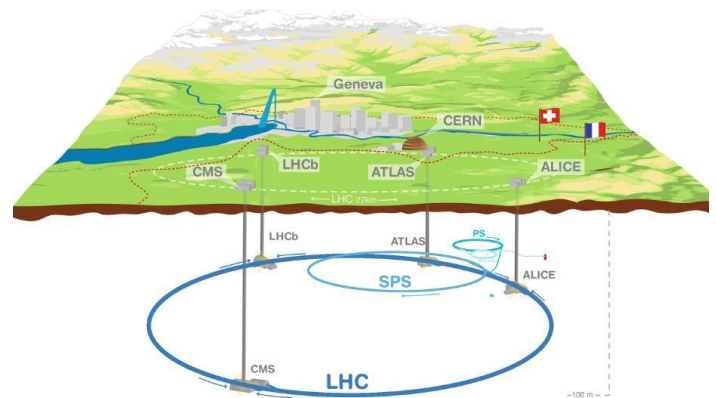
Technology, Pharma Sector & Health Science

**Note4Students**

From UPSC perspective, the following things are important :

**Prelims level :** LHCb experiments and its findings

**Mains level :** Formation of the universe and the Big Bang



The LHCb experiment at CERN (European Council for Nuclear Research) has announced the results of their latest analysis of data.

**LHCb Experiment: An easy explanation**

- LHCb is an experiment set up to explore what happened after the Big Bang that allowed the matter to survive and build the Universe we inhabit today.
- Fourteen billion years ago, the Universe began with a bang.
- Crammed within an infinitely small space, energy coalesced to form equal quantities of matter and antimatter.
- But as the Universe cooled and expanded, its composition changed.
- Just one second after the Big Bang, antimatter had all but disappeared, leaving the matter to form everything that we see around us — from the stars and galaxies to the Earth and all life

that it supports.

### What is the new finding?

- CERN scientists are excited enough to reveal that if the anomaly they had detected was confirmed.
- Because, if confirmed, it would require a new physical process, such as the existence of new fundamental particles or interactions.

### What is this excitement all about?

It is necessary to delve into the world of elementary particles to understand this.

#### (1) Particle zoo

Until now it is believed that the electron, muon and tauon and their antiparticles, though they differ in mass, behave similarly in particle interactions.

- Broadly speaking, elementary particles are classified into the particles called baryons – which include protons, neutrons and their antiparticles the antiprotons etc.
- The “middle mass” particles, roughly speaking, are called the mesons and they include members such as the K and B particles.
- We then have the leptons, which include the electron and its cousins the muon and tau particles and the anti-particles.
- At a still smaller scale, there are tiny particles called quarks and gluons.
- There are six flavours of quarks: up, down, truth, beauty, charm and strange. They too have antiquarks associated with them.

In this particle zoo, while the baryons are made up of combinations of three quarks, the mesons contain two quarks, more accurately a quark and antiquark pair, and

the leptons are truly fundamental and are thought to be indivisible.

#### Do you know?

*Higgs Boson is called the god particle.*

#### (2) Colliding particle beams

By interactions here, is meant the following:

- If a huge particle accelerator such as the LHC were to accelerate beams of hadrons (such as protons) to very high speeds, a fraction of that of light, and then cause them to collide.
- Basically, smash through the repulsive nuclear forces and shatter them, the hadrons would break up into constituents which would recombine to form short-lived particles, which would decay into stabler states.
- Roughly speaking, during this process, they are imaged in a huge multistorey detector and the number of specific processes and particles are counted.

#### (3) Lepton universality principle

- One such process that was measured was the decay of a meson B (which contained the beauty quark) into K-meson (which contains the strange quark) and a muon-antimuon pair, and this was compared with the decay of B into K and an electron-antielectron pair.
- The expectation is that the ratio of the strengths of these two sets of interactions would be just one.
- This is because the muons are not essentially different from the electrons as per the Standard Model, the presently accepted theoretical model of all elementary particle interactions.
- This is called the lepton universality principle.

## TOPIC 9: Security Issues

### Induction of INS Dhruv

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

### Note4Students

From UPSC perspective, the following things are important :

**Prelims level :** INS Dhruv

**Mains level :** India's naval arsenal



India Navy is set to commission INS Dhruv to track satellites, strategic missiles and map the Indian Ocean bed later this year.

*INS Dhruv is no ordinary vessel for the Indian Navy. Read its stealth capabilities and utilities.*

### INS Dhruv

- INS Dhruv has been developed with the help of the DRDO and Indian Navy with India's Strategic Force Command and National Technical Research Organisation (NTRO) as main intelligence consumers.

- The indigenously-developed surveillance ship has been built by Hindustan Shipyard Ltd at its Visakhapatnam facility under the AtmaNirbhar Bharat Abhiyan initiative.
- The 15,000-tonne ship, part of a classified project, will not only create maritime domain awareness for India in the Indian Ocean but also act as an early warning system for adversary missiles headed towards India.

### Stealth capabilities

- INS Dhruv is equipped with active electronically scanned array radars, or AESA considered a game-changer in radar technology.
- It can scan various spectrums to monitor satellites of adversaries that are watching over India.
- It can also understand the range and true missile capability of adversary nations that it finds in the Indo-Pacific.

### Benefits offered

- Once the vessel is commissioned, India will be the only country outside the P-5 – the US, the UK, China, Russia and France – to have this capability
- It will act as a major force multiplier to India's ocean surveillance capabilities.
- It will be able to provide the Indian Navy with an **"ECG of the Indian Ocean"**.

## TOPIC 10: Trivia

### How long is a year on other planets?

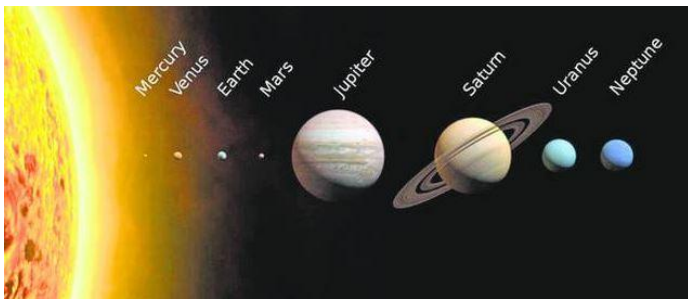
Mains Paper 1: Geographical Features & Their Location

#### Note4Students

From UPSC perspective, the following things are important :

**Prelims level :** Revolution of Earth and other planets around the Sun

**Mains level :** NA



For us, 365 days make up a year because Earth takes as many days to complete one orbit of the Sun. But have you ever wondered how many days make up a year on other planets?

#### What determines the length of a year?

- The length of a year on any planet depends on where the planet is orbiting.
- Planets that are closer to the Sun than Earth will have fewer days in a year, while those rotating farther away will take many more days to make up a year.
- This is because of two reasons – planets that are closer to the Sun will take a shorter time to orbit it than those farther away, and the closer a planet orbits the Sun, the Sun's gravity can pull on the planet, making the planet orbit faster.

### Why should we care?

- To send a spacecraft to another planet, we need to know where the planet is in orbit.
- This will help us plan and manoeuvre the spacecraft accordingly.

### How long each planet takes to orbit the Sun (in Earth days):

- Mercury: 88 days
- Venus: 225 days
- Earth: 365 days
- Mars: 687 days
- Jupiter: 4,333 days
- Saturn: 10,759 days
- Uranus: 30,687 days
- Neptune: 60,190 days

*It's a mean task to consider this PYQ from 2013, Huh!*

**Q. Which planet was downgraded to dwarf planet status?**

(a) Pluto

(b) Mars

(c) Earth

(d) Venus

**Jaapi, Xorai and Gamosa in Assam**

Mains Paper 1: Arts & Culture

#### Note4Students

From UPSC perspective, the following things are

important :

**Prelims level :** Jaapi, Xorai and Gamosa

**Mains level :** NA

As the polling date draws closer, decorative jaapis (field hats), hand-woven gamosas and bell-metal xorais are making frequent appearances in Assam.

*Primarily used to felicitate important people and guests, these important symbols of Assamese identity and culture are abundantly seen in political campaigns across the state.*

**Jaapi**



- The jaapi is a conical hat made of bamboo and covered with dried tokou (a palm tree found in rainforests of Upper Assam) leaves.
- It is most often used in official functions to felicitate guests.
- The landscape of rural Assam features a more utilitarian version, which farmers wear to protect themselves from the harsh weather, both sun and rain, while working in the fields.
- The first possible recorded use of jaapi dates back to the Ahom-era buranjis, or chronicles. Kings and ministers would wear them then.

**Gamosa**



- The Gamosa, which literally translates to a cloth to wipe one’s body, is omnipresent in Assam, with wide-ranging uses.
- It can be used at home as a towel (ukagamosa) or in public functions (phulam/floral gamosa) to felicitate dignitaries or celebrities.
- The popularity of the gamosa has now traveled beyond Assam and is often used by a number of public figures.
- It was during the anti-foreigner Assam Agitation of the early 1980s, when Assamese nationalism reached its crescendo, that the gamosa assumed a new role.

**Xorai**



- Made of bell-metal, the xorai — essentially a tray with a stand at the bottom, with or without a cover — can be found in every Assamese household.

- While it is primarily used as an offering tray during prayers, or to serve tamale-paan (betel-nut) to guests, a xorai is also presented along with the jaapi and gamosa while felicitating someone.
- The bulk of xorais in Assam are made in the state's bell metal hub Sarthebari in Bajali district.

**Gandhi Peace Prize**

Mains Paper 2: India & Its Neighborhood - Relations

**Note4Students**

From UPSC perspective, the following things are important :

**Prelims level :** Gandhi Peace Prize

**Mains level :** NA

The Culture Ministry has announced that Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the late Sultan of Oman, Qaboos bin Said Al Said, would be awarded the Gandhi Peace Prize for 2020 and 2019 respectively.

*Note the features of the award such as prize, the composition of jury etc.*

**Gandhi Peace Prize**

- The International Gandhi Peace Prize, named after Mahatma Gandhi, is awarded annually by the Government of India.
- As a tribute to the ideals espoused by Gandhi, the GoI launched the International Gandhi Peace Prize in 1995 on the occasion of the 125th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.
- This is an annual award given to individuals and institutions for their contributions towards social, economic and political transformation through non-violence and other Gandhian methods.

**Its features**

- The award carries ₹1 crore (US\$140,000) in cash, convertible in any currency in the world, a plaque and a citation.
- It is open to all persons regardless of nationality, race, creed or gender.
- A jury consisting of the PM of India, the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, the Chief Justice of India, Speaker of the Lok Sabha and one other eminent person decides the awardees each year.
- Ordinarily, only proposals coming from competent persons invited to nominate are considered.
- However, a proposal is not taken as invalid for consideration by the jury merely on the ground of not having emanated from competent persons.

**Information about the awardees**

**(1) Sheikh Mujibur Rahman (1920-1975)**

- The Prize recognizes the immense and unparalleled contribution of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in inspiring the liberation of Bangladesh.
- It acknowledges the contribution in bringing stability to a nation born out of strife, laying the foundation for the close and fraternal relations between India and Bangladesh and promoting peace and non-violence in the Indian subcontinent.

**(2)Sultan Qaboos Bin Said (1940-2020)**

- Sultan Qaboos was a visionary leader whose twin policy of moderation and mediation in addressing international issues won him praise and respect across the globe.
- He played an important role in supporting peace efforts in various regional disputes and

conflicts. H.M. Sultan Qaboos was the architect of the special ties between India and Oman.

- He had studied in India and always maintained a special relationship with India.
- Under his leadership, India and Oman became strategic partners and our mutually beneficial, comprehensive partnership strengthened and scaled newer heights.

# SECTION 3

## Practice Questions with Answers



**PRACTICE QUESTIONS**

**1) Zero Discrimination Day is observed on which date?**

- A) March 3
- B) March 4
- C) March 1
- D) March 5
- E) March 7

**Destinations.**

- A) 8
- B) 12
- C) 10
- D) 11
- E) 9

**2) Which of the following country will remain on FATF 'greylist'?**

- A) Saudi Arabia
- B) UAE
- C) Qatar
- D) Pakistan
- E) North Korea

**5) Khadi, Village Industry Commission's e-Market Portal has registered over \_\_\_\_\_ crore turnover in eight months.**

- A) 3
- B) 2.5
- C) 1
- D) 1.5
- E) 2

**3) Which of the following Exchange was recently launched for Fostering Innovation in Urban Ecosystem?**

- A) OTCEI
- B) Calcutta Stock Exchange
- C) NSE
- D) BSE
- E) City Innovation Exchange

**6) Who among the following has addressed the National Science Day through video-conferencing?**

- A) Anurag Thakur
- B) Narendra Modi
- C) NS Tomar
- D) Harsh Vardhan
- E) Amit Shah

**4) Jal Shakti Ministry has announced \_\_\_\_\_ iconic sites for transforming them into Swachh Tourist**

**7) Civil Accounts Day is observed on which of the**

**following date?**

- A) March 3
- B) March 4
- C) March 1
- D) March 5
- E) March 7

- B) Japan
- C) Brazil
- D) US
- E) China

**8) Who among the following has begun the first academic session of MBBS at GMC, Doda?**

- A) Narendra Modi
- B) Amit Shah
- C) Anurag Thakur
- D) Jitendra Singh
- E) Prahlad Patel

**11) National Safety Day is observed on which of the following date?**

- A) March 11
- B) March 3
- C) March 4
- D) March 14
- E) March 5

**9) Which of the following country has launched the first Arctic-monitoring satellite?**

- A) Japan
- B) Israel
- C) Germany
- D) France
- E) Russia

**12) Who among the following held meetings with OTT industry representatives?**

- A) NS Tomar
- B) Piyush Goyal
- C) Nitin Gadkari
- D) Prakash Javadekar
- E) Harsh Vardhan

**10) India along with which country will continue to work together in advance our space collaboration?**

- A) France

**13) Government has amended the Insurance Ombudsman Rules of \_\_\_\_\_.**

- A) 2011
- B) 2012
- C) 2015
- D) 2013

E) 2017

**14) Indigenously designed and developed Spectrograph has recently been commissioned in which city?**

- A) Surat
- B) Mathura
- C) Nainital
- D) Chandigarh
- E) Delhi

**15) National Security Day is observed on which of the following date?**

- A) March 1
- B) March 3
- C) March 5
- D) March 4
- E) March 7

**16) Nag River Pollution Abatement Project approved at a cost of over \_\_\_\_\_ crores.**

- A) 2,445
- B) 2,117
- C) 2,050
- D) 3,110
- E) 3,115

**17) Which company has joined the World Economic Forum initiative to advance racial justice, social equality?**

- A) Dell
- B) HCL
- C) IBM
- D) Wipro
- E) Infosys

**18) Which of the following has been Declared As International Year Of Millets As UN General Assembly?**

- A) 2025
- B) 2024
- C) 2021
- D) 2022
- E) 2023

**19) Separate cell for the National Commission for Women has been commissioned in which state/UT?**

- A) Gujarat
- B) Chandigarh
- C) Ladakh
- D) Punjab
- E) Delhi

**20) Karnataka CM has admired which city for its model of citizen centric initiatives development?**

- A) Raipur
- B) Bengaluru
- C) Chandigarh
- D) Pune
- E) Surat

**21) India Commemorates “Chabahar Day” on which of the following date?**

- A) March 1
- B) March 3
- C) March 4
- D) March 5
- E) March 7

**22) EPFO board has recommended an unchanged \_\_\_\_\_ per cent interest on deposits for 2020-21.**

- A) 8.4
- B) 8.3
- C) 8.7
- D) 8.5
- E) 8.6

**23) Who among the following has launched the “CSIR Floriculture Mission”?**

- A) Amit Shah
- B) Prahlad Patel
- C) NS Tomar

- D) Nitin Gadkari
- E) Harsh Vardhan

**24) Which of the following country is building the world’s first platypus sanctuary to promote breeding and rehabilitation?**

- A) Japan
- B) Switzerland
- C) Australia
- D) France
- E) Germany

**25) The Central government has constituted a National Committee headed by PM Modi to celebrate \_\_\_\_\_years of India’s Independence commemoration**

- A) 85
- B) 80
- C) 100
- D) 75
- E) 50

**26) Who among the following has inaugurated the New Delhi World Book Fair 2021 – Virtual Edition?**

- A) NS Tomar
- B) Ramesh PokhriyalNishank
- C) Prahlad Patel
- D) Narendra Modi

E) Amit Shah

**27) Which of the following country is one of the top performers in land records digitisation?**

A) Chhattisgarh

B) Uttar Pradesh

C) Bihar

D) Haryana

E) Madhya Pradesh

**28) New Cultural Centre of the High Commission of India has been inaugurated by who among the following in Dhaka?**

A) Amit Shah

B) Narendra Modi

C) S. Jaishankar

D) Prahlad Patel

E) NS Tomar

**29) A UN report shows close to \_\_\_\_\_ million tonnes of food were wasted globally in 2019.**

A) 1015

B) 931

C) 932

D) 850

E) 800

**30) Reliance Power forms JV with Jera for \_\_\_\_\_ MW Project in Bangladesh.**

A) 625

B) 630

C) 745

D) 645

E) 650

**31) Which state will be holding various programmers related to Azadi ka Amrut Mahotsav?**

A) Punjab

B) Chhattisgarh

C) Maharashtra

D) Bihar

E) Uttar Pradesh

**32) The Union Government has announced which company's plan to produce smartphones in India will create large numbers of jobs?**

A) Xiaomi

B) Panasonic

C) Samsung

D) Apple

E) Nokia

**33) The Labour Minister has launched ESI Scheme with Ayushman Bharat PM-JAY in \_\_\_\_\_ districts recently.**

A) 109

B) 110

D) US

C) 112

E) Japan

D) 111

E) 113

**37) Which state has approved 5500 hectares of high-density plantation schemes in the horticulture sector?**

**34) The Union government has disbanded claims about Post offices charging Rs. \_\_\_\_ for cash withdrawal.**

A) Haryana

B) Punjab

A) 45

C) Delhi

B) 40

D) Chandigarh

C) 35

E) J&K

D) 25

E) 30

**38) Shri Kedarnath Dham temple Portals will open from which of the following date?**

**35) Who among the following has unveiled the Kindle version of Swami Chidbhanandaji's Bhagavad Gita?**

A) May 11

B) May 13

A) Nitin Gadkari

C) May 17

B) Amit Shah

D) May 14

C) Narendra Modi

E) May 15

D) Prahlad Patel

E) NS Tomar

**39) Who among the following has taken oath as Uttarakhand Chief Minister?**

**36) Which country broke Twitter services over 'objectionable' content?**

A) Dinesh Rawat

B) Suresh Rawat

A) France

C) Anand Rawat

B) Denmark

D) Tirath Singh Rawat

C) Russia

E) NS Rawat

**40) Which organization has launched its first virtual trade fair?**

- A) Niti Aayog
- B) APEDA
- C) IFFCO
- D) NAFED
- E) CII

**41) International Day of Mathematics is observed on which of the following date?**

- A) March 9
- B) March 7
- C) March 14
- D) March 6
- E) March 5

**42) The government has announced linking of OTPRMS certificates with which of the following app?**

- A) MobileSeva
- B) KhanPahari
- C) MyGov
- D) Digilocker
- E) UMANG

**43) World Consumer Rights Day is observed on which of the following date?**

- A) March 1
- B) March 2

- C) March 3
- D) March 5
- E) March 15

**44) The Central government has announced a new scheme for tourist vehicle operators where the permit will be issued online within \_\_\_\_ days of application submission.**

- A) 20
- B) 15
- C) 30
- D) 45
- E) 60

**45) Which state has been paired with Bihar through Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat campaign?**

- A) Chhattisgarh
- B) Mizoram
- C) Manipur
- D) Tripura
- E) Bihar

**46) The I & B Minister has inaugurated Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav exhibitions at \_\_\_\_ places.**

- A) 9
- B) 7
- C) 8
- D) 6

E) 5

**47) India's first centralised AC railway terminal in which city will be operational soon?**

- A) Surat
- B) Chandigarh
- C) Pune
- D) Hyderabad
- E) Bengaluru

**48) World's fastest supercomputer named \_\_\_\_\_ has been introduced.**

- A) Fujimura
- B) Shinzen
- C) Fugaku
- D) Shiketsu
- E) Shitsuketsu

**49) The J&K government has sanctioned interest-free loan worth \_\_\_\_ lakh rupees for PMAY-U beneficiaries.**

- A) 4
- B) 2
- C) 2.5
- D) 3
- E) 3.5

**50) Covid Tracker helpline has been launched in which of the following city?**

- A) Pune
- B) Surat
- C) Mumbai
- D) Delhi
- E) Chennai

**51) Nitin Gadkari will make a statement regarding 'Vehicles Scrapping Policy' soon. The vehicle scrapping policy will lead to a slash of \_\_\_\_ lakh crore expenditure on crude imports.**

- A) 15
- B) 13
- C) 10
- D) 11
- E) 12

**52) Who among the following from India and Italian Ambassador Vincenzo De Luca recently met for ISA?**

- A) Narendra Modi
- B) Prahlad Patel
- C) NS Tomar
- D) Harsh Vardhan Shringla
- E) Nitin Gadkari

**53) The Union Cabinet has given a nod to shut down Handicrafts and Handlooms Export Corporation thus retiring all \_\_\_\_\_ its employees.**

- A) 80
- B) 75



- C) 70
- D) 60
- E) 65

**54) Which country has signed the International Solar Alliance – ISA Framework Agreement recently?**

- A) Iceland
- B) Netherlands
- C) Germany
- D) Italy
- E) France

**55) India-Bangladesh recently held a Water Resources Secretary level meeting in which city?**

- A) Chandigarh
- B) Chennai
- C) Delhi
- D) Pune
- E) Surat

**56) The Foreign Affairs Minister of which country will make a two day visit to India?**

- A) UAE
- B) Qatar
- C) Oman
- D) Uzbekistan
- E) Kuwait

**57) Who among the following has recently inaugurated the project “Awaam Ki Baat”?**

- A) Prahlad Patel
- B) Amit Shah
- C) Manoj Sinha
- D) NS Tomar
- E) Nitin Gadkari

**58) Maitri Cycle Rally was recently organized by which of the following armed forces?**

- A) ITBP
- B) RAF
- C) RPF
- D) BSF
- E) CISF

**59) The Government College for Women at Salaheri located in which state has been renamed as Shaheed Lieutenant Kiran Shekhawat Government College for Women?**

- A) Gujarat
- B) Haryana
- C) Chhattisgarh
- D) Bihar
- E) Punjab

**60) DoodhDuronto special trains have transported \_\_\_\_\_ crore litres of Milk to National Capital, New Delhi.**

- A) 9
- B) 8.5
- C) 8
- D) 7.5
- E) 7

**61) International Day of Forests and the Tree is observed on which of the following date?**

- A) March 4
- B) March 5
- C) March 21
- D) March 8
- E) March 18

**62) Under the New Nagar Van Scheme to develop Urban forests in cities how many urban forests will be developed?**

- A) 350
- B) 375
- C) 300
- D) 200
- E) 250

**63) Who among the following has inaugurated the Advanced High Resolution Microscopy Facility?**

- A) Amit Shah
- B) Harsh Vardhan
- C) Prahlad Patel
- D) NS Tomar

E) Narendra Modi

**64) International Day of Elimination of Racial Discrimination is observed on which of the following date?**

- A) March 3
- B) March 8
- C) March 21
- D) March 9
- E) March 11

**65) Who among the following will launch the Jal Shakti Abhiyan: Catch the Rain campaign?**

- A) Venkiah Naidu
- B) Amit Shah
- C) Prahlad Patel
- D) NS Tomar
- E) Narendra Modi

**66) World Poetry Day is observed on which of the following date?**

- A) March 4
- B) March 5
- C) March 7
- D) March 21
- E) March 19

**67) The chief minister of which state has dedicated various development projects to people worth 1411**

**crore?**

- A) Kerala
- B) Chhattisgarh
- C) Haryana
- D) Bihar
- E) Punjab

- B) Xi'an
- C) Shenzhen
- D) Hong Kong
- E) Beijing

**68) The Road, Transport and Highways Ministry has received reports from which institution regarding targeted intrusion activities directed towards Indian Transport sector with possible malicious intentions?**

- A) Niti Aayog
- B) CERT
- C) FICCI
- D) CII
- E) ASSOCHAM

- A) 5.5
- B) 4.5
- C) 5
- D) 3
- E) 4

**69) World Water Day is Observed on which of the following date?**

- A) March 1
- B) March 11
- C) March 12
- D) March 21
- E) March 22

**71) Parliament recently passed the Finance Bill 2021 raising the interest earned on PF contribution from 2.5 lakh to \_\_\_\_\_ lakh rupees.**

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

**70) India will take part in the Nowruz celebrations at SCO which will be held in \_\_\_\_\_.**

- A) Chengdu

**72) PM Modi will soon visit to which country starting 26 March?**

- A) Gwalior
- B) Varanasi
- C) Surat
- D) Jind
- E) Panipat

**74) Asia's largest Tulip Garden has recently been opened in which of the following state/UT?**

- A) Bihar
- B) Punjab
- C) Delhi
- D) J&K
- E) Haryana

- A) 93
- B) 83
- C) 53
- D) 63
- E) 73

**75) The LG of Ladakh has launched the first Solar Lift Irrigation Scheme of KREDA in which of the following village?**

- A) Chuchot
- B) Hanle
- C) Das
- D) Arya
- E) Latoo

**78) Who among the following has inaugurated the Pashudhan Mela' in Kathua?**

- A) Prahlad Patel
- B) Manoj Sinha
- C) Naveen Kumar Chaudhury
- D) Narendra Modi
- E) Amit Shah

**76) NHAI has planned to develop world class 'Wayside Amenities' – more than 600 locations with a target of \_\_\_\_\_ sites in 2021-22.**

- A) 180
- B) 160
- C) 130
- D) 140
- E) 150

**79) DS Ravindran has been appointed as additional director of which bank?**

- A) Yes Bank
- B) Karnataka Bank
- C) Bandhan Bank
- D) Axis Bank
- E) UCO Bank

**77) How many new AYUSH Health & Wellness Centres have been e-inaugurated in J&K by Lieutenant Governor?**

**80) The CCI has ordered a probe into the new privacy policy of WhatsApp under contravention of which of the following act?**

- A) RBI Act, 1934
- B) IPC Act, 1960
- C) Data Protection Act, 2018

D) Competition Act, 2000

E) IT Act, 2000

**81) The Education Minister has unveiled more than one hundred comic books over which of the following portal recently?**

A) DBT

B) DigiLocker

C) DIKSHA

D) SWADHEEN

E) CPGRAMS

**82) The Chief minister of which state has recently inaugurated the Kurnool Airport?**

A) Delhi

B) Punjab

C) Bihar

D) Andhra Pradesh

E) Haryana

**83) The government will roll out a GPS based toll collection system on which of the following routes?**

A) Lucknow to Mathura

B) Delhi to Lucknow

C) Delhi to Chandigarh

D) Delhi to Dehradun

E) Delhi to Mumbai

**84) Who among the following has held a virtual**

**meeting with the Director General of UNESCO?**

A) Narendra Modi

B) Nitin Gadkari

C) Ramesh PokhriyalNishank

D) Prahlad Patel

E) Amit Shah

**85) More than 68 lakh 33 thousand beneficiaries have been benefited by maternity benefits in 2020 from which of the following schemes?**

A) NMCG

B) ABY

C) PMGKY

D) PMMVY

E) PM-KISAN

**86) Which of the following banks has honoured the WWII codebreaker Alan Turing on a new bank note?**

A) ICBC

B) Bank of England

C) HSBC

D) Barclays

E) Deutsche

**87) In which state was the 10 crore<sup>th</sup> Ayushman card handed over to a beneficiary?**

A) Madhya Pradesh

B) Chhattisgarh

- C) Punjab
- D) Haryana
- E) Bihar

**88) Chitra Nayak has been appointed as Independent Director of which company?**

- A) HP
- B) HCL
- C) Infosys
- D) Wipro
- E) IBM

**89) Who among the following has been appointed in TVS Motor board recently?**

- A) Maurice Wilks
- B) William Lyons
- C) Thierry Bollore
- D) Ralf Speth
- E) Karl Slym

**90) Who among the following has been honoured as 'EY Entrepreneur of the Year 2020'?**

- A) Anand Kapoor
- B) Harsh Mariwala
- C) Rajan Mathur
- D) Navneet Jaggi
- E) Sudhir Mishra

**91) Who among the following recently met the**

**Afghanistan President Ashraf Ghani to have a discussion on the Afghan peace process?**

- A) Nitin Gadkari
- B) Anurag Thakur
- C) S Jaishankar
- D) Amit Shah
- E) Narendra Modi

**92) India along with which country have agreed to the Strategic Energy Partnership?**

- A) Japan
- B) Israel
- C) US
- D) France
- E) Germany

**93) The Central government has gained multiple EoI for privatisation of which of the following company?**

- A) IOCL
- B) BPCL
- C) HPCL
- D) Neelachallspat Nigam
- E) Rashtriyalspat

**94) RBI has further extended limitations on PMC Bank for 3 months till which of the following date?**

- A) September 30
- B) August 30

- C) May 30
- D) July 31
- E) June 30

E) Narendra Modi

**95) Denis Sassou Nguesso has been re-elected as President of which country?**

- A) Somalia
- B) Congo
- C) Sudan
- D) Ethiopia
- E) Burundi

- A) 19th
- B) 18th
- C) 16th
- D) 15th
- E) 17th

**98) 2020 was the Best Year for Wind Industry as per the Report released by Global Wind Report 2021. This was the \_\_\_\_ annual flagship report.**

**96) Jal Jeevan Mission has achieved a new milestone with the tap water to over \_\_\_\_ crore rural households.**

- A) 7
- B) 8
- C) 6
- D) 4
- E) 5

**99) EAM recently attended the \_\_\_\_\_ Ministerial Conference of 'Heart of Asia – Istanbul Process on Afghanistan' in Tajikistan.**

- A) 7th
- B) 8th
- C) 11th
- D) 9th
- E) 10th

**97) Who among the following has launched a new version of 'Exam Warriors' ?**

- A) Nitin Gadkari
- B) Harsh Vardhan
- C) NS Tomar
- D) Amit Shah

**100) Who among the following has been appointed as Chairman Emeritus – appointed by FIDC?**

- A) Rajeshwar Pandey
- B) Naresh Singh
- C) UK Sinha
- D) Ratan Tata
- E) TT Srinivasaraghavan

## ANSWERS

### 1) Answer: C

The Zero Discrimination Day is held every year on 1 March.

Zero Discrimination Day is an annual day celebrated by the United Nations (UN) and other international organisations.

The day was first celebrated on March 1, 2014, and was launched by UNAIDS Executive Director Michel Sidibé on 27 February of that year with a major event in Beijing

The day aims to promote equality before the law and in practice throughout all of the member countries of the UN.

Theme of Zero Discrimination Day 2021: End Inequalities

### 2) Answer: D

Global money laundering watchdog the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) decided to keep Pakistan on its terrorism financing “grey list”.

FATF said Islamabad should demonstrate effective implementation of targeted financial sanctions against all 1267 and 1373 designated terrorists.

The FATF is an inter-governmental body set up in 1989 to combat money laundering, terror financing and other related threats to the international financial system.

Currently, it has 39 members. Pakistan has been on the grey list since June 2018.

### 3) Answer: E

The City Innovation Exchange (CiX) platform was launched by Shri Durga Shanker Mishra, Secretary, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs at an online event.

The platform will be a significant addition to the growing innovation ecosystem of India and focuses on fostering innovative practices in cities.

The City Innovation Exchange (CiX) will connect cities to innovators across the national ecosystem to design innovative solutions for their pressing challenges.

The platform will ease the discovery, design & validation of solutions through a robust, transparent and user centric process that will reduce barriers for innovators and cities to discover fitting solutions.

The Platform has more than 400 start-ups, 100 smart cities, more than 150 challenges statements and over 215 solutions at the time of launch.

### 4) Answer: B

Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation, Ministry of Jal Shakti has announced the selection of twelve iconic sites under Phase IV of Swachh Iconic Places.

These sites include Ajanta Caves in Maharashtra, Sanchi Stupa in Madhya Pradesh, Kumbhalgarh Fort, Jaisalmer Fort and Ramdevra in Rajasthan, Golconda Fort in Telangana and Konark Sun Temple in Odisha.

Chandigarh’s Rock Garden, Jammu and Kashmir’s Dal Lake, Banke Bihari Temple in Mathura, Agra Fort in



Uttar Pradesh and Kalighat Temple in West Bengal are the other sites.

The initiative aims at enhancing the experience of both domestic and foreign visitors by improving the sanitation and cleanliness standards at and around the sites.

**5) Answer: C**

Khadi and Village Industry Commission's e-Market Portal has registered a gross turnover of over one crore 10 lakh rupees in just eight months of its launch.

Minister for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Nitin Gadkari lauded Khadi's successful e-commerce venture.

This portal has provided a wide marketing platform for various Khadi and village industry products to a larger population.

Online orders have been received from all 31 States and Union Territories including the far-flung Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Arunachal Pradesh, Kerala, Himachal Pradesh and Jammu & Kashmir among others.

**6) Answer: D**

Union Minister of Science and Technology Dr. Harsh Vardhan highlighted how science technology and innovation (STI) would impact our future in education, skills and functioning in the post-pandemic world.

He was addressing the National Science Day (NSD) function through video-conferencing from Imphal, Manipur.

Awards to science communicators and women scientists were also conferred on the occasion.

National Science Day is celebrated to commemorate the discovery of Raman Effect on this day every year.

Dr Vardhan said that 30 percent increase in this year's budget of Ministry of Science and Technology and Earth Sciences put together for the year 2021-22 would provide stimulus to Science and Technology infrastructure resources in the country.

He said, in view of last year's challenges thrown by the COVID-19 pandemic, the theme of the National Science Day 2021, 'Future of STI: Impacts on Education, Skills, and Work,' becomes all the more important.

**7) Answer: C**

The 45th Civil Accounts Day was celebrated in New Delhi on March 01.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman was the Chief Guest of the event.

Comptroller and Auditor General G.C. Murmu, Expenditure Secretary Dr T. V. Somanathan and Controller General of Accounts Soma Roy Burman were present on the occasion among others.

This annual event was celebrated for the first time by virtual mode and was enthusiastically attended by Indian Civil Accounts Service ICAS officers and staff of the Civil Accounts Organization.

Ms Sitharaman expressed her appreciation for the service for keeping government expenditure going even during the most challenging time.

**8) Answer: D**

Union Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office Dr. Jitendra Singh inaugurated the first academic session of MBBS students at Government Medical College, Doda in Jammu division of Jammu and Kashmir for the 2020-21 batch.

Congratulating the students of the first batch of MBBS

starting at GMC, Doda, the Minister described it as a historic moment and welcomed development.

He thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Health Minister Dr. Harsh Vardhan for the initiative to set up world class health infrastructure in the Union Territory by building five new Medical colleges.

Dr. Singh said, Udhampur-Doda is the only parliamentary constituency in India which has three Government Medical Colleges.

**9) Answer: E**

Russia has successfully launched its first satellite to monitor the Arctic's climate and environment.

A Soyuz-2.1b carrier rocket with the "Arktika-M" satellite on board blasted off from the Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan

The creation of a satellite system in highly elliptical orbits is necessary for information collection to solve operational meteorology and hydrology problems, and monitoring the climate and environment in the Arctic region

The Arktika-M will provide round-the-clock continuous monitoring of the northern territory of Russia and the seas of the Arctic Ocean.

The satellite will be able to transmit overview images of the Earth's northern polar region and the adjacent areas at least every 15-30 minutes.

**10) Answer: C**

External Affairs Minister Dr S Jaishankar has congratulated Foreign Minister of Brazil Ernesto Araújo for successful launch of Amazonia-1 on ISRO's PSLVC51 Mission.

Dr Jaishankar said, India and Brazil will continue to work to further advance our space collaboration.

**11) Answer: C**

National Safety Day is observed on March 4 every year to commemorate the foundation of the National Safety Council.

Aim:

To raise awareness about safety measures that need to be undertaken to prevent accidents and mishaps.

The objective of the day is to renew the commitment of employees and the general public to work safely and ensure the integration of a safe and sound work culture and lifestyle.

This year's theme is 'Sadak Suraksha (Road Safety).'

National Safety Day was observed for the first time in 1972, on the foundation day of the National Safety Council.

**12) Answer: D**

Information and Broadcasting Minister Prakash Javadekar held a meeting with representatives of Over the Top, OTT industry and explained to them the provisions of the new OTT rules.

The Minister mentioned that the Government has done several rounds of consultation with the OTT players in the past and stressed the need for self-regulation.

Informing them about the provisions of the rules, Mr. Javadekar said, it merely requires them to disclose information and that there is no requirement of registration of any kind with the Ministry.

He added that a form for this will be ready soon.

It was highlighted that the rules focus on self classification of content instead of any form of

ensorship.

**13) Answer: E**

Government on 2nd March 2021 notified comprehensive amendments to the Insurance Ombudsman Rules, 2017, with a view to improve the working of the Insurance Ombudsman mechanism to facilitate resolution of complaints regarding deficiencies in insurance services in a timely, cost-effective and impartial manner.

About the amendments :

The Ombudsman mechanism was administered by the Executive Council of Insurers, which has now been renamed as the Council for Insurance Ombudsman

Earlier, the scope of complaints to the Ombudsman was limited to only disputes, but now it has been enlarged to include deficiencies in service on the part of insurers, agents, brokers and other intermediaries.

The amended rules have also enlarged the scope of complaints to the Ombudsman and insurance brokers have been brought within the ambit of the redressal mechanism.

To strengthen the timeliness and cost-effectiveness of the mechanism, policyholders will now be enabled for making complaints electronically to the Ombudsman.

The new rules notified through an official gazette also pave way for setting up a complaints management system to enable policyholders track the status of their complaints online.

Further, the Ombudsman may use video-conferencing for hearings.

**14) Answer: C**

The 'Made in India' optical spectrograph named as Aries-Devasthal Faint Object Spectrograph & Camera (ADFOSC) is indigenously designed and developed by Aryabhata Research Institute of observational sciences (ARIES), Nainital.

About the Spectrograph :

The spectrograph is presently being used by astronomers from India and abroad to study distant quasars and galaxies in a very young universe, regions around supermassive black-holes around the galaxies, cosmic explosions like supernovae and highly energetic Gamma-ray bursts, young and massive stars, and faint dwarf galaxies.

It is about 2.5 times less costly compared to the imported ones and can locate sources of light with a photon-rate as low as about 1 photon per second.

This low-cost optical spectrograph can locate sources of faint light from distant quasars and galaxies in a very young universe, regions around supermassive black-holes around the galaxies, and cosmic explosions. The total cost of this instrument is nearly Rs. 4 Crore.

The spectroscope, the largest of its kind among the existing astronomical spectrographs in the country, has been successfully commissioned on the 3.6-m Devasthal Optical Telescope (DOT), the largest in the country and in Asia, near Nainital, Uttarakhand.

**15) Answer: D**

On March 4 India is celebrated as National Security Day (Rashtriya Suraksha Diwas) every year, in the honor of the Indian Security Forces.

Aim :

To show gratitude to all the security forces, including policemen, paramilitary forces, commandos, guards, army officers, and other persons involved in security,

who sacrifice their life in maintaining the peace and security of the people of the country.

March 4 also marks the day when the National Security Council (NSC) of India was established, in 1966 by the Ministry of Labour under the Government of India.

The first National Security Day (NSD) was held in 1972.

**16) Answer: B**

Union Minister Nitin Gadkari announced that the Nag River Pollution Abatement Project has been approved at a cost of over Rs 2,117 crore.

The river which flows through Nagpur city thus giving its name to the city is now a highly polluted water channel of sewage and industrial waste.

It will reduce the pollution level in terms of untreated sewage, flowing solid waste and other impurities flowing into the Nag river and its tributaries.

The project approved under the National River Conservation Plan will be implemented by the National River Conservation Directorate.

**17) Answer: D**

Wipro has joined the World Economic Forum's (WEF) 'Partnering for Racial Justice in Business' initiative to promote a culture of diversity, inclusion, equity and justice for people of all racial backgrounds in the workplace.

The initiative is aimed towards driving action and accountability for companies to confront racism at a systemic level, set new global standards for racial justice in business and accomplish necessary policy changes for inclusion and advancement of professionals with under-represented racial and ethnic identities, said

the company in a press release.

**18) Answer: E**

The UN General Assembly adopted by consensus a resolution sponsored by India and supported by over 70 nations declaring 2023 as the International Year of Millets

It aimed at raising awareness about the health benefits of the grain and their suitability for cultivation under changing climatic conditions

The resolution titled 'International Year of Millets 2023' was initiated by India with Bangladesh, Kenya, Nepal, Nigeria, Russia and Senegal and was co-sponsored by over 70 nations.

The 193-member General Assembly unanimously adopted the resolution, declaring 2023 as the International Year of Millets.

In April 2016, the UN General Assembly had proclaimed the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition from 2016 to 2025, recognising the need to eradicate hunger and prevent all forms of malnutrition worldwide.

The Decade of Action on Nutrition provides an "umbrella for a wide group of actors to work together to address these and other pressing nutrition issues."

**19) Answer: C**

Newly formed Ladakh and Jammu and Kashmir Union Territories will have a separate cell in National Commission for Women (NCW).

The Commission's Chairperson Rekha Sharma said that by the end of this month, separate cells for the new UTs will be created.

Four days ahead of International Women's Day, Ladakh

became the launching pad for the first-ever online training programme Empowering Women through Entrepreneurship.

In collaboration with IIM, Bangalore and India SME Forum, the Commission is providing online training to five thousand women entrepreneurs from across the country.

Chairperson Rekha Sharma said that NCW chose Ladakh for the occasion, to involve the women in the journey of development.

**20) Answer: B**

Karnataka Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa has tweeted that Bengaluru has emerged as the most livable city in India in the Ease of living Survey conducted by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.

He has said that the Bengaluru model of development of citizen centric initiatives and delivery of services have ensured this top ranking.

**21) Answer: C**

India commemorated the 'Chabahar Day' on March 04, 2021 on the sidelines of the Maritime India Summit-2021 which was held from March 2-4, 2021.

The event was held virtually. Ministers from Afghanistan, Armenia, Iran, Kazakhstan, Russia and Uzbekistan participated in the event.

It is the only Iranian port with direct access to the Indian Ocean and the agreement was signed between India and Iran in 2018 for its development.

**22) Answer: D**

The Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) has kept the interest rates unchanged on provident fund

deposits at 8.5 per cent for financial year 2020-21.

This rate, the same as last year's, is the lowest offered by EPFO in eight years.

There were speculations that the EPFO would lower interest on provident fund deposits for this fiscal (2020-21) from 8.5 per cent given in 2019-20, owing to the coronavirus-induced slowdown through 2020.

The retirement fund body has more than 50 million active subscribers

The decision was taken at the Central Board of Trustees (CBT) meeting, which is the main decision-making body of EPFO.

The interest rate would be officially notified in the government gazette following which EPFO would credit the rate of interest into the subscribers' accounts

**23) Answer: E**

Dr Harsh Vardhan encouraged scientists of CSIR laboratories across the country to develop the land available at each laboratory to be set up as a model under the "CSIR Floriculture Mission".

CSIR Floriculture Mission has been approved for implementation in 21 States and Union Territories of India wherein available knowledge base in CSIR Institutes will be utilized and leveraged to help Indian farmers and industry reposition itself to meet the import requirements.

The CSIR Floriculture Mission is expected to create opportunities for entrepreneurship development in floriculture. Infusion of the latest technologies in the field of floriculture can be successfully led by CSIR.

The mission will focus on commercial floral crops, seasonal/annual crops, wild ornaments and cultivation of flower crops for honey bee rearing. Some of the popular crops include Gladiolus, Canna, Carnation,

Chrysanthemum, Gerbera, Liliium, Marigold, Rose, Tuberose etc.

This Mission is being implemented in collaboration with Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR)- Directorate of Floriculture, Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC), Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA), Ministry of Commerce, Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India Ltd. (TRIFED), Fragrance and Flavour Development Centre (FFDC), Kannauj, Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) and Universities.

The Portal is to facilitate the public to submit the societal problems that can be resolved using S&T interventions.

**24) Answer: C**

Australian conservationists unveiled plans to build the world's first refuge for the platypus, to promote breeding and rehabilitation as the duck-billed mammal faces extinction due to climate change.

The Taronga Conservation Society Australia and the New South Wales State government said they would build the specialist facility, mostly ponds and burrows for the semi aquatic creatures, at a zoo 391 km (243 miles) from Sydney, by 2022, which could house up to 65 platypuses.

The new facility will promote breeding and rehabilitation of these iconic creatures, which are native to Australia.

**25) Answer: D**

The Government has constituted a National Committee headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to commemorate 75 years of India's Independence.

The committee has 259 members and includes dignitaries and eminent citizens from all walks of life.

It will provide policy direction and guidelines for formulation of programs for the commemoration of 75th anniversary of Indian Independence, at the national and international levels.

The 75 years of India's Independence falls on 15th August next year and celebrations are proposed to be launched 75 weeks prior to this date on 12th March this year.

12th March is the 91st anniversary of the historic Salt Satyagraha led by Mahatma Gandhi.

The Committee will hold its first meeting to discuss modalities relating to preparatory activities.

The Government intends to commemorate 75 years of India's Independence in a befitting manner at national and international level in the form of 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav'.

New Delhi World Book Fair 2021 inaugurated by Education Minister

**26) Answer: B**

Union Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank appreciated that 'National Education Policy-2020' is the theme of the book fair.

The Minister said it has emerged as the world's biggest reform.

He said, National Education Policy will develop India not only as the Knowledge hub but will also help in making learners ideal and global citizens.

The Minister congratulated National Book Trust and its entire team for holding the Virtual Edition of Book Fair.

**27) Answer: E**

Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal and Odisha are the best performing Indian states in land record digitisation, according to an annual land records index prepared by Delhi-based think-tank National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER).

The NCAER's Land Records and Services Index (NLRSI) 2020-21 released Thursday said nearly all states and union territories 29 out of 32 showed a gradual improvement in their efforts to digitise land records compared to the previous year.

The data was primarily collected on two aspects: the extent of digitisation of land records and the quality of these records.

Out of the 32 states and UTs ranked, only Assam and Lakshadweep Islands saw a decline in points from last year.

As a result, the mean N-LRSI score across the 32 states and UTs has shown an increase of 16.6 per cent in 2020-21, from 38.7 in 2019-20 to 45.1 in 2020-21 (out of the maximum score of 100 points).

**28) Answer: C**

A new cultural centre of the High Commission of India was inaugurated by the External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar in Dhaka.

It is the second cultural centre of the High Commission of India after the Dhanmondi centre at the Indira Gandhi Cultural Centre in Dhaka.

The new cultural centre has facilities for conducting short term courses on Indian art forms and holding cultural programmes and art-exhibitions.

Inaugurating the cultural centre at the old India House Building Dr. Jaishankar said that the new centre will act as a centre of energy for the unique relations between

India and Bangladesh.

He said that the shared cultural heritage of the two countries is the strength of their partnership.

Commending the opening of the second cultural centre, Dr. Jaishankar said that Dhaka is among the few cities in the world that hosts more than one Indian cultural centre.

**29) Answer: B**

The Food Waste Index Report 2021, from the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and partner organisation WRAP, said that around 931 million tonnes of food waste was generated in 2019, sixty-one per cent of which came from households, 26 per cent from food service and 13 per cent from retail.

This suggests that 17 per cent of total global food production may be wasted.

In India, the household food waste estimate is 50 kg per capita per year, or 68,760,163 tonnes a year.

Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target 12.3 aims at halving per-capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels and reducing food losses along production and supply chains. One of the two indicators for the target is the Food Waste Index.

**30) Answer: C**

Anil Ambani-led Reliance Power has formed a joint venture with Japan-headquartered Jera Co. Inc to develop a new gas-fired power generation project in Bangladesh.

The company has achieved financial closure for the project with a group of lenders including Japan Bank for International Cooperation and Asian Development Bank and all requisite conditions for availing drawdown

under the loan agreements have been achieved.

The project is to build, own, and operate a 745-MW (net output: 718 MW) natural gas combined-cycle power project in Meghnaghat near Dhaka.

Reliance Power's wholly-owned subsidiary Samalkot Power has received the approval from the Export Import Bank of the United States to sell one module of equipment to EPC contractor of the project Samsung C&T Corporation of South Korea for 1,540 crore.

**31) Answer: C**

Maharashtra government will be holding various programmes related to Azadi ka Amrut Mahotsav.

Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray will flag-off Freedom Heritage walk from August Kranti Maidan in Mumbai.

Freedom fighters will also be felicitated in the programme.

The Uttar Pradesh government is holding a series of events and activities as a part of the 'Azadi Ka Amrut Mahotsav' to mark the beginning of nationwide celebrations of the 75th anniversary of India's independence.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath will take part in an event at Kakori Shaheed Smarak in Lucknow while Governor Anandi Ben Patel will be present in Ballia.

In Madhya Pradesh, Azadi ka Amrut Mahotsav to mark 75 years of India's Independence is being launched in a grand manner.

**32) Answer: D**

IT and Communication Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said Apple's plan to produce I-phone 12 Smartphones in India will create jobs in large numbers.

Appreciating the plan, Mr Prasad said the government's

effort to make India a big hub of mobile and its components manufacturing is attracting global attention.

Apple said that it is going to start I-phone 12 in India.

The tech giant, which started manufacturing I-phones in India in 2017, has been shifting some of its productions from China to India.

According to experts, shifting some of the production to India is not only in the interest of Apple, but also the Indian economy.

**33) Answer: E**

Union Minister for Labour and Employment Santosh Kumar Gangwar launched the convergence of ESI Scheme with Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana, PM-JAY in 113 districts of Chhatisgarh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra.

It was launched on the culmination day of Employees' State Insurance Corporation, ESIC, and Special Services Fortnight at New Delhi.

The convergence will ensure that 1.35 crore ESI beneficiaries in such districts avail cashless medical services through empanelled hospitals of Ayushman Bharat PM-JAY without any need of referral.

To avail medical care, the Insured Worker or the beneficiary need to carry an ESIC e-pehchan card or Health Passbook and Aadhar Card with them.

The list of districts and empaneled hospitals are available at [www.esic.nic.in/ab-pm-jay](http://www.esic.nic.in/ab-pm-jay).

**34) Answer: D**

Government has dismissed a claim made on social media that from 1st of next month, Post offices will



charge Rs. 25 on every cash withdrawal from its account.

The Press Information Bureau has termed the claim as fake.

It clarified that India Post has not announced any such charge on the withdrawal of money by account holders.

**35) Answer: C**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will launch the Kindle version of Swami Chidbhavanandaji's Bhagavad Gita and also address the occasion through virtual mode.

The event has been organised to commemorate the sale of over five lakh copies of the Swami Chidbhavanandaji's Bhagavad Gita.

Swami Chidbhavanandaji is the founder of Sri Ramakrishna Tapovanam Ashram at Thirupparaithurai, Tiruchirapalli in Tamil Nadu.

Swamiji has authored 186 books and all genres of literary composition.

His scholarly work on the Gita is one of the most extensive books on the subject.

Tamil version of the Gita with his commentaries was published in 1951 followed by the English in 1965.

Its translations into Telugu, Odia, German and Japanese were undertaken by devotees.

**36) Answer: C**

In Russia, the media regulator, Roskomnadzor, announced that it was slowing down online access to the social media giant Twitter, accusing the social media company of failing to remove around three thousands posts relating to objectionable content.

The communications watchdog said, if Twitter does not comply with Russian law, there will be further actions against the service, including a complete ban.

The Roskomnadzor said that this first measure to slow down Twitter's service in Russia would affect all mobile devices and half of non-mobile devices.

The statement indicated that Roskomnadzor had made over 28,000 complaints to twitter since 2017, including repeated requests to remove illegal links and publications.

**37) Answer: E**

The Jammu and Kashmir Administrative Council under the chairmanship of Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha has approved the implementation of high-density plantation scheme in the horticulture sector with the support of National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Ltd (NAFED).

The step will go a long way in enhancing the quality and quantity of horticulture produce and doubling the farmer's income.

The farmer-centric scheme will be implemented for apple, walnut, almond, cherry, litchi, and olive among others over an estimated area of 5500 hectares of suitable agro-climatic zones for 6 years with effect from March 2021 to March 2026.

**38) Answer: C**

The Portals of Shri Kedarnath Dham temple will open on May 17 this year.

Shri Kedar Nath moving Deity will depart from Omkareshwar Temple Ukhimath to Kedarnath Dham on 14 May.

On the auspicious occasion of MahaShivratri, after the

PANCHANG calculation, the date for opening of the portals of Kedar Nath temple was decided at Sri Omkareshwar Temple in Ukhimath.

**39) Answer: D**

In Uttarakhand, Tirath Singh Rawat was sworn-in as the new chief minister.

He was administered the oath of office by Uttarakhand Governor Baby Rani Maurya at Raj Bhawan in Dehradun.

Senior BJP leaders, Central observer and former Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Dr. Raman Singh along with state BJP in-charge Dushyant Kumar were present on this occasion.

Dr. Raman Singh told the media that the name of the cabinet ministers will be announced soon.

Mr. Tirath Singh Rawat, Lok Sabha MP from Garhwal and former state BJP chief is the 10th Chief Minister of the Uttarakhand.

His name was announced by the outgoing chief minister Trivendra Singh Rawat after the legislature party meeting, which lasted around 30 minutes.

Meanwhile, Haryana's BJP-JJP government won the trust vote in the house of state Assembly.

The 55 votes were polled against the No Confidence Motion while 32 votes were polled in favour of motion.

**40) Answer: B**

The Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority launched its first virtual trade fair to boost export of agricultural and processed food products.

The fair will conclude Mar 12.

In the fair, basmati rice, non-basmati rice, millets, wheat, maize, groundnut and coarse grains have been displayed.

266 Indian and international buyers from various countries have registered for the virtual fair.

**41) Answer: C**

The International Day of Mathematics is 14 March.

It is also known as the Pi Day, because the mathematical constant  $\pi$  can be rounded up to 3.14.

UNESCO's 40th General Conference decided Pi Day as the International Day of Mathematics in November 2019.

This year, the theme of the International Day of Mathematics is "Mathematics for a Better World".

On the occasion of International Day of Mathematics 2021, Audrey Azoulay, Director-General of UNESCO in an official statement said, "Mathematics, with its many technical applications, now underpins all areas of our lives.

**42) Answer: D**

Union Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank has announced linking of Online Teacher Pupil Registration Management System, OTPRMS certificates with DigiLocker.

This has been done in order to ensure hassle free access to verified OTPRMS Certificates.

The issued certificates will automatically be transferred to DigiLocker and the same may be traced at the website of National Council for Teacher Education and DigiLocker.

The Minister also informed that the registration fee of 200 rupees payable for obtaining OTPRMS Certificates,

issued by NCTE has been waived off.

This will enable all stakeholders across India to be digitally empowered facilitating ease of doing business.

**43) Answer: E**

World Consumer Rights Day is observed on March 15. Consumers International is the membership organization for consumer groups around the world.

The World Consumer Rights Day 2021 theme is to gather all the consumers in a fight to “Tackle Plastic Pollution”.

Founded on 1 April 1960, it has over 250 member organizations in 120 countries.

Its head office is based in London, England, with regional offices in Latin America, Asia Pacific, Middle East and Africa.

**44) Answer: C**

The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has announced a new scheme for tourist vehicle operators.

Any tourist vehicle operator may apply for an All India tourist authorization and permit through online mode.

It will be issued, after relevant documents are submitted and fees deposited, within 30 days of submission of such applications.

About the new scheme:

The new set of rules, to be known as, All India Tourist Vehicles Authorization and Permit Rules, 2021, will be applicable from 1st April this year.

All existing permits shall continue to be in force during their validity.

The new rules for permits are expected to go a long way

in promoting tourism across the states.

It will also consolidate a central database and fees of all such authorization which might give a sense of tourist movements, scope for improvement and promotion of tourism.

**45) Answer: B**

A country wide Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat campaign, which highlights the age-old tradition of our country – unity in diversity.

The campaign portrays the very common principle of cultural harmony of the people though we are living in different geographical areas with diversity of language, food, custom and costumes.

Exchange of different languages, food habits, and similarly paying respect to others’ culture, music, dances and customs are in fact the mantra of Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat.

Under this Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat campaign, each state is paired with another state and highlights the milieu of mutual exchange of cultures.

Mizoram is paired with Bihar on Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat campaign.

Mizoram is endowed with serene landscape and rich natural resources.

Many people from other states frequently visit Mizoram for occupational and travel purposes.

Many of them talk about the culture, peaceful behaviour and law-abiding nature of the Mizo people.

Also, many Mizo people who have visited Bihar still remember their good experiences.

Recalling the ethos of culture, customs and heritage of Bihar, many people of Mizoram observed that Bihari

people are very cooperative and they live a simple life.

According to them, Bihar is a mix of Hindu, Islam, Buddha, Jain and Christians.

A Sizable population belongs to tribal communities.

Terming the Holi in Bihar as very joyous, they also found that Chhath festival is indigenous to people of Bihar.

**46) Answer: D**

Information and Broadcasting Minister, Prakash Javadekar inaugurated the exhibition to commemorate 75 years of India's Independence, Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav at six places in the country virtually.

The six places where Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav exhibitions were inaugurated are Jammu, Imphal, Patna, Bhubaneshwar, Pune and Bengaluru.

About Exhibition:

Mr. Javadekar said, Independence was achieved after a lot of sacrifices by the freedom fighters.

He said through exhibition people will come to know about the freedom struggle.

He also said that the basis of the objective to celebrate Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav by the Prime Minister is to connect people and make them aware of the freedom struggle.

Secretary Information and Broadcasting, Mr. Amit Khare, Principal Director General of Bureau of Outreach, Mr. Satyendra Prakash, and Principal Director General of PIB, Mr. Jaideep Bhatnagar and other senior officials were present on the occasion.

**47) Answer: E**

India's first centralised air-conditioned (AC) railway terminal has been built at Baiyappanahalli in Bengaluru.

Named after 'Bharat Ratna Sir M Visvesvaraya' one of the foremost civil engineers, the AC railway terminal is set to become operational soon.

It has been built at an estimated cost of Rs 314 crore.

The Byappanahalli terminal is the third coach terminal named after Bharat Ratna Sir M Visvesvaraya, sanctioned in 2015-16.

**48) Answer: C**

The world's most powerful supercomputer named "Fugaku", developed by Japanese scientific research institute RIKEN and Fujitsu, has been made available for research work.

The development of the machine was started about six years ago in 2014 and was completed in May 2020.

74 research projects have already been selected by Japan's Research Organization for Information Science and Technology (RIST) and will be implemented from April 2021.

About "Fugaku" supercomputer:

Fugaku will help the Japanese government to achieve its vision to establish an ultra-smart Society 5.0, where all people live safe and comfortable lives.

Fugaku computer has 100 times the application performance of K supercomputer and is developed to implement high-resolution, long-duration and large-scale simulations.

A portion of Fugaku's research is said to be dedicated to COVID-19 related projects.

**49) Answer: B**

Jammu and Kashmir government has approved a proposal to provide interest-free loan up to 2 lakh rupees to the urban homeless economically weaker

section beneficiaries under Beneficiary Led Construction (BLC) component of the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Urban (PMAY-U).

J&K Administrative Council, which met under the chairmanship of Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, approved the proposal of the Housing and Urban Development Department.

The beneficiaries under the BLC component of PMAY-U have experienced the difficulty in mobilising their contribution as they come from economically weaker sections.

As a result of which the construction of dwelling units under this component of PMAY-U could not achieve the desired targets.

The beneficiaries of this component have demanded enhancement of assistance in their favour so that they can complete their houses within the targeted date of the mission.

About The scheme PMAY-U:

Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana is an initiative by the Government of India in which affordable housing will be provided to the urban poor with a target of building 20 million affordable houses by 31 March 2022.

Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana – Urban (PMAY-U), a flagship Mission of Government of India being implemented by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA), was launched on 25th June 2015.

The Mission addresses urban housing shortage among the EWS/LIG and MIG categories including the slum dwellers by ensuring a pucca house to all eligible urban households by the year 2022, when Nation completes 75 years of its Independence.

**50) Answer: C**

The coronavirus cases in Maharashtra including

Mumbai have been witnessing a sharp spike since last few days.

In order to make the testing convenient for citizens, the Covid Tracker helpline is enabling Mumbaikars to do Covid testing at home without going to the hospital.

‘Covid Tracker’ helpline has been launched for the citizens of Mumbai.

About the helpline:

Through this helpline, citizens are being provided guidance on Covid -19 and various tests are being made available at home.

Citizens are getting advice from expert doctors by contacting the helpline.

Further tests, medications and treatments are also being provided at the patient’s home if required.

Critically ill patients are being assisted through government agencies for further treatment.

All these facilities are being provided at government rates and as per the standards of the World Health Organization.

This initiative by the Udan Foundation is expected to reduce the stress on the government medical system to some extent.

**51) Answer: C**

Union Minister of Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari will make a statement regarding ‘Vehicles Scrapping Policy’ in both the Houses of Parliament.

Besides it, in business of the Lok Sabha, Appropriation Bill, 2021, Discussion and Voting on Demands for Grants in respect of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir for 2021-22 and Demands for Grants on Account in respect of the Union Territory of Puducherry for 2021-22 and the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order

(Amendment)

Bill, 2021 are listed.

In the business schedule of Rajya Sabha, the Insurance (Amendment) Bill, 2021 and Discussion on the working of Ministry of Tourism and Ministry of Food Processing Industries are listed.

Vehicle scrappage policy in India:

The vehicle scrappage policy has been devised to promote sales of new vehicles with improved fuel efficiency and low pollution levels, as well as to slash India's Rs 10 lakh crore expenditure on crude imports.

Around 1 crore aging vehicles are set to be scrapped once the policy is implemented, according to Gadkari.

**52) Answer: D**

Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla met Italian Ambassador Vincenzo De Luca and welcomed Italy's accession to International Solar Alliance.

They also discussed Italy's G20 Presidency and Vaccine Maitri.

About International Solar Alliance:

The International Solar Alliance is an alliance of 121 countries initiated by India, most of them being sunshine countries, which lie either completely or partly between the Tropic of Cancer and the Tropic of Capricorn.

Purpose of ISA:

The goal of the ISA is to set the ground rules, norms and standards for solar energy, in order to obtain a rapid and massive deployment in countries that are rich in solar resources but where the risks are still seen as high.

**53) Answer: E**

The Union cabinet gave its nod to shut down loss-making Handicrafts and Handlooms Export Corp. of India Ltd (HHEC), and to offer voluntary retirement to all its 65 employees. The corporation has been continuously incurring losses since 2015-16 and not earning sufficient income to meet its running expenses.

About Handicrafts and Handlooms Export Corporation:

Handicrafts and Handlooms Export Corporation of India is an agency of the Ministry of Textiles, Government of India established in 1958 with main objectives to undertake exports of handicrafts, handlooms products, khadi and products of village industries from India and to undertake special promotional measures.

On the 17th of March 2021, the Government of India approved the closure of Handicrafts and Handlooms Export Corporation of India.

**54) Answer: D**

Italy signed the International Solar Alliance under the amended ISA Framework Agreement.

The amendments to the Framework Agreement of the ISA entered into force, opening its Membership to all Member States of the UN.

The External Affairs Ministry said the Framework Agreement was signed by Italy's Ambassador, Vincenzo De Luca.

The signed copies of the Agreement were received by Additional Secretary (ER), as the representative of External Affairs Ministry, which is the depositary of ISA Framework Agreement.

"The Italian Republic signed the framework agreement of the International Solar Alliance (ISA) after the amendments to the framework agreement of the ISA entered into force on 8 January 2021, opening its membership to all member states of the UN," said by

Srivastava.

**55) Answer: C**

The Secretary-level meeting between Water Resources ministries of India and Bangladesh under the framework of the Joint Rivers Commission was held in Delhi.

According to a press release issued by the High Commission of India, both sides noted that India and Bangladesh share 54 common rivers which directly impact the livelihood of people of two countries.

Both sides commended the close cooperation that exists between India and Bangladesh in the matter.

India and Bangladesh agreed to expand cooperation across an entire gamut of water resources issues including framework for sharing of river waters, mitigation of pollution, river bank protection, flood management and basin management among others.

A Joint Technical Working Group will provide inputs on the matter, said the press release.

The Indian delegation was led by Water Resources Secretary Pankaj Kumar while the Bangladesh delegation was led by Kabir Bin Anwar, Senior Secretary, Ministry of Water Resources.

Both sides agreed to schedule the next meeting at Secretary level under JRC framework at Dhaka at mutually convenient dates.

**56) Answer: E**

Foreign Affairs Minister of Kuwait Dr. Ahmed Nasser Al-Mohammed Al-Sabah arrived in New Delhi for a two-day visit to India.

He will meet External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar.

**57) Answer: C**

In the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha, initiated the project "Awaam Ki Baat" – a Radio program by launching its website at Raj Bhavan, Jammu.

The half-an-hour long Radio program to be aired every third Sunday of the month (to start from April), is one of the many sequential steps of broader program aimed at disseminating the progressive steps taken by the government and providing the public with a platform to speak, write and interact with the administration, thereby voicing their suggestions, ideas and creative proposals.

**58) Answer: D**

Giving a fillip to the Indo-Bangla friendship, the Maitri Cycle Rally, organised by BSF, completed its journey and reached its last stop at Silkore border outpost in Mizoram.

Director-General of BSF Rakesh Asthana extended greetings to the people of Bangladesh on the occasion of the 101th birth anniversary of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

He wished that India and Bangladesh maintain their peaceful relations in the coming days too.

A delegation of Border Guard Bangladesh was also present there to mark the program.

During the over two months cycle rally, 12 BSF riders toured bordering areas of West Bengal, Assam, Tripura, Manipur, Meghalaya and Mizoram.

The rally was started from PanitarBoP in 24 North Pargana of West Bengal on 10th of January.

Maitri Cycle Rally is also a mark of paying tribute to the birth anniversary of the Father of Bangladesh, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

The rally is also aimed at enhancing the friendship between BSF and BGB.

The rally is hoped to bolster the better management of the Indo-Bangla borders, supplement mutual cooperation, coordination and spirit of true friendship.

**59) Answer: B**

In Haryana, Government College for Women at Salaheri in Nuh district has been renamed as Shaheed Lieutenant Kiran Shekhawat Government College for Women, Salaheri.

This was informed by Haryana Education Minister, Kanwar Pal during the Question Hour during the Budget session of the Vidhan Sabha.

He further added that Yasin Meo Degree College in Nuh has 1,108 students.

**60) Answer: E**

DoodhDuronto special trains have transported seven crore litres of Milk to National Capital, New Delhi in the current financial year 2020-21, which is the highest ever transportation since its commencement.

Transportation of Milk from Renigunta of Andhra Pradesh was started in the year 2011-12 and initially Milk Tankers were attached to Regular Superfast trains to serve the purpose.

Since then, transportation of Milk has been done on a regular basis, transporting around 2 to 3 crore litres in every financial year.

There has been an increase in demand as the years passed by and in the year 2019-20, 4.4 crore litres were transported.

But in the month of April 2020, due to Covid lockdown, when all passenger trains came to a halt, Milk

transportation was a challenging task to the Zone.

**61) Answer: C**

The International Day of Forests was established on the 21st day of March, by resolution of the United Nations General Assembly on November 28, 2012.

The theme for 2021 is "Forest restoration: a path to recovery and well-being".

This year's theme aims to emphasize how restoration and sustainable management of forests can help address climate change and biodiversity crisis.

According to the official UN website, the Day celebrates and raises awareness of the importance of all types of forests.

On this day, countries are encouraged to undertake local, national and international efforts to organize activities involving forests and trees, such as tree-planting campaigns

**62) Answer: D**

Union Environment and Information & Broadcasting Minister Prakash Javadekar has said that the new Nagar Van Scheme will help in creation of Urban forests in the cities.

Mr. Javadekar noted, the scheme will also fill the gap between the cities and villages in terms of having their own forest cover.

He cited India's age old tradition of developing and caring for village forests in the vicinity of almost every rural patch.

Under the Nagar Van Scheme, Urban forests will be developed in 200 cities in its first phase.

The United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 21st March as the International Day of Forests in 2012.



The Day celebrates and raises awareness of the importance of all types of forests.

**63) Answer: B**

Union Minister of Health & Family Welfare, Science & technology Dr. Harsh Vardhan inaugurated the new Advanced High Resolution Microscopy Facility at National Agri-Food Biotechnology Institute (NABI) and Unveiled the 4 Star GRIHA Certification of Center of Innovative and Applied Bioprocessing (CIAB) Lab and Admin Building at Mohali in Punjab.

Both NABI & CIAB are autonomous institutes under Dept. of Biotechnology, Ministry of Science & Technology.

Following the gathering Dr. Harsh Vardhan urged both the institutes to address the problems of hunger & malnutrition and to bring nutritional revolution in the country.

Minister emphasized that with government impetus on doubling the farmer's income by 2022-23, NABI and CIAB's roles are crucial to achieve this ambitious goal.

**64) Answer: C**

The International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination is observed annually on 21 March to remind people about the negative consequences of racial discrimination.

2021 Theme: "Youth standing up against racism".

The United Nations General Assembly called for the day in 1966 to encourage people to remember their obligation and determination to combat racial discrimination.

On that day, in 1960, police opened fire and killed 69 people at a peaceful demonstration in Sharpeville, South Africa, against the apartheid pass laws.

**65) Answer: E**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will virtually launch Jal Shakti Abhiyan : Catch the Rain campaign on the occasion of World Water Day.

The theme of the campaign is 'Catch the rain, where it falls, when it falls'.

In the presence of the Prime Minister, the signing of the historic Memorandum of Agreement between the Minister of Jal Shakti and the Chief Ministers of Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh to implement the Ken Betwa Link Project will also take place.

This is the first project of the National Perspective Plan for interlinking of rivers.

This project involves transfer of water from the Ken to the Betwa River through the construction of Daudhan Dam and a canal linking the two rivers.

It will provide annual irrigation of 10.62 lakh hectare, drinking water supply to about 62 lakh people and also generate 103 MegaWatt of hydropower.

The Project will be of immense benefit to the water starved region of Bundelkhand, especially to the districts of Panna, Tikamgarh, Chhatarpur, Sagar, Damoh, Datia, Vidisha, Shivpuri and Raisen of Madhya Pradesh and Banda, Mahoba, Jhansi and Lalitpur of Uttar Pradesh.

**66) Answer: D**

World Poetry Day is celebrated on 21 March, and was declared by UNESCO in 1999, "with the aim of supporting linguistic diversity through poetic expression and increasing the opportunity for endangered languages to be heard".

If you want to celebrate World Poetry Day, all you can do is either read poems of well-known poets or simply

attempt to write one.

World Poetry Day 2021: Poetry has its own way of expressing deep emotions with ease, and it must not be wrong to say that a world without poetry will be hard to survive

**67) Answer: C**

Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal inaugurated and dedicated various development projects worth Rs. 1411 crore to the people of the State through video conference from Chandigarh.

CM in a state level virtual programme inaugurated and laid foundation stones of as many as 163 projects pertaining to Education, Health, Sports, Roads, Water, Power etc. in 22 districts.

This includes inauguration of 80 projects worth Rs. 475 crore and laying foundation stones of 83 projects worth Rs. 935 crore.

**68) Answer: B**

The Road, Transport and Highways Ministry has received reports from Indian Computer Emergency Response Team – CERT-In regarding targeted intrusion activities directed towards Indian Transport sector with possible malicious intentions.

The Ministry has advised departments and organizations under the transport sector to strengthen the security posture of their infrastructure.

It said, National Informatics Centre (NIC), National Highways Authority of India, NHIDCL, State PWDs, Testing agencies and Automobile manufacturers have been requested to conduct the security audit of the entire IT system by CERT-In certified agencies on a regular basis and take all actions as per their recommendations.

It also said the audit report and the Action Taken Report to be regularly submitted to the Ministry.

**69) Answer: E**

World Water Day is an annual UN observance day that highlights the importance of freshwater.

The day is used to advocate for the sustainable management of freshwater resources.

The theme of World Water Day 2021 is “Valuing Water” and has been chosen to highlight the value of water in our daily lives.

To create awareness regarding the importance of water, the United Nations declared March 22 as World Water Day.

So whatever water is left for consumption should be valued.

Lack of conservation and misuse of water is putting a great strain on the supply of freshwater.

**70) Answer: E**

India participated in the Nowruz festivities at the SCO Secretariat in Beijing.

As SCO is celebrating 2021 as ‘Year of Culture’, India showcased performances of Kathak, Yoga, Indian cuisine, artefacts to an audience of more than 500.

Eighteen countries including all the member countries, dialogue partners and observer countries presented their cultural diversities including their cuisine.

Ambassador Vikram Misri extended warmest greetings on the occasion and conveyed that Nowruz is an important part of India’s own cultural tapestry and a reflection of diversity, richness and plurality of Indian culture.

Ambassador also planted a Pine tree sapling on the occasion and said that it symbolizes the nurturing of friendship between India and SCO and the message 'VasudhaivaKutumbakam'.

A friendship pavilion was also inaugurated at the SCO Secretariat as the atmosphere was full of festivities amid the tunes of local musical instruments.

Indian pavilion set up by India Tourism Office, Beijing was the centre of attraction for many as it showcased its cultural diversity, cuisine and heritage.

A demonstration of Yoga was also held.

**71) Answer: C**

Parliament has passed the Finance Bill, 2021 with the Rajya Sabha returning it to Lok Sabha.

With this, Parliament has completed all the budgetary exercise.

For tax exemption raised on interest earned on PF contribution from 2.5 lakh to 5 lakh rupees per annum

Replying to a discussion on the Finance Bill, 2021, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said the NDA rule has provided corruption free governance and brought Indian economy out of policy paralysis and fragile five.

She alleged that the economy was mismanaged under UPA rule and the Narendra Modi government had got a legacy of high inflation which has been checked.

Mrs Sitharaman also said NPA has brought down to around 8 lakh 99 thousand crore rupees by March 2020.

Talking about GST, the Minister said GST compensation due to states prior to COVID has all been paid.

She informed that 30 thousand crore rupees of GST compensation will be released to states this month.

She also elaborated several measures taken to provide relief to the common man during the COVI-19

pandemic.

When the Finance Minister alleged that the West Bengal government has deprived farmers of benefits under the central government's PM Kisan Samman Nidhi scheme, the House witnessed heated arguments between the treasury bench and TMC members.

**72) Answer: E**

The visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Bangladesh starting on 26 March will be of very special significance in reinforcing the comprehensive strategic partnership between the two countries.

Briefing media ahead of the official state visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Bangladesh Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla said that Prime Minister's first visit to a foreign country after the Covid 19 pandemic signifies the importance India attaches to its ties with Bangladesh.

During his visit to Bangladesh Prime Minister Modi will join the national day celebration of Bangladesh on 26th March and deliver an address at the National Parade ground in Dhaka.

He will also hold delegation level talks and restricted talks with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina of Bangladesh.

Prime Minister Modi will pay homage at the National Martyr's memorial at Savar just outside Dhaka.

He will also jointly inaugurate the Bangabandhu- Babu exhibition with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina of Bangladesh.

**73) Answer: B**

The Union Minister of State (I/C) for Power & New and Renewable Energy, RK Singh, launched the GRAM UJALA programme in Varanasi of Uttar Pradesh.

Under this program Convergence Energy Services

Limited, CESL, a wholly owned subsidiary of Energy Efficiency Services Limited -EESL, will distribute high quality LED bulbs, at an affordable cost in rural areas.

Under the scheme One crore 50 lakh LED bulbs will be distributed in phase 1 resulting in energy savings of 2025 million KWh/year and CO2 reductions of 1.65 million T CO2/year.

He said, the scheme has crossed 6,150 distribution mark in Arrah, Bihar within 2 days of launch of scheme.

The Power Minister said that India is leading in energy transition as well as energy efficiency.

This scheme is designed specifically for rural homes keeping affordability in mind and it will also result in energy savings as a 12 Watt LED bulb gives equivalent light as a 100 watt incandescent bulb.

#### **74) Answer: D**

In the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, Asia's largest Tulip Garden in Srinagar is scheduled to be opened for the general public and tourists.

The Tulip Garden in Srinagar is a spectrum of colours featuring lakhs of tulips which have blossomed in the lap of Zabarwan Hills along the banks of world famous Dal Lake in Srinagar city.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his tweet has urged the people to visit Jammu and Kashmir and enjoy the scenic Tulip Garden Festival in Srinagar where 15 lakh flowers of more than 64 varieties are in full bloom nowadays.

Mr Modi has also not missed to convey the hospitality of the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

#### **75) Answer: E**

Ladakh Lieutenant Governor R K Mathur has inaugurated the first Solar Lift Irrigation Scheme of

Kargil Renewable Energy Development Agency (KREDA) at Latoo Village.

This is the last Village on the LOC.

The project is inspired by the Vision of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi for solarising Ladakh as a model region by making it fully solarised and Carbon Neutral.

The agency has successfully installed and Commissioned a 41 Hp Submersible Pump backed with 50 Kw Solar Photovoltaic Plant making the first prototype of the Solar Lift Irrigation System in Ladakh in coloration with Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council Kargil.

Mr.Mathur said, after preliminary analyses which will be completed in a week, it will be a model and it can be replicated in most parts of Ladakh without any running cost.

#### **76) Answer: C**

In a major move to improve commuters' experience on National Highways for both passengers and truckers, the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) will develop world class 'Wayside Amenities' at more than 600 locations across 22 states in the next five years.

Out of these, 130 are targeted for development in 2021-22.

NHAI has already invited bids to develop 120 such wayside amenities.

As per plan, wayside amenities will be developed every 30 to 50 kilometer along the current and upcoming Highways and Expressways.

The amenities will include numerous facilities for passengers such as Fuel Station, Electric Charging Facilities, Food Court, Retail Shops, ATM, and Toilets with shower facility, Children Playing Area, Clinic, Village Haat for local handicrafts etc.

Keeping in view the specific requirements of truckers, separate 'Truckers Blocks' will be developed at large amenities that will include Truck and Trailer Parking, Auto Workshop, Truckers Dormitory, Cooking and Washing area, Toilets with showers, Clinic, Eateries and Retail shops .

**77) Answer: E**

In the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, with the aim of promoting good health and expanding the outreach of comprehensive primary healthcare services to the people of J&K, Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha e-inaugurated as many as 73 AYUSH Health & Wellness Centres under Ayushman Bharat across the UT.

The LG observed that healthcare services in J&K witnessed a revolutionary transformation in the past several months and unprecedented work is being done for advancement and upgradation of medical facilities for ensuring quality and affordable healthcare services in the UT.

**78) Answer: C**

In Jammu and Kashmir, Principal Secretary Animal & Sheep Husbandry Department, Naveen Kumar Chaudhary has inaugurated 'Pashudhan Mela' in Kathua.

A variety of breeds of cattle and buffalo from the neighboring state of Punjab including breeds from Kashmir were put on display.

The Principal Secretary said the 'Pashudhan Mela' is the first of its kind Mela held in the Union Territory organized with the objective to educate farmers about the latest cattle breeds.

He said Cattle Mela will be a regular affair in J&K covering each district in a phased manner.

He said the Department of Animal Husbandry has taken

a series of steps to empower farmers and livestock owners to adopt dairy which have huge market demand.

He appealed to youth to come forward to start their units in dairy farming under Integrated Dairy Development Scheme (IDDS) which provides expertise and necessary machinery at subsidized rates.

**79) Answer: B**

Leading Private Sector lender Karnataka Bank Ltd. has appointed Dr. D S Ravindran as Additional Director (Non-Executive, Independent) on 24th March, 2021 and the appointment will be effective from 1st April, 2021.

**80) Answer: D**

The Competition Commission of India ordered a probe into the new privacy policy of WhatsApp.

In a Suo-Motu order on the Updated Terms of Service and Privacy Policy for WhatsApp Users the Anti-trust Watchdog said that WhatsApp has prima facie contravened the Competition Act, 2000.

The order says that WhatsApp through its exploitative and exclusionary conduct, in the garb of policy update violated the provisions of Section 4 of the act.

It added that the conduct of WhatsApp in sharing of users' personalized data with other Facebook Companies, in a manner that is neither fully transparent nor based on voluntary and specific user consent, appears prima facie unfair to users.

**81) Answer: C**

Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank has launched more than one hundred comic books created by teachers and students of CBSE schools and curated by NCERT.

The comics are aligned with topics of NCERT textbooks

and have specific storyline and characters.

It has been created in a linear progression which will help to understand basic concepts and decrease the learning gaps.

These comics can be accessed online on DIKSHA web portal and DIKSHA app.

MrPokhriyal noted that this innovative initiative will help in increasing the cultural and social sensitivity in our children while imparting knowledge.

### **82) Answer: D**

The Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister, Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy has inaugurated the Kurnool Airport located at Orvakal and named it after the first ever freedom fighter of the country, Uyyalavada Narasimha Reddy, as a tribute to him.

While addressing the gathering at Kurnool, the CM has said that the flight operations from the airport will commence from March, 28th servicing to Bengaluru, Visakhapatnam, and Chennai routes.

He stated that the Airport is equipped with all the latest technology, fine infrastructure which can facilitate parking for four aircrafts at the same time.

Stating that this will be the sixth civilian airport in the State after Visakhapatnam, Tirupati, Vijayawada, Rajahmundry and Kadapa.

Jagan Mohan Reddy also said that the airport has been set up in the judicial Capital of Andhra Pradesh, connecting to other States.

He later said that the airport will make the judicial capital stand on par with other States.

### **83) Answer: E**

The government is working to roll out a GPS based toll

collection system and introducing the E-Highway from Delhi to Mumbai in the upcoming months.

This was stated by the Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadakari in the Lok Sabha.

Mr. Gadkari said that toll collection through the fast tag has reached to 93 per cent across the country which has resulted in 10 thousand crore more toll collection in comparison to previous year.

He said use of fast tag has also reduced the waiting time on the toll booths.

He added that introduction of GPS based toll collection system will facilitate smooth movement of traffic, bring transparency and remove the old mechanism of toll collection system.

Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari has said that the thrust in road building will provide jobs and sustainable growth of the economy.

Addressing a National Conference on Road Infrastructure in New Delhi, Mr Gadkari said that around 64.5 per cent of the goods and nearly 90 percent of passenger traffic use the road network to commute.

He said, the road infrastructure has a direct and indirect effect on sustainability of growth and overall development of the country.

The Minister also stressed on the need to move towards public transport on electricity and

exhorted the industry to come forward in this direction.

### **84) Answer: C**

Education Minister Ramesh PokhriyalNishank held a virtual meeting with Director General UNESCO, MsAudrey Azoulay in New Delhi.

They discussed key issues of mutual importance

including National Education Policy, India's response to COVID Pandemic especially in the education sector.

MrPokhriyal said, Government has ensured that education reaches even the last child in the remotest part of the country.

He also spoke about Manodarpan, the government's initiative to provide online psychosocial support to students, teachers and families for their mental health and emotional wellbeing.

The Minister also mentioned that competitive entrance exams for almost 23 lakh students, the largest entrance examinations in the world were conducted successfully and safely during the covid pandemic.

**85) Answer: D**

More than 68 lakh 33 thousand beneficiaries were provided maternity benefits in 2020 under the Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana, PMMVY.

Women and Child Development Minister Smriti Irani said this in a written reply in the Rajya Sabha.

The government implements the scheme with the objectives of providing partial compensation for the wage loss in terms of cash incentive so that the woman can take adequate rest before and after delivery of the first child.

Under the scheme, the government also provides cash incentive to improve health seeking behaviour amongst the Pregnant Women and Lactating Mothers.

**86) Answer: B**

The Bank of England unveiled the design of the new GBP 50 banknote, which features British scientist and World War II codebreaker Alan Turing.

The polymer note, which includes an image of Turing and other related imagery, will be issued for the first

time on June 23, coinciding with what would have been the mathematician's 109th birthday.

"There's something of the character of a nation in its money, and we are right to consider and celebrate the people on our banknotes.

So I'm delighted that our new GBP 50 features one of Britain's most important scientists, Alan Turing," said Bank of England Governor Andrew Bailey.

**87) Answer: E**

Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana has registered a landmark achievement with the issuing of ten crore cards to a resident of Bihar.

A 25 year old Irfan Ali from Gopalganj district has received this card.

This landmark achievement is a result of the AapkeDwar Ayushman campaign which was launched to spread awareness among the beneficiaries.

Under the scheme, any family can avail free medical benefits upto 5 lakh rupees per year.

CEO of Ayushman Bharat, Dr. Ram Sewak Sharma termed this a great achievement saying that 10th crore Ayushman card has been issued to a beneficiary in Gopalganj district in Bihar.

He expressed happiness over the adding of lakhs of new beneficiaries under AapkeDwarAyushman initiative.

He said targets have been set to take the number of identified beneficiaries to at least 20 crore next financial year.

**88) Answer: C**

IT services major Infosys announced the appointment of former Salesforce executive Chitra Nayak as an

independent director.

Her appointment, effective March 25, 2021, is based on recommendation of the Nomination and Remuneration Committee of the Infosys Board, a regulatory filing said.

The appointment is for a period of three years, subject to the approval of shareholders, it added.

Nayak has over 25 years of professional experience in go-to-market, general management, and operations leadership roles at various organisations.

She currently serves as a member of the board at Invitae, a medical genetics company; at Morneau Shepell, a tech-enabled HR services company; at Forward Air, a freight and logistics company; and at Intercom, a messaging platform company, the filing said.

**89) Answer: D**

To give wings to its global ambitions, TVS Motor Company has brought on board Ralf Speth, former CEO of Jaguar Land Rover.

Speth, who built Jaguar Land Rover into a global brand, will become Chairman of TVS Motor Company effective January 2023, when the present chairman, Venu Srinivasan, will become Chairman-Emeritus.

**90) Answer: B**

Harsh C. Mariwala, chairman of Marico, was named the EY Entrepreneur of the Year 2020.

He will now represent India at the EY World Entrepreneur of the Year Award on June 10.

Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year Award:

The EY Entrepreneur of the Year Awards previously Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year Awards is an award sponsored by Ernst & Young in recognition of

entrepreneurship.

Awarded for: Entrepreneurship

Presented by: Ernst & Young

**91) Answer: C**

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar met Afghanistan President Ashraf Ghani and had a discussion on the Afghan peace process.

Dr Jaishankar and Mr Ghani are in Dushanbe to attend the ninth Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process conference.

Tajikistan is hosting the conference which is focused on strengthening a regional and international consensus for Afghan peace.

Afghan Foreign Minister Haneef Atmar visited India and held back-to-back talks with Dr Jaishankar and NSA Ajit Doval.

In New Delhi, the Afghan Foreign Minister during his meeting with Dr Jaishankar on the peace process, the two sides reviewed the Troika Peace Meeting in Moscow and assessed the final declaration of the meeting as positive for strengthening and advancing the peace process.

**92) Answer: C**

Petroleum Minister Dharmendra Pradhan and US Secretary of Energy, Jennifer Granholm have agreed to revamp India-US Strategic Energy Partnership (SEP).

Mr. Pradhan held an introductory meeting virtually with her and reviewed the SEP.

The two leaders agreed to revamp the India-US SEP to reflect the new priorities of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Joe Biden with focus on promoting clean energy with low-carbon pathways and accelerating green energy cooperation.



During the meeting, they also agreed to prioritize greater collaboration in cleaner energy sector and joint R&D through Partnership to Advance Clean Energy Research among other initiatives.

Besides, both sides agreed to convene the third meeting of a revamped India-US SEP at an early date.

They decided to intensify the efforts to take advantage of the complementarities of both the countries - advanced US technologies and rapidly growing India's energy market, for a win-win situation through a cleaner energy route with low carbon pathways.

**93) Answer: D**

Government has received multiple expressions of interest for privatisation of Neelachallspat Nigam Ltd (NINL).

In a tweet, Secretary, Department of Investment and Public Asset Management, TuhinKanta Pandey said the transaction moves ahead to the second stage, on schedule.

Earlier, the government had invited bids to privatise NINL seeking to divest 93.7 per cent stake held by four central public sector enterprises and two Odisha government PSUs.

In January last year, Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs had given in principle approval for strategic disinvestment of equity shareholding of Minerals and Metals Trading Corporation Limited, National Mineral Development Corporation, MECON and Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd as well as two Odisha State Government PSUs in Neelachallspat Nigam Limited to a strategic buyer identified through a two-stage auction procedure.

**94) Answer: E**

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has once again

extended the restriction imposed on scam-hit Punjab and Maharashtra Cooperative (PMC) Bank for a further period of 3 months till June 30, 2021.

The restriction puts curbs on the withdrawals and deposits activity of the lender.

This restriction was first placed in September 2019, and since then has been consecutively extended.

The previous restriction was set to expire on March 31, 2021.

**95) Answer: B**

The Congolese politician Denis Sassou Nguesso has been re-elected president of the Republic of the Congo with 88.57 percent of the vote.

The 77-year-old has been ruling the country for 36 years.

He first won the presidential election in 1979 and ruled for three consecutive terms till 1992.

**96) Answer: D**

Jal Jeevan Mission has achieved a new milestone of providing over 4 Crore rural households with tap water supply.

The mission was announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 15th August, 2019, with the aim to provide tap water supply to every rural home by 2024.

Now, 7.24 Crore, more than 1/3rd of rural households are getting potable water through taps.

Goa has become the first State in the country to provide 100 percent tap water supply followed by Telangana and Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

The untiring efforts of States and UTs have helped Jal Jeevan Mission provide assured tap water supply to

every family living in 56 districts and over 86 thousand villages.

States and UTs are now competing with each other and focusing on the target to ensure that every household in the country gets safe drinking water, so that no one is left out.

**97) Answer: E**

The new version of Exam Warriors written by Prime Minister Narendra Modi is now available with many new mantras for students as well as parents.

It is available at retail stores as well as online.

The Exam Warriors module is also available on the NaMo App.

Mr Modi said, the new edition of the book has been enriched with valuable inputs from students, parents and teachers.

Substantive new parts have been added that would especially interest the parents and teachers.

He said the book reaffirms the need to remain stress free before an exam.

The Prime Minister added that it has many interactive activities for students and parents.

**98) Answer: C**

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the year 2020 was the best year in history for the global wind industry as this sector installed 93GW of new capacity in 2020, according to a new report titled 'Global Wind Report 2021, released by the Global Wind Energy Council (GWEC- Headquarters location: Brussels, Belgium).

This is the 16th annual flagship report, released by GWEC on March 25, 2021.

The 93GW represents a 53% year-on-year increase.

**99) Answer: D**

External Affairs Minister Dr S Jaishankar will attend the 9th Ministerial Conference of Heart of Asia – Istanbul Process on Afghanistan at Dushanbe in Tajikistan.

Dr Jaishankar reached Dushanbe on a three day visit.

He called on President of Afghanistan Ashraf Ghani before the commencement of the Heart of Asia Conference.

Mr Ghani and Dr Jaishankar shared the perspectives on the peace process.

As the lead country for Trade, Commerce and Investment Confidence Building Measure under Heart of Asia – Istanbul Process, India has made concerted efforts for strengthening regional connectivity for the greater economic integration of Afghanistan with the region.

A dedicated Air Freight Corridor between cities of India and Afghanistan and operationalisation of Chabahar Port in Iran are steps in that direction.

India, as an important stakeholder for peace, prosperity and stability in Afghanistan has played a constructive role in the international processes on Afghanistan.

India has engaged regional and international stakeholders on Afghanistan.

The visit will further enhance the outreach to Central Asian countries with a special focus on Afghanistan.

**100) Answer: E**

Finance Industry Development Council has appointed T Srinivasaraghavan, Managing Director, Sundaram Finance Ltd. as Chairman Emeritus, FIDC and Sanjay Chamria, VC & MD, Magma Fincorp & Umesh Revankar,

MD, Shriram Transport Finance Co. Ltd. as its Co-Chairmen with effect from April 1, 2021.

Ramesh Iyer, Chairman, FIDC said that, TTS Sir has been with the NBFC Sector since more than 40 years and his honesty and wisdom, experience and exposure is known and acknowledged by one and all.

Even Reserve Bank of India and other Government authorities look at him with utmost respect.

He has been the Torch-bearer of NBFC Sector during good times and bad times and his joining FIDC for life will immensely benefit FIDC and NBFC Sector.

T Srinivasaraghavan, Chairman Emeritus, FIDC said, "I am greatly humbled by this gesture on the part of FIDC.

It has been my privilege to serve this industry for nearly four decades and I look forward to contributing in whatever way I can to support the excellent work being done by the FIDC management team."



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