

CURRENT AFFAIRS



150 PRACTICE QUESTIONS INCLUDED



JANUARY 2022

**PRABHA IAS IPS
COACHING ACADEMY**

PREFACE

This is our special edition of Current Affairs Magazine for various Central & State level Competitive Examinations, covering content from the month of January 2022.

The Magazine is divided into three sections:

Section 1: Topic Wise Current Affairs in Short

The first section is dedicated to Topic Wise Current Affairs with a short description to provide information about all major happenings this month.

Section 2: Practice Questions with Answers

The Second Section contains 150 Multiple Choice Questions based on daily current affairs.

Section 3: Detailed Analysis of important Events

The Third Section covers some major happenings in this month along with analysis. 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



1: Important Days



Global Family Day : 01 January :-

Global Family Day, also known as World Peace Day, marks on the first day of the new year calendar - to begin the new year with a positive message of unity in the world. It is celebrated every year to promote harmony and unity. The day also emphasizes the idea of the world as a one in which we are all family, regardless of citizenship, borders, or race. On this day people are encouraged to be part of events by organizations and councils promoting the very message of the Global Peace or Family Day.



World Braille Day : 04 January :-

World Braille Day is observed every year on January 4th to raise awareness about how Braille plays a significant

role in the complete realization of human rights in the lives of blind and partially sighted people. One billion people worldwide suffering from different disabilities have lower chances to access health care, education, employment and are prone to poverty, violence, neglect and abuse. Braille is named after Louis Braille, who invented it for blind and partially sighted people in 19th century, France. Braille is considered important in terms of education, freedom of expression and opinion, as well as social inclusion, as reflected in article 2 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.



64th Foundation Day Of DRDO : 01 January 2022 :-

Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) is celebrating its 64th foundation day on 01 January. On this day in 1958 when DRDO was formed to make India strong and self-reliant in terms of science and technology and especially in military technologies. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has wished to all Defence Research and Development Organisation, DRDO scientists and personnel on their 64th Raising Day. In the span of 63 years the organization has transformed the landscape of defence research and development in the country.



WORLD DAY OF WAR ORPHANS

World Day of War Orphans : 06 January :-

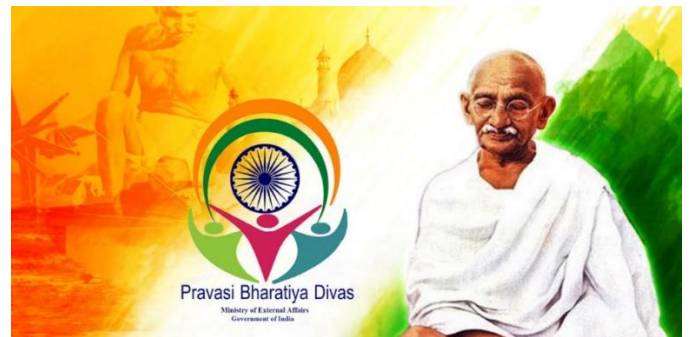
On 6 January every year, World Day of War Orphans is celebrated to create awareness about the plight of the war orphans and to address the traumatic conditions faced by them. World Day of War Orphans was started by the French organization, SOS Enfants en Detresses. The day highlights the lives of the children who were affected by the outcomes of the war and aims for the betterment of their future.



African National Congress Foundation Day : 08 January :-

The birth of the African National Congress a century ago, on January 8, 1912, was a landmark in the history of Africa, marking the beginning of the end of centuries of exploitation and humiliation of the continent. It received hardly any attention at the time internationally or from

the white establishment in South Africa. Mahatma Gandhi had become a non-violent revolutionary and a mass leader in 1906 when he realised the futility of mere petitions and deputations to the racist white authorities against oppressive laws and regulations. He decided to defy the imposition of passes and immigration restrictions against the Indians in the Transvaal and led the passive resistance movement in which about a third of adult Indian males in the Transvaal went to prison.



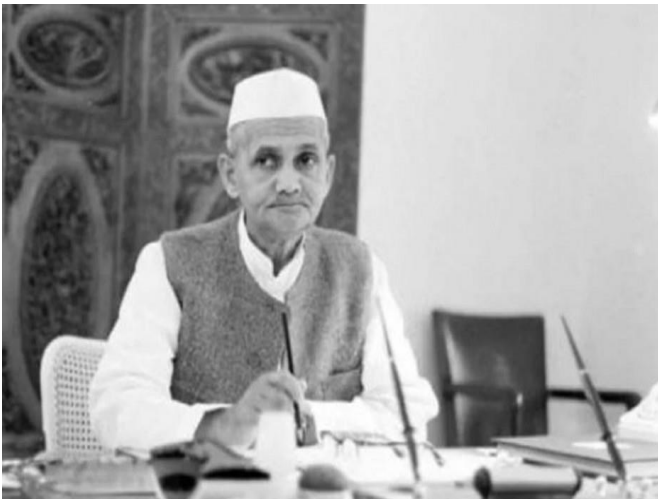
NRI (Non-Resident Indian) Day or Pravasi Bharatiya Divas : 09 January :-

Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) is celebrated on 9th January every year to mark the contribution of Overseas Indian community in the development of India. On the occasion, several events such as PBD Convention, Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award and Bharat ko Janiye Quiz are organised. 9th January was chosen as the day to celebrate PBD since it was on this day in 1915 that Mahatma Gandhi, the greatest Pravasi, returned to India from South Africa, led India's freedom struggle and changed the lives of Indians forever.

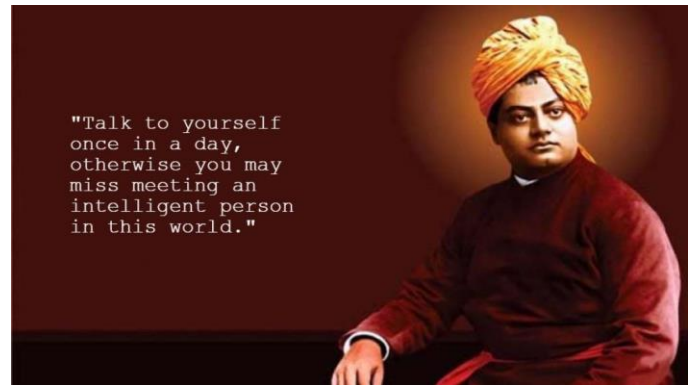


World Hindi Day : 10 January:-

World Hindi Day or Vishwa Hindi Divas is celebrated on January 10 every year, with an aim to promote the use of the Hindi language worldwide. January 10 marks the first World Hindi Conference that took place in 1975, in Nagpur, Maharashtra. In 2006, then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh declared January 10 as World Hindi Day. Another objective of the occasion is to present Hindi as an international language. Vishwa Hindi Divas is celebrated at the Indian Embassies and government offices that organize lectures on different topics.

**Death anniversary of Lal Bahadur Shastri : 11 January :-**

Lal Bahadur Shastri was the second Prime Minister of India who occupied the office from 1964 to 1966. However, he died before completing his full term in the office. PM Shastri died of heart attack in Uzbekistan's capital Tashkent on January 11, 1966. This year marks the 56th death anniversary of the late Congress leader. A devout follower of Mahatma Gandhi, Shastri was born on October 2, 1904 at Mughalsarai in Uttar Pradesh. Shastri joined the Non-Cooperation Movement in 1920 after Gandhi urged his country's people to demand freedom from British rule and protest against the Rowlatt Act.

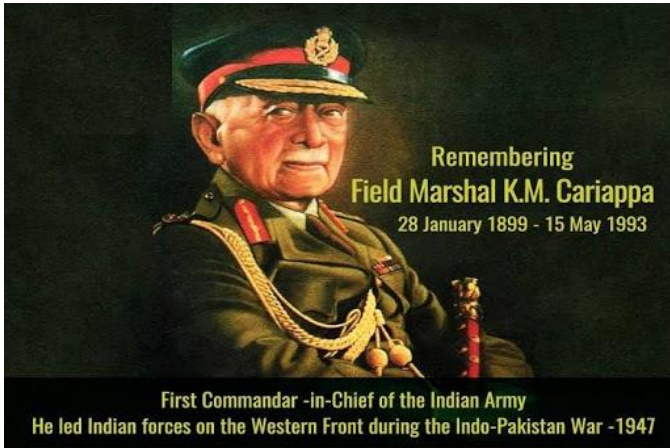
**National Youth Day : 12 January :-**

National Youth Day is celebrated on January 12, every year in India to honor the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda, one of India's greatest leaders and believers of youth power. was an ardent disciple of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa and a major force in the revival of Hinduism in India. Celebrated as one of the greatest social leaders of the country, Swami Vivekananda was born on January 12, 1863, in Kolkata. In 1984 the Government of India declared this day as National Youth Day and since 1985, the event is celebrated in India every year.

**Indian Army Day : 15 January :-**

India is celebrating 74th Army Day on January 15, 2022. Each year on this day, the soldiers of the army are honoured, who have served the nation selflessly and set the greatest example of brotherhood. This day is celebrated at all Army Command Headquarters. While

the preparations are going on, due to the third wave of the global pandemic of COVID-19, the day will be celebrated amidst stringent protocols.



Armed Forces Veterans Day: 14 January 2022 :-

The 'Armed Forces Veterans' Day' is commemorated on 14 Jan each year as a mark of respect to and in recognition of the services rendered by Field Marshal KM Cariappa, OBE, the first Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army. He led the Indian Forces to victory in the 1947 war, became the Commander-in-Chief on 15 Jan 1949 and retired on 14 Jan 1953. Commemorating the Veterans' Day is a unique way of the services to acknowledge the selfless devotion and sacrifice by our veterans who have served the nation during their prime years and still continue to do so in various capacities.



Netaji Subash Chandra Bose Jayanti : January 23 :-

Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose was a great freedom fighter who rebelled against the British and did his part to help India achieve independence. His undeterred attitude and resolution to make India free still inspire many. Therefore, to honour his contribution to India's struggle for independence, Subhas Chandra Bose's birthday is celebrated across various parts of the country on January 23rd every year. This year will mark his 125th birth anniversary. The Indian government has decided to celebrate January 23rd as 'Parakram Diwas'.



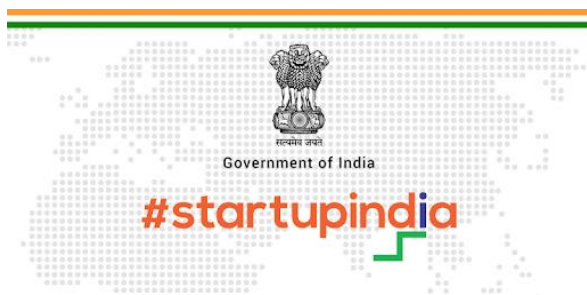
National Girl Child Day : January 24 :-

National Girl Child Day in India is celebrated on January 24 every year. The day was an initiative of the Ministry of Women and Child Development in 2008. The objective behind celebrating the National Girl Child Day is to provide support and opportunities to the girls of India. It also aims towards promoting awareness about the rights of the girl child and to increase awareness on the importance of girl education, and their health and nutrition.

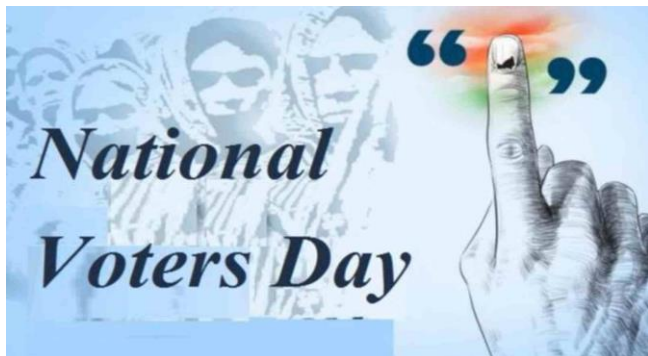


International Day of Education : 24 January :-

International Day of Education is observed every year on January 24 to celebrate the role of education for peace and development. The United Nations General Assembly proclaimed the day as International Day of Education on January 24, 2018. This year the world is celebrating the fourth International day of Education under the theme “Changing Course, Transforming Education”.

**PM Narendra Modi declares January 16 as 'National Startup Day' :-**

January 16 will be celebrated as National Startup Day, Prime Minister Narendra Modi declared on 16 January, saying that this is India's “golden era of startups” with immense growth potential in rural and semi-urban areas, as they will be the backbone of a new India. The country currently has 82 unicorns, officials said, each valued in excess of \$1 billion, the number is the third highest in the world. Modi had launched the Startup India movement on January 16, 2016.

**National Voters Day : 25 January :-**

National Voters' Day is celebrated on 25th January each year to highlight the importance of voting right. 25th January is also the foundation day of the Election Commission of India. In order to encourage new voters of the country to participate in the electoral process, the Government of India celebrates 25th January as National Voters' Day. First National Voters' Day was observed in the year 2011 to make awareness among the young voters to take part in the political process. The theme for this year's National Voters' Day is 'Making Elections Inclusive, Accessible and Participative'.

**National Tourism Day : 25 January :-**

National Tourism Day is celebrated on January 25 every year across the country. This day is observed by the government to encourage tourism and explain the essential role of tourism in the growth of the country. India is a country where ethnicity, practice, culture, etc changes with every kilometre as one moves from North to South. India being the 7th largest country in the world stands apart from the rest of the Asian continent.



Republic Day : January 26 :-

Republic Day in India is celebrated on January 26 every year. This year, the country will be celebrating its 73rd Republic Day on Wednesday, January 26, 2022. It's the day, Constitution of India was adopted in 1950 after attaining Independence on 15 August 1947. Republic Day main celebration is held at the Rajpath in the national capital, New Delhi, before the President of India.

**International Customs Day : January 26 :-**

January 26 is celebrated as the International Customs Day (ICD). It is the day designated to honour the custom officials and agencies for their function in taking care of the flow of goods across the world borders. In simpler words, it is the day to commemorate the vital role of customs officials in handling the entire flow of goods across international borders. They ensure that world trade management is safe and secured.

**NDRF Celebrated Its 17th Raising Day On 19 January 2022 :-**

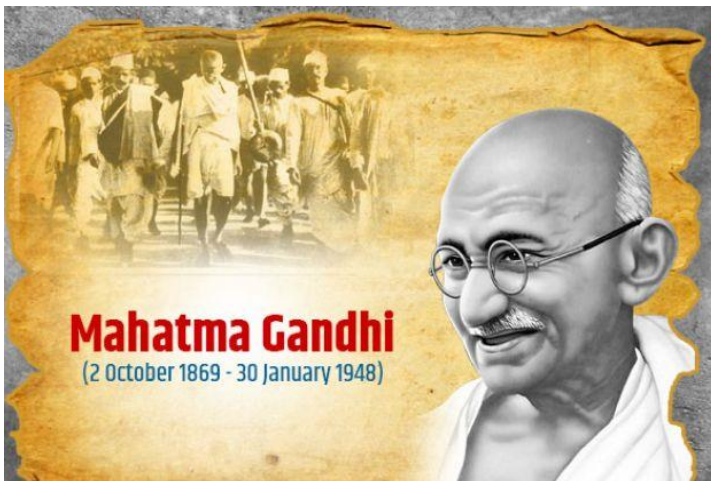
The Raising Day of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) was celebrated on 19 January. Prime Minister Narendra Modi took to social media to mark the occasion of the 17th NDRF Raising Day. The Prime Minister asserted that the NDRF has been at the forefront of several relief and rescue measures. He also praised the organisation's professionalism and courage and sent his best wishes for their future endeavours. He also talked about disaster management and stressed on India's efforts towards mitigating the impact of any crises through the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure.

**International Holocaust Remembrance Day: 27 January :-**

International Holocaust Remembrance Day or the International Day in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust, is an international memorial day on 27 January that commemorates the victims of the Holocaust, which resulted in the murder of one third of the Jewish people, along with countless members of other minorities by Nazi Germany between 1933 and 1945. 27 January was chosen to commemorate the date that Auschwitz concentration camp was liberated by the Red Army in 1945. The theme of this year's Holocaust remembrance Day is "Memory, Dignity and Justice".

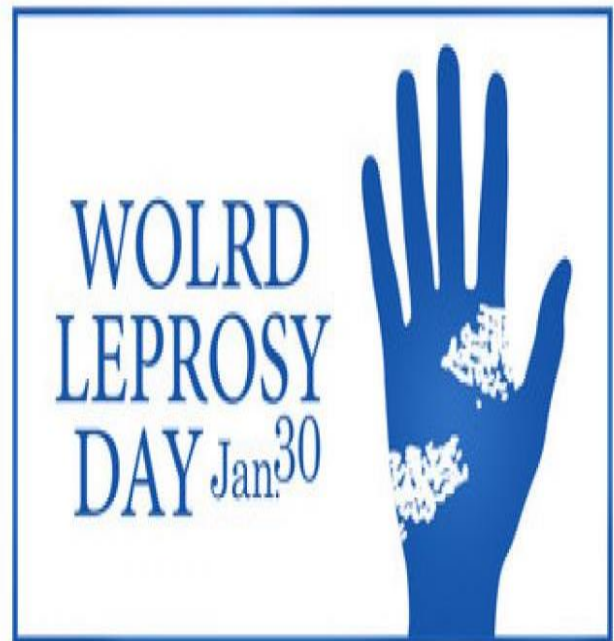
**Lala Lajpat Rai Birth Anniversary : 28 January :-**

Lala Lajpat Rai (28 January 1865 – 17 November 1928) was one of India's most celebrated freedom fighters. His ideology of nationalism and zealous patriotism earned him the title, 'Punjab Kesari' and 'Lion of Punjab'. He was part of the famous radical trio Lal Bal Pal, who advocated the Swadeshi movement in India, involving the boycott of all imported goods and the use of Indian made goods. Rai also initiated the foundation of Punjab National Bank.

**Mahatma Gandhi's Martyrdom Day : 30 January :-**

On 30th January, India observes Martyrs' Day every year, to pay homage to honor the sacrifices made by Mahatma

Gandhi and countless other brave Indians. This year India is observing the 74th death anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. On January 30, 1948, Mahatma Gandhi was assassinated by Nathuram Godse in Birla House. Mahatma Gandhi was born on October 02, 1869, in Gujarat. After completing his early education, Gandhi went to London for further studies. He later went south Africa on an assignment. After facing discrimination in South Africa, he returned to India in 1916 and lived his entire life for the freedom struggle.

**World Leprosy Eradication Day : 30 January :-**

World Leprosy Day (WLD) is celebrated on the last Sunday of January. In India, however, the day is celebrated on January 30. In 2022, World Leprosy Day is 30 January. This international day is an opportunity to celebrate people who have experienced leprosy, raise awareness of the disease, and call for an end to leprosy-related stigma and discrimination. This date was chosen by French humanitarian Raoul Follereau as a tribute to the life of Mahatma Gandhi who had compassion for people afflicted with leprosy.

2: Agreements



HDFC Life signed bancassurance partnership with South Indian Bank :-

HDFC Life on 29 December announced a bancassurance tie-up with South Indian Bank that will enable customers of the bank to avail a range of life insurance products of the insurer that include solutions for protection, savings and investment, retirement and critical illness. This bancassurance partnership will strengthen HDFC Life's business across India, as per a press release. The company is one of the largest life insurance players with a market share of 22.3% (in terms of overall new business premium as on September 30, 2021), the release said.



Karnataka Govt Partnered With NPCI & SBI To Implement 'E-RUPI' :-

The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), State Bank of India (SBI), and Department of e-Governance, government of Karnataka have partnered for enabling and implementing e-RUPI, a cashless and contactless payment solution for students under the State's scholarship programme. e-RUPI will be used to ensure a leak-proof delivery of education fees of eligible students by paying digitally to the college/institute by Karnataka Government, NPCI said in a statement.



IndusInd Bank and NPCI tie-up to offer cross-border payments through UPI :-

Google acquires Israeli cybersecurity startup Siemplify for \$500 million :-

To bolster its response to ever-growing cyber-attacks, Google has acquired an Israel-based cybersecurity startup 'Siemplify' reportedly for \$500 million. The startup will be integrated into Google Cloud Platform, especially its Chronicle operation. Siemplify specialises in end-to-end security services for enterprises, typically referred to as security orchestration, automation and response (SOAR) services.

**Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Retail invests \$200 mn in Dunzo to acquire 25.8% stake :-**

Reliance Industries Ltd's retail arm has invested \$200 million (around ₹1,488 crore) in Bengaluru-headquartered Dunzo as it looks to get a foothold in the country's rapidly growing market of quick delivery. With the investment of \$200 million, Reliance Retail will own 25.8% stake in the online delivery platform on a fully diluted basis. The capital will be used to further Dunzo's vision to be the largest quick commerce business in the country, enabling instant delivery of essentials from a network of micro warehouses while also expanding its B2B business.

**WFP & The Akshaya Patra Foundation partnered to enhance PM POSHAN Scheme :-**

United Nations' World Food Programme (WFP) in India, has partnered with The Akshaya Patra Foundation (TAPF), a not-for-profit organization, to enhance the effectiveness of the Pradhan Mantri – Poshan Shakti Nirman (PM POSHAN) scheme (earlier known as National Programme for Mid-Day Meal in Schools). The partnership aims to enhance food safety and hygiene projects, capacity building of cooks-cum-helpers and nutritional quality of school meals.

**Reliance acquires controlling stake of 73.37% in New York's Mandarin Oriental hotel :-**

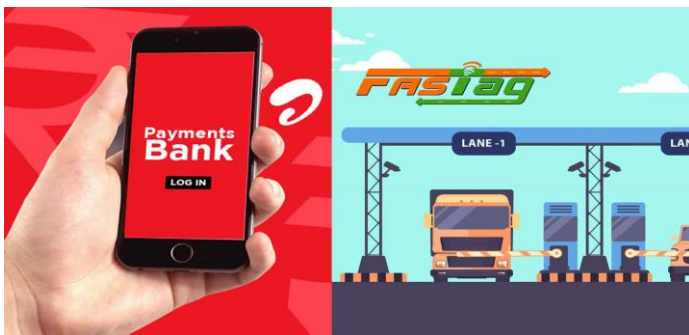
Reliance Industries Ltd will pick up a controlling stake in New York's premium luxury five-star hotel, Mandarin Oriental, for \$98.15 million, the company said on 09 January. Reliance Industrial Investments and Holdings

Ltd will acquire the 73.37% stake held indirectly by Cayman Island-based Columbus Centre Corp. in Mandarin Oriental. In April 2021, RIL acquired Stoke Park Ltd, a luxury hotel, spa and country club in the UK for \$79 million.



Australia & Japan signed defence agreement to counter China :-

The leaders of Australia and Japan have signed a “historic” defence treaty that Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison said would “contribute to a secure and stable Indo-Pacific” as China expands its military and economic clout in the region. The treaty was signed during a virtual summit between Morrison and his Australian counterpart, Fumio Kishida on 06 January.



Airtel Payments Bank tie-up with Park+ to offer FASTag-based Parking Solutions :-

Airtel Payments Bank on 06 January announced a collaboration with Park+ to offer FASTag-based smart parking solutions to marquee commercial and residential properties across the country. Backed by Sequoia Capital and Matrix Partners, Park+ is engaged in automating parking spaces through FASTag. Airtel Payments Bank said it is among the top five issuers of FASTag in the country. Park+ access control systems are installed at over 1500 societies, over 30 malls, and over 150 corporate parks across the country.



RBL Bank tie-up with Google to advance next-gen customer experience :-

RBL Bank and Google on 10 January announced a strategic collaboration to fuel the Bank's customer experience strategy and expand its value proposition to serve its rapidly growing customer base through its digital platform, Abacus 2.0. This collaboration will enable better customer data management, and analytics, enabling effective cross-selling within the Bank's large customer base and subsequently reducing the cost of customer acquisition, significantly.



Centre will hold 35.8% stakes of Vodafone Idea in the form of equity :-

Vodafone Idea announced 11 January that it will accept the Indian government's proposal to convert its spectrum and adjusted gross revenue (AGR) dues to equity, making the government the largest shareholder of the company. And, the implied cost of this conversion is ₹10 a share, a 32% discount on Monday's (January 10) closing price. With this, the Indian government will now hold a 35.8% stake in the company.

**Adani Group sign agreement with South Korea's POSCO to develop steel mill :-**

South Korea's Posco and Adani Group have agreed to jointly build a \$5 billion integrated steel plant in Gujarat in the third attempt by the South Korean steel giant to have a significant manufacturing presence in India. As part of an initial non-binding agreement between Posco and Adani, the environment-friendly steel mill would be built at Mundra in Gujarat, the home state of the billionaire Gautam Adani-led conglomerate.

**LazyPay Tie-Up With SBM Bank India To Launch LazyCard :-**

LazyPay, a Buy Now Pay Later solution by PayU Finance, has partnered with SBM Bank India to launch LazyCard, a payment instrument backed by a credit line, thus foraying into the card segment. The card aims at empowering financially underserved Indians, who struggle with limited credit options, with easy access to credit. Commenting on the launch of LazyCard, Prashanth Ranganathan, CEO, PayU Finance, said, "Today only three in every 100 Indians own a credit card, creating a massive credit gap in our economy. We are excited to launch 'LazyCard', to empower and elevate the underserved, by giving them means to carry out financial transactions without worrying about their bank account balance."

**Axis Bank tie-up with MinkasuPay for biometric-based banking payments :-**

Axis Bank has entered into a partnership with MinkasuPay to offer biometric authentication solution for its customers, where by the transaction time to execute net banking payment will be reduced from about 50-60 seconds currently, to just 2-3 seconds. India's third largest private sector bank said customers' biometric authentication will be done with Fingerprint or Face ID authentication. This will also increase transaction success rates significantly.



Indifi tie-up with GPay to offer instant digital credit to SMEs :-

Lending company Indifi Technologies on 14 January said it has collaborated with UPI-based payments major Google Pay to offer instant loans to eligible small merchants on the Google Pay platform. The borrowing process is entirely digital and eligible merchants on the Google Pay for Business app can click on loan offerings from Indifi and submit an application online. Indifi will evaluate multiple criteria by leveraging its API integrations to decide whether the merchant will get instant credit or not.



Odisha And The United Nations World Food Programme Teams Up To Bolster Food Security Of Small Farmers :-

The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) and the Odisha government have joined hands to improve the food security of small and marginal farmers by strengthening their resilience to climate change. An

agreement was signed by Agriculture Director Muthu Kumar and WFP Country Director Bishow Parajuli at a virtual programme on 13 January, the UN agency said in a release. In a pilot initiative, advisories will be provided to small farmers of the state, which is particularly prone to cyclones, to help them adapt to impact of the climate crisis.



Microsoft to acquire video gaming company Activision Blizzard :-

Microsoft published in a press release on its website on January 18 that it had acquired Activision Blizzard, one of the biggest California-based video game holding companies in the world. With the acquisition of the game developing company Activision, Microsoft became the world's third largest company by revenue, after Tencent and Sony. The deal involved a transaction of \$68.7 billion, which is the biggest purchase ever made



IIMK LIVE and Indian Bank ink MoU to disburse loans upto Rs 50 Crore for Startups :-

The Indian Institute of Management - Kozhikode's Business incubator 'Laboratory for Innovation Venturing and Entrepreneurship' (LIVE) and Indian Bank signed a

game-changing Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on 13 January. The inked agreement launched a startup funding scheme, 'IndSpring Board', to support early stage start-ups by providing loans up to Rs 50 crore. The loan amount disbursed to start-ups under the IndSpring Board.

3: Appointments

**Gol appoints Atul Kumar Goel as new MD & CEO of PNB :-**

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has approved the appointment of Atul Kumar Goel, MD & CEO of UCO Bank, as MD & CEO of Punjab National Bank (PNB) with effect from February 1 2022. Goel will serve as PNB chief until December 31, 2024, which is his attaining the superannuation age. He will serve as Officer on Special Duty (OSD) in PNB, which is the country's second-largest public sector bank, until January 31, 2022. Goel will replace Mallikarjuna Rao, incumbent MD & CEO of PNB, who is due to demit office at the end of January 2022. Rao was given a three-month extension that will end on January 31, 2022.

**IAS Praveen Kumar named as DG & CEO of Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs :-**

Govt of India has approved the appointment of Shri Praveen Kumar, IAS (1987)(Retd.), Former Secretary, Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship to the post of Director General & Chief Executive Officer (DG&CEO), Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs (IICA). Praveen Kumar is a 1987 batch retired IAS officer of Tamil Nadu cadre, and a former Secretary Skill Development & Entrepreneurship.



Diplomat Vikram Misri Named As Deputy National Security Advisor :-

Vikram Misri was on December 27, 2021 appointed as India's new deputy National Security Adviser in the National Security Council Secretariat. Misri is a 1989 batch Indian Foreign Service officer. He currently serves as India's Ambassador to China. He was appointed to the post in 2019. He will be succeeded by Pradeep Kumar Rawat, who was recently appointed as the next ambassador to China. Misri had previously served as private secretary to Prime Ministers Inder Kumar Gujral, Manmohan Singh and Narendra Modi.



CP Goyal Appointed Director-General Of Forests & Special Secretary :-

Indian Forest Service officer Chandra Prakash Goyal has been appointed as the Director-General of Forests &

Special Secretary (DGF&SS), Ministry of Environment, Forests & Climate Change. The Appointments Committee of the Union Cabinet approved the appointment of the IFoS officer, according to an order dated December 27. Goyal, a 1986 batch IFS officer was previously the Principal Chief Conservator of Forest under Uttar Pradesh Department of Forest.



Vasudevan PN Reappointed As MD & CEO Of Equitas Small Finance Bank :-

Equitas Small Finance Bank Limited board of directors has approved the proposal for re-appointment of Vasudevan Pathangi Narasimhan (PN) as the MD & CEO for three years, with effect from July 23, 2022, up to July 22, 2025, subject to the RBI and shareholders' approval. Vasudevan is currently serving as the MD and CEO of the bank. He was appointed as the MD of erstwhile Equitas Finance Limited, now a bank, with effect from July 23, 2016. Before that, he was the MD of Equitas Holdings Limited.



ITBP DG Sanjay Arora To Hold SSB Additional Charge :-

Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) chief Sanjay Arora on December 29 was given additional charge of the post of Director General Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB). The Ministry of Home Affairs issued an office memorandum directing to refer to the subject and to convey the approval of the competent authority that consequent upon the superannuation of Kumar Rajesh Chandra as Director-General of the SSB in December last year. As per the order, Mr Arora, a 1988-batch Tamil Nadu cadre Indian Police Service officer, shall hold additional charge of the post of DG, SSB vice Chandra, till the appointment and joining of the regular incumbent or until further orders, whichever is earlier.

**Anupam Ray to become India's new ambassador to UN Conference on Disarmament :-**

Senior diplomat Anupam Ray has been appointed as India's next permanent representative to the UN Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said on 29 December. Ray, a 1994-batch Indian Foreign Service officer, is currently serving as a joint secretary in the MEA's headquarters in Delhi. "Anupam Ray (IFS:1994), presently joint secretary in the ministry, has been appointed as the next ambassador/PR (permanent representative) of India to the UN Conference on Disarmament, Geneva," the MEA said in

a statement. It said he is expected to take up the assignment shortly.

**VS Pathania takes over as Chief of Indian Coast Guard :-**

Director General VS Pathania, took over as the 24th Chief of Indian Coast Guard on 31 Dec 21. He is an alumnus of the Defence Services Staff College, Wellington and National Defence College, New Delhi. The Flag Officer is a qualified helicopter pilot and holds a Master's Degree in Defence & Strategic Studies from the University of Madras. He has also undergone specialization in Search and Rescue and port operations with US Coast Guard. In his illustrious career spanning over 36 years, he has held several key appointments afloat and ashore, prominent among them are Commander Coast Guard Region (North West) at Gandhi Nagar, Commander Coast Guard Region (West) at Mumbai, Deputy Director General (HRD), Deputy Director General (Policy & Plans) at Coast Guard Headquarters, New Delhi.



Vinay Kumar Tripathi appointed as new chairman, CEO of Railway Board :-

Vinay Kumar Tripathi has been appointed as new Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Railway Board. The Appointment Committee of the Cabinet has approved the appointment of Mr Tripathi who is presently working as General Manager, North Eastern Railway to the post of Chairman of Railway Board. Mr Tripathi belongs to 1983 Batch of Indian Railway Service of Electrical Engineers.

**Baldev Prakash named as MD & CEO of J&K Bank :-**

Jammu & Kashmir Bank on December 30 said Baldev Prakash has taken charge as the Managing Director & CEO of the bank from December 30, 2021. On 28 December, Jammu & Kashmir Bank had said that its board of directors appointed Baldev Prakash as the MD & CEO for three years, to be effective from his actual date of taking charge. In October last year, the RBI had approved the appointment Prakash as the next MD & CEO of J&K Bank.

**Vinod Kannan Named As Next CEO Of Vistara Airline :-**

Vinod Kannan took over as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Vistara airline on January 1, a statement said. Kannan replaced Leslie Thng who was the CEO from July 16, 2017 to December 31, 2021. In its statement, Vistara said Deepak Rajawat has been elevated to take up the role of Vistara's Chief Commercial Officer from January 1 onwards. "Kannan started his stint with Vistara as the Chief Strategy Officer in June 2019 and took over as Chief Commercial Officer in January 2020 with responsibility for developing, executing, and sustaining Vistara's corporate strategy and ensuring the airline's commercial success," it mentioned.

**Ex-UK PM Tony Blair Joins Top Royal Order 2022 :-**

Former British Prime Minister Tony Blair, the Duchess of Cornwall, and Baroness Amos are to be appointed as members of the Order of the Garter, England's oldest and most senior order of chivalry. The former prime minister now will be known as 'Sir Tony', the BBC reported on January 1. Baroness Amos, a former Labour cabinet minister, becomes the first black member of the order.



Indian-Origin Ashok Elluswamy Was First Employee To Be Hired For Tesla's Autopilot Team :-

Indian-origin techies are ruling the world, especially those serving in the biggest tech giants like Google and Microsoft, who are shaping the world. Recently Parag Agrawal and Jagdeep Singh CEO of a US battery startup, QuantumScape created quite a buzz because of their post and salary. Now Ashok Elluswamy from India to work as an autopilot team director at Elon Musk's Tesla electric vehicle company. Tesla founder and CEO Elon Musk took to Twitter to reveal how he chose Ashok Elluswamy from India to work as an autopilot team director at his electric vehicle company.

**Alka Mittal Becomes 1st Women Head Of Oil And Natural Gas Corporation :-**

State-run Oil and Natural Gas Corporation's (ONGC) Director HR (human resources), Alka Mittal, has been given additional charge of chairman and managing director, making her the first woman to head the energy major, ONGC said in a tweet on 03 January. "ONGC Director (HR) Dr Alka Mittal has been entrusted with additional charge of ONGC CMD, making her the first woman to head the #Energy major," ONGC tweeted from its official handle.

**RBI named Ajay Kumar Choudhary and Deepak Kumar as new Executive Directors :-**

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has appointed Deepak Kumar and Ajay Kumar Choudhary as new executive directors (ED) with effect from 03 January, according to an official statement. Prior to being promoted as ED, Deepak Kumar was heading the department of information technology of RBI, while Ajay Choudhary was Chief General Manager-in-Charge, Department of Supervision.

**Atul Keshap appointed as President of US-India Business Council :-**

The US Chamber of Commerce said on 04 January that ambassador Atul Keshap was being appointed as president of the US-India Business Council (USIBC) effective from January 5. The Indian-origin Keshap has held a number of senior US government positions and is a 28-year veteran of the US Department of State. Keshap said he was excited to continue his involvement in shaping and strengthening the robust relationship between the United States and India.



G Asok Kumar named as DG of National Mission for Clean Ganga :-

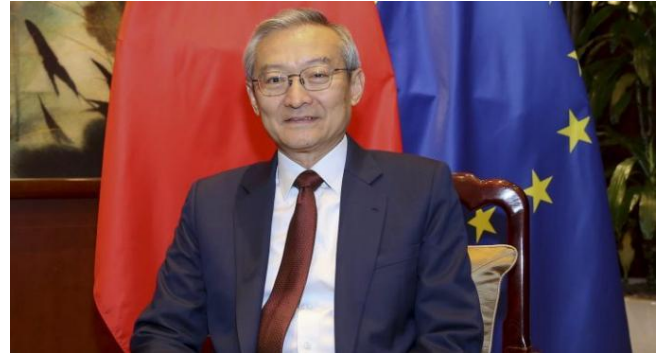
Senior IAS officer, G Asok Kumar posted as additional secretary, Union ministry of Jal Shakti assumed the charge as Director General of National Mission for Clean Ganga, Ministry of Jal Shakti. Kumar, a 1991 batch of IAS officer has earlier also served in Civil Aviation and Power ministries and was also executive director of projects in National Mission for Clean Ganga. According to a government notification, Kumar has extensive experience in working in the water sector. Earlier he has served as the mission director for National Water Mission.



Govt Re-Appoints Vijay Paul Sharma As CACP Chairman :-

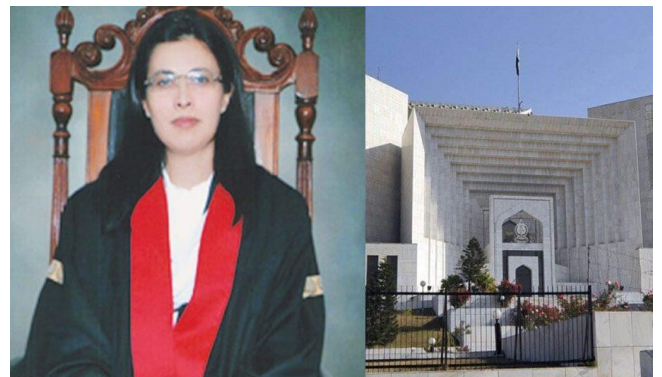
The Centre has again appointed Vijay Paul Sharma as the chairman of Commission for Agricultural Costs & Prices (CACP) after he relinquished the post in May last year

following completion of the five-year tenure. The role of CACP chairman will be crucial in the proposed committee on the minimum support price (MSP) and other reforms. Sharma, a professor at the Centre for Management in Agriculture at the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad, was appointed CACP Chairman for the first time in June 2016.



Chinese diplomat Zhang Ming takes charge of Secretary-General of SCO :-

China's senior diplomat Zhang Ming has taken charge as the new Secretary-General of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) in which India is a member. Zhang has taken charge from Vladimir Norov, former Foreign Minister of Uzbekistan from January 1 for a three-year term. He was until recently China's ambassador to the European Union. The Beijing headquartered SCO is an eight-member economic and security bloc consisting of China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, India and Pakistan.



Justice Ayesha Malik to be Pakistan's first woman Supreme Court judge :-

Pakistan on 06 January moved closer to appoint the first woman judge of the Supreme Court, after a high-power panel approved the elevation of Lahore High Court judge Ayesha Malik to the apex court. The Judicial Commission of Pakistan (JCP) headed by Chief Justice Gulzar Ahmed approved Malik's elevation by a majority of five votes against four. After endorsement by the JCP, her name will be considered by a parliamentary committee which rarely goes against the recommendation of the JCP.

**Gol Extends Navrang Saini's Term As Interim Chief Of IBBI :-**

The government's inability to fill top slots in key regulatory bodies on time continues with the Centre extending the additional charge of Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) Wholetime Member Navrang Saini as Chairperson till March 5 this year. It may be recalled that the Centre had in October last year assigned the additional charge to Navrang Saini for a period of three months (till January 13, 2022).

**Former RBI Governor Urjit Patel Appointed as Vice President of AIIB :-**

Former Reserve Bank of India (RBI) governor Urjit Patel has been appointed as a vice president of the Beijing-based multilateral funding institution Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), according to sources in the bank on 09 January. India is a founding member of AIIB with the second highest voting share after China. It is headed by former Chinese vice minister for finance Jin Liqun. Mr Patel, 58, will be one of the five Vice Presidents of the AIIB with a three-year tenure.

**Pierre-Olivier Gourinchas appointed as next IMF's Chief Economist :-**

The International Monetary Fund appointed Pierre-Olivier Gourinchas to succeed Gita Gopinath as its chief economist. Gopinath, the first woman to serve as the IMF's chief economist, is set to take over from Geoffrey Okamoto as the institution's first deputy managing director on January 21. He will begin his work as the IMF's new Chief Economist on January 24, initially on a part-time basis as he concludes some prior teaching commitments, transitioning to full-time on April 1, 2022.



Alikhan Smailov appointed as new Prime Minister of Kazakhstan :-

Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev nominated Alikhan Smailov for prime minister on 11 January, and the lower house of parliament swiftly voted him in during a session broadcast live on state television. Smailov, 49, served as first deputy prime minister in the previous cabinet which Tokayev dismissed previous week amid violent unrest in the oil-rich Central Asian nation.

**RBI approves appointment of Ittira Davis as MD & CEO of Ujjivan SFB :-**

Ujjivan Small Finance Bank (SFB) announced that it has received RBI approval for the appointment of Ittira Davis as its Managing Director & CEO for a period of one year. Ittira Davis has been with Ujjivan since 2015 and was previously CEO of Ujjivan Financial Services. His appointment as Director (Executive) will be for a period co-terminus with his tenure as MD and CEO.

**Raghuvendra Tanwar Appointed Chairman Of ICHR :-**

Raghuvendra Tanwar, a professor emeritus and former registrar of the Kurukshetra University, has been appointed as chairman of the Indian Council of Historical Research (ICHR) As per a January 5, 2022 notification issued by Union ministry of education, Prof Tanwar's appointment is for three years. Prof Tanwar, who joined KU as lecturer in August 1977, has an outstanding academic record, with two gold medals in MA history.

**Shersingh B Khyalia Appointed As CEO Of Adani Power :-**

Adani Power has said the Board of Directors approved the appointment of Shersingh B Khyalia as a chief executive officer of the company with effect from 11 January. Shersingh B Khyalia is a Chartered Accountant and brings with him over 32 years of rich experience in managing complex business in power industry, including generation, transmission and distribution, Adani Power said.



Narendra Kumar Goenka named as new chairman of AEPC :-

Textile Ministry has said that Narendra Kumar Goenka has been appointed as new chairman of Apparel Export Promotion Council, AEPC. Former chairman Padma Dr A Sakthivel handed over the charge to him on 17 January. Ministry said, Mr. Goenka has been associated with the Council for more than two decades. He was the Vice Chairman of the apex body of Indian apparel exporters before taking charge as Chairman of AEPC.

**Centre Appoints Vikram Dev Dutt As New CMD Of Air India :-**

Senior bureaucrat Vikram Dev Dutt has been appointed as the Chairman & Managing Director of Air India Ltd as part of a senior-level bureaucratic reshuffle effected by the Centre on 18 January. The Centre had in October last year accepted Tata Sons bid of Rs 18,000 crore to acquire 100 per cent of the debt-laden state-run carrier. The takeover has not been completed yet. Talace Pvt Ltd, a unit of the holding company of the salt-to-software conglomerate, had made the winning bid of Rs 2,700 crore cash and Rs 15,300 crore debt takeover.

**Roberta Metsola Takes Over EU Parliament Presidency :-**

Maltese center-right politician Roberta Metsola has been elected as the new European Parliament President, a week after the body's previous head David Sassoli died suddenly. Metsola, who was voted into the post on her 43rd birthday, had served as the Parliament's vice-president since 2020 and was elected comfortably in Tuesday's (January 18) leadership vote, winning the support of 458 of the group's 705 MEPs. She is the third woman to lead the Parliament.

**Dileep Sanghani Named As New Chairman Of IFFCO :-**

On 19 January, Dileep Sanghani was elected as the chairman of the Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative (IFFCO). Since 2019, Sanghani has served as vice-chairman. The elections were called after incumbent chairman Balvinder Singh Nakai died in October of last year. The elected board of directors of IFFCO unanimously elected Dileep Sanghani as the 17th chairman of the Cooperative, according to a statement from the cooperative major.

**Vijay Shekhar Sharma named as ambassador of Internet panel on languages UASG :-**

Global internet body ICANN-supported Universal Acceptance Steering Group (UASG) said it has roped in Paytm founder Vijay Shekhar Sharma as UA Ambassador. Universal Acceptance Steering Group works on developing and recommending standards for languages script that are not currently used to access the internet. The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) aims to help ensure a stable, secure, and unified global Internet. Its headquarter is based at California, United States.

**Chanchal Kumar Named As New MD Of NHIDCL :-**

Shri Chanchal Kumar IAS (Bihar 1992), presently in the cadre, , has been appointed as Managing Director, National Highways & Infrastructure Development Corporation Ltd. (NHIDCL), Ministry of Road Transport & Highways in the rank and pay of Additional Secretary. The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has also approved the extension in the central deputation tenure of Ashutosh Jindal, Additional Secretary, Cabinet Secretariat for 1 year beyond 16th February 2022 to 16th February 2023.

4: Awards

**HDFC Bank won CII Dx award for 'Most Innovative Best Practice' 2021 :-**

HDFC Bank's efforts in furthering financial inclusion through partnership with the Government of India's Common Service Centres (CSC) have been adjudged 'Most Innovative Best Practice' for financial inclusion at the coveted CII Digital Transformation Award 2021. Additionally, the bank has 5,686 branches across 2929 cities/ towns - 50 per cent of these are located at Rural & Semi-Urban locations.



Viral Desai bagged “Global Environment And Climate Action Citizen Award 2021” :-

Surat’s noted industrialist Viral Desai, popularly known as Greenman for his love for the environment, has been awarded the prestigious Global Environment and Climate Action Citizen Award in Dubai. Viral Desai and the other winners were felicitated at Dubai’s Atlantis, The Palm, on December 23, with the Bharat Gaurav Samman by Sanskruti Yuva Sansthan. The UAE’s Foreign Trade And Economic Development Department’s Director-General Sheikh Awad Mohammed Mugrin graced the ceremony with his presence. Twenty-eight prominent personalities from 11 countries, including the UK, the US, New Zealand, France, and Malaysia, were felicitated with the prestigious awards on occasion, but Viral Desai was the only one from India to have won the honour for climate action.



PETA: Alia Bhatt India’s 2021 Person Of The Year :-

PETA India has named Bollywood actress Alia Bhatt as its 2021 Person of the Year to celebrate her work to support an animal-friendly fashion industry and for her advocacy for dogs and cats in need. Alia Bhatt has been actively

involved in launching animal welfare activities. She had launched her vegan kidswear line Ed-a-Mamma last year, which won the 2021 PETA India fashion award for helping nurture children's love for animals and nature.



Sahitya Akademi Award 2021 Announced :-

The Sahitya Akademi on 30 December announced a list of 22 winners each of the Yuva Puraskar and the Bal Sahitya Puraskar for 2021. Megha Majumdar won the Yuva Puraskar for her debut novel "A Burning" and Himanshu Vajpai won it for his collection of short stories titled "Kissa Kissa Lucknowa -- Lucknow Ke Awami Kisse", the Sahitya Akademi said in a statement. The Sahitya Akademi Yuva Puraskar 2021 will be given for nine books of poetry, five novels, six short stories and one each of essays and play, it said.



KVASU Bags National Award For Breed Conservation :-

The All India Co-ordinated Research Project (AICRP) on poultry breeding, Mannuthy, under the Kerala Veterinary and Animal Science University (KVASU), bagged the national breed conservation award for 2021. The centre received the prestigious award from ICAR - The National Bureau of Animal Genetic Resources (NBAGR) for the conservation and research activities on the Tellicherry breed, the only registered native chicken breed from the State.



Danish Siddiqui gets posthumously Mumbai Press Club's RedInk Award 2020 :-

Photojournalist Danish Siddiqui, who died during an assignment in Afghanistan, has been posthumously awarded as the 'Journalist of the Year' for 2020 by the Mumbai Press Club. Chief Justice of India N V Ramana on 29 December presented the annual 'RedInk Awards for Excellence in Journalism', instituted by the Mumbai Press Club, in a virtual event. He presented the prestigious award to Siddiqui "for his spectrum of investigative and impactful news photography". Danish Siddiqui's wife Frederike Siddiqui received the award.



Zishaan A Latif won Ramnath Goenka Award in Photo journalism :-

As part of centenary year celebrations of its founder, Ramnath Goenka, Indian Express Group instituted the Ramnath Goenka Excellence in Journalism Awards. Zishaan A Latif won Ramnath Goenka Award in the Photo Journalism category. About a month after the NRC list was released, Latif made his way through four districts in Assam, documenting people's struggle for inclusion in the NRC. Most of those he met were poor Muslims who did not understand the NRC process and had been excluded from the first two drafts of the list, published in December 2017 and July 2018.



JC Chaudhry gets first ever Guinness World Record in Numerology :-

The first-ever Guinness World Record in Numerology and the first world record of 2022 was achieved by one of India's top numerologists JC Chaudhry educating about ancient science to around 6000 participants, enthusiasts of numerology joined from USA, UK, Middle East, and India. The initiative was organised by CNPL (Chaudhry Nummero Pvt Ltd) and the Indian Institute of Numerology to create awareness regarding numerology, which was prevalent across ancient cultures like Greece, Egypt, China, Chaldea and India.



South Indian Bank won UiPath Automation Excellence awards 2021 :-

The Kerala-based lender South Indian Bank has won the UiPath Automation Excellence Awards 2021 for Best Automation under Crisis for Business Continuity. The award was bestowed upon the Bank for its exceptional use of Robotic Process Automation capabilities under difficult times for solving severe operational constraints, thereby ensuring business continuity. South Indian Bank has been at the forefront in adopting robotic process automation with a robust ecosystem in place, with a vision to automate complex and mundane processes.



3rd National Water Awards For 2020 Announced :-

Union Minister of Jal Shakti Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat announced 3rd National Water Awards-2020, on January 07. In the Best State category, Uttar Pradesh has been awarded first prize, followed by Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu. Ms. Vini Mahajan, Secretary, DDWS was also present on the occasion. Speaking on the occasion, Shri Shekhawat stated that water is fundamental to life. India's current water requirement is estimated to be around 1,100 billion cubic meters per year, projected to go up to 1,447 billion cubic meters by 2050. Water as a

resource is crucial to India, which is one of the fastest growing economies in the world.



Satish Adiga gets ICMR national award "Dr Subhas Mukherjee Award" :-

Dr Satish Adiga, Professor in Clinical Embryology at Kasturba Medical College (KMC), Manipal Academy of Higher Education (MAHE), Manipal, has been selected by the Indian Council of Medical Research for its National Award for the year 2020. According to a release issued by ICMR on its website, Prof Adiga will receive Dr Subhas Mukherjee Award from ICMR in recognition for his outstanding contribution to the field of In vitro fertilization (IVF). Dr Subhas Mukherjee is the creator of India's first IVF baby and ICMR has instituted the award in his name to recognize the outstanding contribution of IVF experts in the country.



Forensic Science Laboratory won SKOCH award for combating crime against children :-

The Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL) won SKOCH Award in Silver category for its work towards combating Crime and Violence against Children. It was given on the 78th SKOCH Summit organised with theme of "State of Governance". According to a statement issued by the FSL, the Director Deepa Verma, the Director of Rohini-based lab and who accepted the award on its behalf, said crime and violence against children has a lifelong effect on physical and mental health of children.

**Golden Globe Awards 2022 Announced :-**

The 79th Annual Golden Globe Awards have been announced by the Hollywood Foreign Press Association (HFPA) from the Beverly Hilton, California. For the first time in history, the winners were announced on goldenglobes.com and were live-streamed on the Golden Globes YouTube channel. Two of the films namely The Power of the Dog and the West Side Story, won the most number of awards with 3 each.

**'Kerala Arts and Crafts Village Organization' won 'International Craft Award 2021 :-**

The Kerala Arts and Crafts Village near Kovalam has won the 2021 International Craft Award for the best craft village of the year. The Kerala Arts and Crafts Village is an institution established by the Uralungal Labour Contract Co-operative Society for the state tourism department. The international craft award aims at honouring organizations, councils, governments, teachers, artists, designers and individuals around the world who have made significant contributions to the sustainable and comprehensive development of the handicraft industry

**Actress Harshaali Malhotra awarded 12th Bharat Ratna Dr Ambedkar Award 2022 :-**

'Bajrangi Bhaijaan' actress Harshaali Malhotra received the prestigious Bharat Ratna Dr Ambedkar Award this year. She received the award for her performance in the film and for her contribution to the field of cinema. Harshaali posted on her Instagram about the award. In her caption, she thanked her co-star Salman Khan, and director Kabir Khan, along with Casting director Mukesh Chhabra.



New Zealand spinner Ajaz Patel wins ICC Player of the Month Award :-

New Zealand cricketer Ajaz Patel on 10 January won the ICC Player of the Month award for December following his 10-wicket haul against India in the second Test in Mumbai. The left-arm spinner was nominated for the award alongside India opener Mayank Agarwal and Australian pacer Mitchell Starc but beat them to it on the back of his incredibly rare feat. Ajaz picked up 14 wickets in the Mumbai Test match in early December against India, including all 10 in the first innings, to become only the third player in Test history.

**NIRAMAI & InnAccel received Global Women's Health Tech Awards :-**

NIRAMAI Health Analytix Pvt. Ltd. and InnAccel Technologies Pvt. Ltd., two start-ups supported by DBT-BIRAC), have received the World Bank Group and the Consumer Technology Association's Global Women's Health Tech Awards, which recognises innovative startups that leverage tech to improve women's health and safety in emerging markets. NIRAMAI Health Analytix Pvt. Ltd, a recipient of BIRAC's Women in Entrepreneurial Research Award 2019, was selected for its novel software-based medical device that detects early-stage breast cancer in a simple and private way on women of all age groups and breast densities, addressing a critical unmet need in cancer screening.

**Global Private Banking Awards 2021: HDFC Bank named as Best Private Bank in India :-**

HDFC Bank has been adjudged Best Private Bank in India at the Global Private Banking Awards 2021, organised by Professional Wealth Management (PWM). HDFC Bank Private Banking, part of India's largest privately-owned bank, provides customers with a product suite across all asset classes for "optimal asset allocation" depending on clients' risk profiles and goals. The bank has been on a drive to increase market share through geographic expansion by employing more relationship managers and adding new products and services, says Rakesh Singh, group head, investment and private banking, marketing and retail liability products, at HDFC Bank.

**Former West Indies Cricketer Clive Lloyd Receives Knighthood :-**

Clive Lloyd, the former Captain of the West Indies Cricket team, has been given the honour of knighthood for his services to the game of Cricket. The investiture was

performed on January 12, 2022, by the Duke of Cambridge at Windsor Castle. The Cricket West Indies (CWI) also congratulated Clive Llyod on receiving the knighthood. The President of CWI Ricky Skerritt in a statement offered his heartiest congratulations to Sir Clive.



India's Navdeep Kaur wins Best National Costume award at Mrs World 2022 pageant :-

Mrs India Navdeep Kaur won the round for Best National Costume at the Mrs World 2022 pageant in Las Vegas, USA. Navdeep Kaur represented India at the international stage after winning the title of Mrs India World in 2021. For the National Costume round of Mrs World 2022, she wore an all-gold outfit conceptualised, designed and created by Eggie Jasmin.



National Startup Awards 2021 Announced :-

The Union Minister of Commerce & Industry presented the second edition of National Startup Awards 2021. It was also announced that 16th January (Startup India Initiative was launched on this day in 2016) will be

celebrated as National Start-up Day, to take the Startup culture to the far flung areas of the country. The 'Blockchain-enabled verification for Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) tax incentive certificates', 'Digilocker enabled DPIIT Startup recognition certificate' were also launched.



Sumit Bhale won gold medal at the International Folk Art Festival :-

A young Lavni artist from Maharashtra has won a gold medal at the International Folk Art Festival in Dubai. Artist Sumit Bhale from Pathri of Fulbari taluka led the entire state of Maharashtra in the International Folk Art Festival held in Dubai. With his splendid performance Maharashtra's splendor has been widely appreciated at the international platform.



Minister of State Subhas Sarkar launches Swachh Vidyalaya Puraskar :-

Minister of State for Education Subhas Sarkar on Wednesday (January 12) launched the Swachh Vidyalaya

Puraskar (SVP) 2021 – 2022. The SVP 2021-22 is open to all categories of schools i.e. government, government aided and private schools in both rural and urban areas. In order to create self-motivation and awareness about sanitation the Swachh Vidyalaya Puraskar (SVP) was first instituted by the Department of School Education and Literacy, in 2016-17.



Axis Bank & CRMNEXT Won IBSi Innovation Awards 2021 :-

Axis Bank, one of the largest private bank in Asia, and CRMNEXT, the leading crm for banks, were awarded the "Best CRM System Implementation" at IBS Intelligence Global FinTech Innovation Awards 2021, which are referred by prominent global bankers and IT consultants as the most prestigious of their kind across the world.

Naval Kumar Lad, Sr. Vice President, Information Technology, Axis Bank, accepted the award on behalf of the bank.



Pfizer CEO Albert Bourla wins \$1 million Genesis Prize for COVID-19 vaccine :-

Albert Bourla, chairman and chief executive of global pharmaceutical giant Pfizer Inc., was awarded on 19 January the prestigious Genesis Prize for his efforts in leading the development of a COVID-19 vaccine. The \$1 million award is granted each year to a person for their professional achievements, contributions to humanity and commitment to Jewish values. The Genesis Prize Foundation said Bourla had received the largest number of votes in an online campaign in which some 200,000 people in 71 countries participated.

5: Banking



IndusInd Bank Launched 'Green Fixed Deposits' :-

IndusInd Bank has announced the launch of 'Green Fixed Deposits' where the deposit proceeds will be used to finance projects and firms supporting the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). IndusInd Bank is amongst few banks globally, to bring forth this proposition, thereby integrating SDG into a regular fixed deposit product. These deposits shall be offered to both retail and corporate customers.



SBI To Acquire 9.95% Stake In GIFT-IFSC-Based Clearing Corp :-

India's biggest public sector lender State Bank of India (SBI) on 30 December announced that it has picked up 9.95 per cent stake in India International Clearing Corporation (IFCC) Ltd for a maximum amount of Rs 34 crore. The Clearing Corporation is a GIFT City (Gandhinagar, Gujarat) based Market Infrastructure Institution (MII). The Corporation is the first international clearing corporation to be set up at Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT) International Financial Services Centre (IFSC). As per the filing, the Clearing Corporation is AAA-rated and clears and settles index and single stock derivatives, commodity derivatives, currency derivatives and debt securities.



LIC, GIC, New India Assurance are Domestic Systemically Important Insurers for 2021-22 :-

Life Insurance Corporation of India, General Insurance Corporation of India and New India Assurance remain Domestic Systemically Important Insurers (D-SIIs) and consequently subject to enhanced regulatory

supervision. Insurance regulator IRDAI said this while announcing LIC, GIC Re and New India have been identified, like in 2020-21, as D-SIIs for 2021-22. Given their nature of operations and systemic importance, the three insurers have to carry on efforts to raise the level of corporate governance besides identifying all relevant risks and promoting a sound risk management framework and culture.



RBI Retains SBI, ICICI Bank, HDFC Bank As D-SIBs 2022 :-

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on January 04 released the list of Domestic Systemically Important Banks (D-SIBs) for 2021. State Bank of India (SBI), ICICI Bank and HDFC Bank continue to be identified as D-SIBs. "The additional Common Equity Tier 1 (CET1) requirement for D-SIBs was phased-in from April 1, 2016 and became fully effective from April 1, 2019. The additional CET1 requirement will be in addition to the capital conservation buffer," RBI said. The addition CET1 requirement as a percentage of Risk Weighted Assets (RWAs) for SBI is 0.60 per cent, while it is 0.20 per cent for HDFC Bank and ICICI Bank.



RBI Approved Fino Payments Bank For International Remittance Business :-

Fino Payments Bank on 03 January said it has received approval from Reserve Bank of India (RBI) for starting international remittance business under the money transfer service scheme (MTSS). The Bank will be undertaking inward cross-border money transfer activities and will be partnering with an overseas principal. It has also received the approval to partner with one of the largest global remittance service providers as its overseas principal.

**RBI: Airtel Payments Bank Gets Scheduled Bank Status 2022 :-**

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on 04 January announced the inclusion of Airtel Payments Bank in the second schedule of the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934. The central bank also said that SBI, ICICI and HDFC banks will continue to be identified as Domestic Systemically Important Banks (D-SIBs), under the same bucketing structure as in the 2020 list of D-SIBs.

**RBI Issued Framework For Offline Digital Payments :-**

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on 03 January released a framework for small-value offline transactions in the digital mode. Offline payments may be made using any channel or instrument like cards, wallets or mobile devices, but they shall be made in proximity, or in the face-to-face mode only, the framework prescribed. An offline payment refers to a transaction which does not require internet or telecom connectivity to take effect. Authorised payment system operators (PSOs) and payment system participants (PSPs) banks as well as non-banks which wish to offer payments in the offline mode will have to comply with the requirements under the framework.

**RBI cancelled authorisation certificates of Muthoot Vehicle Finance, Eko India :-**

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on January 4 cancelled the Certificate of Authorisation (CoA) of two Payment System Operators (PSOs) — Muthoot Vehicle and Asset Finance Limited and Eko India Financial Services Private Limited — citing non-compliance with regulatory requirements. The apex bank took the decision by exercising the powers conferred on it under the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007. The RBI said the COA cancellation came into force on December 31, 2021.

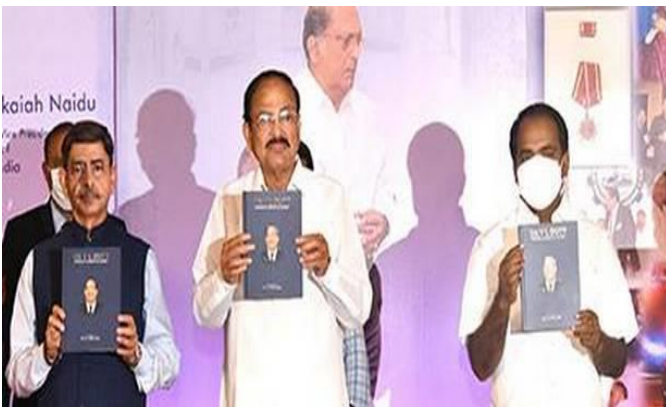
**SBI General Insurance launched
‘#BahaneChhodoTaxBachao’ campaign :-**

SBI General Insurance has announced the launch of a campaign to increase awareness of Indians around the need to buy health insurance to save tax. The campaign #BahaneChhodoTaxBachao will also underline other benefits of opting for health insurance. "The pandemic has caused a significant increase in insurance awareness and adoption. However, India still has vast scope for penetration of health insurance. It is a priority rather than a choice of option since it not just prevents a medical emergency from turning into a financial crisis but also comes with the double benefit of saving tax under section 80D," according to a press release.

**Paytm Payments Bank****Paytm Payments Bank became most preferred UPI beneficiary bank in India :-**

Paytm Payments Bank Ltd (PPBL) announced that it has received over 926 million UPI transactions in a single month, becoming the first beneficiary bank in the country to achieve this landmark and cementing its position as the largest and fastest growing UPI beneficiary bank in the country. At the 'Digital Payments Utsav', the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) awarded it for being the top performer in terms of volume of transactions, merchant onboarding and transaction success rate.

6: Books and Author

**A book titled 'Dr V L Dutt: Glimpses of a Pioneer's Life Journey' by V L Indira Dutt :-**

The Vice President, Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu emphasized the need for maintaining work-life balance and said that equal importance must be given to one's professional duties and family responsibilities. Addressing the gathering after launching the book 'Dr V L Dutt: Glimpses of a Pioneer's Life Journey' written by Smt. V L Indira Dutt in Chennai, the Vice President urged all business leaders to frame their HR policies in such a way that their employees are able to manage their work-life balance easily. "This would not only lead to better performance by employees but would also help in addressing mental health issues which are rising in our society", he added.



A new book titled “Mamata Beyond 2021” authored by Jayanta Ghosal :-

HarperCollins Publishers India is set to publish a new book titled “Mamata: Beyond 2021”, authored by political journalist Jayanta Ghosal and translated by Arunava Sinha. The book details how Mamata was successfully able to portray herself as the ‘daughter of Bengal’ who worked tirelessly for the state’s poor and disadvantaged. It also asks the question: with the state elections under her belt, what will be Mamata’s path to the General Elections of 2024? Does she consider herself a candidate for the prime minister’s post?



Ratan Tata’s biography ‘Ratan N. Tata: The Authorized Biography’ to be out in Nov 2022 :-

Industrialist and philanthropist Ratan Tata's authorized biography titled 'Ratan N. Tata: The Authorized Biography' is all set to hit the stands globally in

November 2022. The development comes after HarperCollins acquired the rights to publish the authorized biography of Tata Sons emeritus chairman on January 7. The biography will be penned by former senior bureaucrat and retired IAS officer Dr. Thomas Matthew.



A book on Arundhati Bhattacharya “Indomitable: A Working Woman’s Notes on Life, Work and Leadership” released :-

Former (SBI) Chairperson Arundhati Bhattacharya turned author with her autobiography - 'Indomitable - A Working Woman's Notes on Life, Work and Leadership'. Published by HarperCollins India, the book tracks the life and career of the 65- year-old banker, who broke the glass ceiling and stood out in a male-dominated industry. It shares a glimpse into how she got into the challenging banking job and left her mark as an exceptional leader.



A Book Titled “Manoj Bajpayee — Kuch Paane Ki Zid”:-

A biography on National Award-winning actor Manoj Bajpayee, penned by veteran TV journalist Piyush

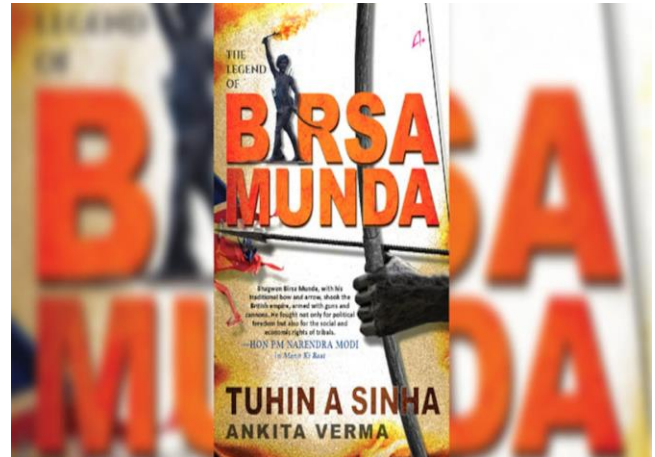
Pandey, will be released in January. Penguin India's imprint Hind Pocket Books will publish the book titled "Manoj Bajpayee — Kuch Paane Ki Zid". Regarded as one of India's finest actors today, Bajpayee has straddled the various formats of acting from theatre to films to OTT and has made a name for himself courtesy his unconventional skills.



A book titled "Bose: The Untold Story of An Inconvenient Nationalist" by Chandrachur Ghose :-

A new biography of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose titled 'Bose: The Untold Story of An Inconvenient Nationalist' is all set to release in February. The biography is authored by researcher and founder of 'Mission Netaji' Chandrachur Ghose and published by Penguin Random House India under its Viking imprint. The biography attempts to bring new perspectives on Netaji's thoughts on independent India's development, the problem of communalism, geopolitics, his political ideology, and

how he negotiated with the political parties, revolutionary societies, and the government.



A book titled 'The Legend of Birsa Munda' authored by Tuhin A Sinha & Ankita Verma:-

While people today remember prominent Indian freedom fighters who laid their lives for the country, unfortunately, some of them have been forgotten in the pages of history. And remembering one such lesser-known tribal hero, Birsa Munda, author Tuhin Sinha has written a new book which is co-authored by Ankita Verma. Titled 'The Legend of Birsa Munda', the book tells the extraordinary story of Birsa Munda, who courageously fought against the oppressive British Raj for the rights of his tribal community.

7: Defence



DRDO named Paras Defence for handing over border surveillance systems tech :-

Paras Defence has been selected by Defence Research Development Organization (DRDO) as one of the companies for handing over technology of border surveillance systems, the company informed. The technology is as developed by instruments research and

development establishment (IRDE) and DRDO. This technology has been transferred by a licensing agreement for transfer of technology for border surveillance Systems entered between the Company, IRDE and DRDO. The system will provide all weather surveillance for day and night monitoring of the border areas, it will consist of Radar, EO sensors etc.



Indian Army Set Up Quantum Lab At MCTE In Military Headquarters Of War :-

The Indian army, along with the National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS), established a Quantum Lab to spearhead research and training at the Military College of Telecommunication and Engineering (MCTE) in Madhya Pradesh's Mhow. Gen MM Naravane, the Chief of Army Staff, was also briefed on the developments during his recent visit to Mhow. Military College of Telecommunication Engineering (MCTE) is a leading government college based in Mhow which provides an array of academic courses and programmes. Indian Army has also established an Artificial Intelligence (AI) Centre at MCTE with over 140 deployments in necessary fields.



Exercise Milan 2022: India To Host 46 Nations Mega Naval Wargames :-

The Indian Navy is getting ready for the largest ever multilateral 'Milan' exercise which has been scheduled for the end of February, 2022. More than 40 plus navies from across the globe are expected to enter the Indian waters starting next month. This time besides the member countries of the QUAD (Japan, the US and Australia), the member nations of AUKUS (the UK, Australia & the US) too are going to be participating in this drill which is going to be all about interoperability and jointness in the waters.



Sea Dragon 2022 Exercise: India Joins 'Sea Dragon' Exercise :-

India and its partners in the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue or Quad along with Canada and South Korea are participating in the multinational exercise Sea Dragon at Guam in the Western Pacific. The exercise, primarily focused on anti-submarine warfare (ASW) training, will involve more than 270 hours of in-flight training and activities ranging from tracking simulated targets to tracking a US Navy submarine. Each event will be graded and the country scoring the highest points will receive the Dragon Belt award.



India successfully test-fires naval variant BrahMos cruise missile :-

India on 11 January successfully test-fired a naval variant of the advanced supersonic BrahMos cruise missile from a stealth guided-missile destroyer of the Indian Navy. The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) said the missile hit the designated target "precisely". "Advanced sea to sea variant of BrahMos Supersonic Cruise missile was tested from INS Visakhapatnam today. Missile hit the designated target ship precisely," the DRDO tweeted.



DRDO successfully test-fires final deliverable configuration of MPATGM :-

Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) successfully flight tested the final deliverable configuration of Man Portable Anti-Tank Guided Missile (MPATGM) on January 11, 2022. The indigenously

developed anti-tank missile is a low weight, fire & forget missile and is launched from a man portable launcher, integrated with thermal sight. The missile impacted the designated target and destroyed it. The final impact event was captured on camera and the test has validated the minimum range successfully.



Philippines to purchase BrahMos cruise missiles from India :-

Philippines on 14 January accepted BrahMos Aerospace Pvt Ltd's to supply Shore-Based Anti-Ship Missile System Acquisition Project for its navy. The proposal is worth \$374.9 million. The Notice of Award has been communicated to BrahMos officials by the Philippines Department of National Defense. BrahMos is the main weapon system of the Indian Navy warships and has been deployed on almost all of its surface platforms.



Indian Navy and Russian Navy conducts PASSEX Exercise in Arabian Sea :-

Indian Navy's indigenously designed and built guided missile destroyer, INS Kochi, exercised with Russian Federation Navy's RFS Admiral Tributs on 14 January 2022 in the Arabian Sea. The exercise showcased cohesiveness and interoperability between the two navies and included tactical manoeuvres, cross-deck helicopter operations and seamanship activities. These exercises are aimed at enhancing interoperability, improving understanding and imbibing best practices between both the friendly navies.

**India & Japan conducted Maritime Partnership Exercise in Bay of Bengal :-**

The Indian Navy conducted maritime drill exercises with Japan Maritime Self-Defence Force on Thursday, January 13 to improve defence collaboration between the two nations. In the Bay of Bengal, Indian Naval Ships Shivalik and Kadmat participated in a Maritime Partnership Exercise alongside Japanese Navy Ships Uraga and Hirado. According to the Indian Navy, this maritime drill between the two nations involved a wide variety of flying operations, replenishment approaches, as well as tactical manoeuvres.

**Israel Completed A Successful Flight Test Of The Arrow-3 :-**

Israel's defence ministry said on January 18 that it had completed a planned flight test of the Arrow weapons system, and would release further test details throughout the day. Last year, Israel said it was developing a new ballistic missile shield, the Arrow-4, with the United States. Its Arrow-2 and Arrow-3 interceptors are already operational as part of a multi-layered system to destroy incoming missiles in the atmosphere and in space.

**Lt Gen Manoj Pande Appointed As Next Army Vice Chief :-**

The government has approved the appointment of Eastern Command chief Lt General Manoj Pande as the next Army vice-chief, even as the decision on the next chief of defence staff (CDS) is still awaited. Lt Gen Pande will succeed Lt-General CP Mohanty, who is slated to retire on January 31, sources said on 18 January. There was, however, no official word on the appointment.



India Successfully Test Fires BrahMos Supersonic Cruise Missile :-

India successfully test-fired supersonic cruise missile Brahmos off the Odisha coast here on 20 January, DRDO sources said. With new the added technologies, including the control system, the missile was test-fired from the Integrated Test Range (ITR) launch pad-III at Chandipur around 10.45 am, said a source at the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO). The detailed data is being analysed analysis, the source said.

8: Economy



RBI imposed penalty on payment operators One Mobikwik & Spice Money :-

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has imposed a monetary penalty of Rs 1 crore each on payment platforms Mobikwik and Spice Money. In a press statement, RBI said that the penalties have been imposed on these two payment service operators (PSOs) under provisions of Section 30 of the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007 (PSS Act). "These actions are based on deficiencies in regulatory compliance and are not intended to pronounce upon the validity of any transaction or agreement entered into by the entities with their customers," RBI said. Both One Mobikwik Systems Private Limited – parent company of Mobikwik – and Spice Money Limited have been penalised for

committing offences of the nature referred to in Section 26 (6) of the PSS Act.



Foreign exchange reserves decrease by \$587 million to \$635.08 billion for the week ended Dec 24 :-

India's foreign exchange (forex) reserves declined by 160 million to \$635.66 billion due to a sharp drop in foreign currency assets, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) data showed on 24 December. The foreign currency assets dipped by \$645 million to \$572.21 billion during the week ended December 17, 2021, as per the RBI's weekly statistical supplement. The foreign currency assets include the effect of appreciation or depreciation of non-US units like the euro, pound, and yen held in the foreign exchange reserves. It is expressed in the US dollar.



Government Approved 19th Tranche Of Electoral Bonds :-

The sale of the 19th tranche of electoral bonds was started from January 01. The issuance of these bonds was approved by the central government on 30 December, ahead of the assembly elections in next few months. The sale will go on till January 10. The elections are due in Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh and Goa. "State Bank of India (SBI), in the 19th Phase of sale, has been authorised to issue and encash Electoral Bonds through its 29 Authorized Branches with effect from January 1 to January 10, 2022," the finance ministry said in a statement. SBI is the only authorised bank to issue such bonds.



RBI extended deadline for Periodic KYC Update till March 31, 2022 :-

Reserve Bank of India on December 30 extended the deadline for periodic KYC (know-your-customer) update in banks by three months till March 31, 2022. The extension has been granted in view of prevalent

uncertainty due to a new variant of covid-19, it said. In May 2021, amid the second wave of COVID-19 in the country and its induced restrictions in various states, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) had directed banks and other regulated financial entities to not impose any punitive action against customers for failure to update KYC till the end of the year.



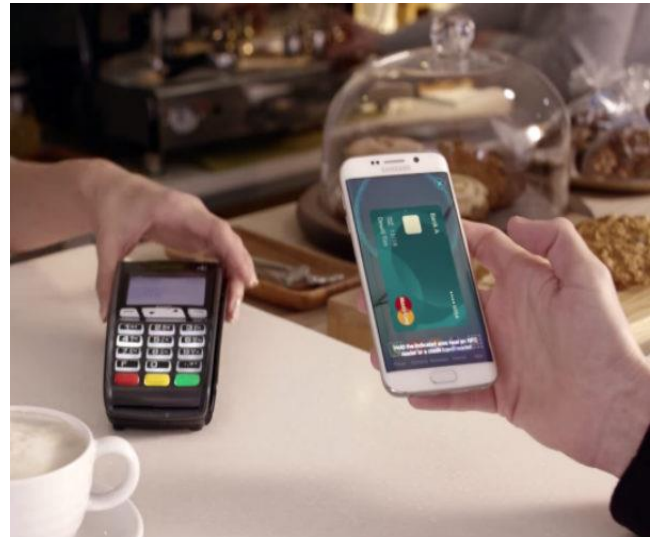
SEBI Reconstitutes Its Primary Market Advisory Committee :-

Sebi has restructured its advisory committee on market data that recommends policy measures pertaining to areas like securities market data access and privacy. Rejigging its market data advisory committee, Sebi has said the panel will now be chaired by S Sahoo, Professor at National Law University, Delhi and former chairperson, Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI), as per the latest information with the regulator. The 20-member committee was earlier headed by Madhabi Puri Buch, ex-whole time member of Sebi.



Nippon India MF Launches India's First Auto ETF 2022 :-

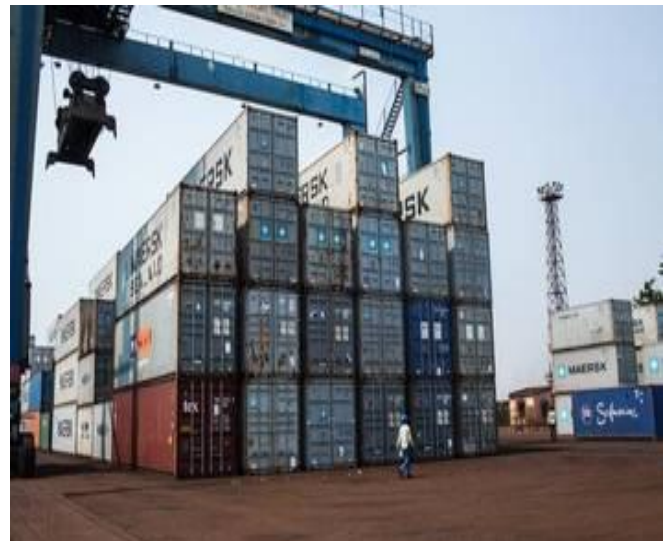
Nippon Life India Asset Management Limited, asset manager of Nippon India Mutual Fund (NIMF), has announced the launch of India's First Auto sector ETF - Nippon India Nifty Auto ETF. The Auto ETF is an open-ended scheme tracking the Nifty Auto Index. Nippon India Nifty Auto ETF will predominantly invest in stocks comprising of the Nifty Auto Index in the same proportion as the Index. It will provide exposure to Top 15 (as per Nifty Auto Index methodology) companies representing auto-related sectors like Automobiles 4 wheelers, Automobiles 2 & 3 wheelers, Auto Ancillaries, and Tyres, the fund house said.

**NBBL launched UPMS to simplify recurring bill payments :-**

NPCI Bharat BillPay Ltd. (NBBL) on 04 January announced the launch of a Unified Presentment Management System (UPMS), which will enable users to set up standing instructions on their recurring bill payments across all channels and modes of digital payments. Bharat BillPay is a bill payments services platform of the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI). Under the system, bills will be automatically fetched from the billers and presented to customers to take action in terms of auto-debit and bill payment management.

**CryptoWire Introduces India's First Global Index Of Cryptocurrencies IC15 :-**

Superapp CryptoWire has launched India's first crypto index, IC15, which will track the market capitalization and liquidity of top 15 global digital currencies, the company said on 03 January. The IC15 is a rule-based broad market index by market capitalization that measures the performance of 15 widely traded liquid cryptocurrencies listed on exchanges across the world, it added. Crypto assets such as Bitcoin, Ethereum, Binance coin, Solana, Cardano, Ripple, Terra, Dogecoin and Shiba inu will be monitored by the platform.



India records highest-ever monthly exports at \$37 billion in December :-

India exported goods worth \$37.29 billion in December, the highest ever in a month, as demand for items such as engineering products, petroleum items, and gems and jewellery continued to soar, the preliminary data released by the commerce and industry ministry showed. India's merchandise exports in April-December were nearly \$300 billion, up 48.85 per cent year-on-year and 26 per cent against the same period in 2019. This translates into India achieving three-fourths of its annual export target of \$400 billion in the first nine months of FY22.

**RBI increased banks' LCR maintenance on Funds received :-**

The Reserve Bank has increased the threshold for deposits and other funds of non-financial small businesses by 50 per cent to Rs 7.5 crore for the purpose of maintenance of Liquidity Coverage Ratio (LCR), with the aim to better align its regulations with Basel norms and also enable banks to manage liquidity risks more effectively. The existing cap was Rs 5 crore, the central bank said on 06 January, adding the new framework will be effective immediately.

**RBI issues eligibility norms for entities harnessing credit bureau data :-**

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on 05 January laid down eligibility norms for entities tapping into data from credit information companies (CICs), or credit bureaus. The rules say a company must be owned and controlled by resident Indian citizens to become a specified user with a credit bureau, amid reports of lending apps with Chinese links operating in India. In order to be eligible as a 'specified user' under the Credit Information Companies (Amendment) Regulations, 2021, an entity must be a company incorporated in India or a statutory corporation established in India.

**RBI Set Up A Separate Department For "FinTech" :-**

The RBI has set up a fintech department to facilitate innovation, and help identify and address challenges & opportunities in the new-age sector. The central bank has appointed Ajay Kumar Choudhary, executive

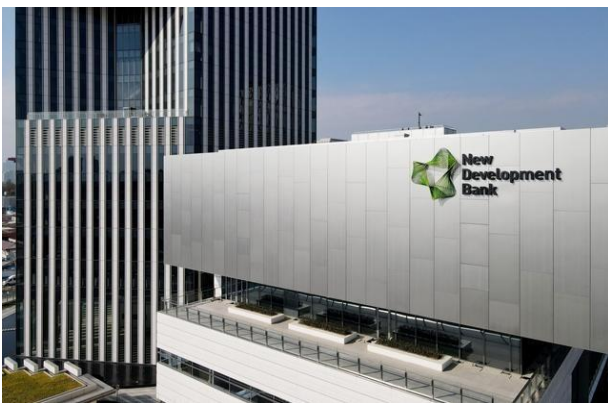
director, to head the department. All matters related to inter-regulatory and international coordination on fintech shall also be dealt with by the department, which will report to the RBI's centralised administration division.



The Union Cabinet Approved Infusion Of 1500 Crore Rupees In IREDA :-

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) on 19 January approved infusion of ₹1,500 crore in Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Limited (IREDA), which will help generate 10,200 jobs a year and reduce carbon emissions equivalent to approximately 7.49 million tonnes per year. The additional equity infusion will enable the mini-ratna company under the ministry of new and renewable energy to lend ₹12,000 crore approximately to the renewable energy sector.

9: International



Egypt Became Fourth New Member Of New Development Bank :-

The BRICS New Development Bank (NDB) on 29 December announced that it will add Egypt as its new member. Egypt is the fourth new member admitted into NDB, after Bangladesh, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Uruguay, further expanding the bank's global outreach. The NDB will provide Egypt with a new platform to foster cooperation with BRICS countries on infrastructure and sustainable development, as well as with other emerging economies and developing countries.



Russia's 1st versatile nuclear-powered icebreaker to boost India's Arctic Plans :-

Russia has launched a new nuclear-powered icebreaker 'Sibir' that will contribute to the rapidly growing fleet of lethal icebreakers to keep the Northern Sea Route open for year-round shipping through the Arctic enabling wider presence of India in the region. During the 21st edition of the India-Russia summit held on December 6, the Indian Side also expressed its interest in collaborating with Russia on the Northern Sea Route. The Indian Side congratulated the Russian Side for its ongoing successful chairmanship of the Arctic Council from 2021-23 and expressed its readiness to play an active role as an Observer in the Arctic Council.



China says Arunachal Pradesh 'inherent part' of its territory; calls it South Tibet :-

China on December 31 defended the renaming of 15 more places in India's northeastern state of Arunachal Pradesh, claiming that the southern part of Tibet is an "inherent part" of its territory. India on December 30 strongly rejected China renaming 15 places in Arunachal Pradesh and asserted that the state has "always been" and will "always be" an integral part of India and that assigning "invented" names does not alter this fact. India's reaction came in response to China's Ministry of Civil Affairs announcing Chinese names for 15 more places in Arunachal Pradesh which Beijing claims as South Tibet.



World's Longest Metro Line Opened In China :-

China's biggest city and a global financial hub, Shanghai is going to extend a new driverless and longest metro line

on 30 December. With the latest inclusion of metro lines, the total length of Shanghai's metro network will extend to 831 km, continuing to be the longest in the world. Apart from making a record of the world's largest metro network, the city will also get two fully driverless metro lines, taking the total number of such automatic lines to five in the city. The fully automatic lines will contribute 167 km to the total length of the metro network established in the city.



Russia's Test-Fires New Hypersonic Tsirkon Missiles 2022 :-

Russia test-fired around 10 new Tsirkon (Zircon) hypersonic cruise missiles from a frigate and two more from a submarine, Interfax news agency said on December 31 citing northern fleet. Russian President Vladimir Putin has lauded the weapon as part of a new generation of unrivalled arms systems. Putin has called a missile test, conducted last week, "a big event in the country's life", adding that this was "a substantial step" in increasing Russia's defence capabilities. Some Western experts have questioned how advanced Russia's new generation of weapons is, while recognising that the combination of speed, manoeuvrability and altitude of hypersonic missiles makes them difficult to track and intercept.



Covid-19 New Variant 'IHU' Discovered In France :-

The Omicron Covid variant is spreading like wildfire around the world. The variant of concern has been leading to a galloping surge in Covid-19 cases across the globe. And now, a new variant of Covid-19 has emerged in France recently, according to researchers. Named IHU, the B.1.640.2 variant was discovered by the academics at institute IHU Mediterranee Infection. According to the researchers, the new variant contains 46 mutations – even more than Omicron.



Apple Becomes World's First Company To Hit \$3 Trillion M-Cap :-

Apple Inc on January 03 became the first company with a \$3 trillion stock market value, lifted by investor confidence that the iPhone maker will keep launching best-selling products as it explores new markets such as automated cars and virtual reality. On the first day of trading in 2022, the Silicon Valley company's shares hit an intraday record high of \$182.88, putting Apple's market value just above \$3 trillion. The stock ended the

session up 2.5% at \$182.01, with Apple's market capitalization at \$2.99 trillion. The world's most valuable company reached the milestone as investors bet that consumers will continue to shell out top dollar for iPhones, MacBooks and services such as Apple TV and Apple Music.



Sudan's Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok Announces Resignation :-

Sudan's Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok announced his resignation on 02 January amid political deadlock and widespread pro-democracy protests following a military coup that derailed the country's fragile transition to democratic rule. Hamdok, a former UN official seen as the civilian face of Sudan's transitional government, had been reinstated as prime minister in November 2021 as part of an agreement with the military following the October coup. In that time, he had failed to name a Cabinet and his resignation threw Sudan into political uncertainty amid uphill security and economic challenges.

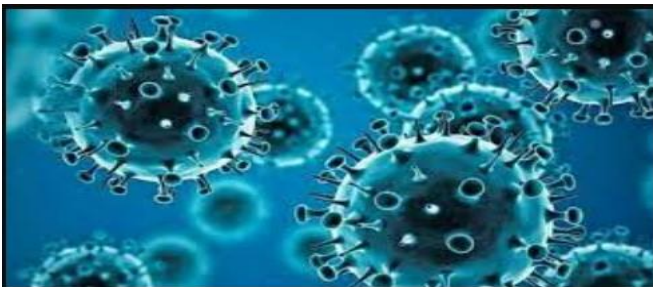


UK: First human case of Avian flu :-

A person living in the south-west of England has caught bird flu, UK officials have confirmed. Cases like this are extremely rare and the individual probably became infected from very close contact with a sick or dead bird. Experts say there is no evidence of onward spread and all close contacts of the person are being monitored. Avian flu, also known as bird flu, is a type of influenza that spreads among birds. The UK has recently seen a large number of outbreaks and incidents of the H5N1 strain of avian influenza in birds across the country.

**PM Imran Khan launches Pakistan's first-ever National Security Policy :-**

Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan has launched the country's first-ever National Security Policy, which articulates a citizen-centric framework, placing economic security at its core unlike the previous one-dimensional security policy where the focus was on the military. Unveiling the public version of the policy, which was separately endorsed by the National Security Committee and the Cabinet last month, Prime Minister Khan said that the previous governments had failed to strengthen Pakistan's economy.

**Cyprus Detects New 'Deltacron' Covid Variant :-**

Cyprus has detected a new variant dubbed as "Deltacron", that has a similar genetic background to the Delta variant, coupled with 10 mutations from Omicron. The variant has already affected 25 people in Cyprus. According to Dr Leondios Kostrikis, the head of the laboratory of biotechnology and molecular virology at the University of Cyprus, of the 25 samples taken in Cyprus, 11 were hospitalised due to the virus, while 14 were from the general population, the Cyprus Mail reported.

**India Give Support To Sri Lanka To Overcome Forex Crisis :-**

India has announced a USD 900 million loan to Sri Lanka to build up its depleted foreign reserves and for food imports, amidst a shortage of almost all essential commodities in the island nation. On 12 January, the governor of the Central Bank Ajith Nivard Cabraal said that the island nation is negotiating a USD one billion loan from India to import goods from the country.



Daniel Ortega sworn in as President of Nicaragua for 5th term :-

Nicaragua President Daniel Ortega was sworn in for a fourth consecutive term on 10 January following elections considered rigged and on a day marked by sanctions from the United States and European Union against members of his government. Alongside him was first lady Rosario Murillo, sworn in for her second term as his vice president. Ortega, 76, and Murillo, 70, oversaw the jailing of opposition leaders, including seven potential challengers for the presidency, months before the November election. They have remained defiant under foreign pressure.

**Mrs World 2022: Mrs America Shaylyn Ford Takes The Crown :-**

Mrs World pageant is the first and the biggest beauty pageant for married women. It has been running since 1984. As Mrs World 2022 pageant recently took place in Las Vegas, Nevada, USA, Mrs America Shaylyn Ford was crowned as the winner. Mrs Jordan and Mrs UAE were the runner ups, respectively. Shaylyn Ford, a 37-year-old hails from Granville, Ohio and was the winner of Mrs American 2021. She beat 57 other contestants for the title and was crowned by Mrs World 2020, Kate Schneider, who was Mrs Ireland.

**20th Dhaka International Film Festival Begins 2022 :-**

On 15 January 2022, the 20th Dhaka International Film Festival (DIFF) began in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The festival is commence from 15th to 23rd of January 2022, and screen 225 films from 70 countries in ten categories at various venues throughout Dhaka. The film festival is going through in a hybrid format, with several films being broadcast live online throughout the event.

**Poet Maya Angelou becomes the first black woman to appear on US coin :-**

Poet and activist Maya Angelou has become the first Black woman to appear on the US quarter, in a new version of the coin unveiled by the US Mint on 10 January. Angelou, author of "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings," will also be the first figure commemorated through the American Women Quarters Program, which was signed into law in January 2021. The program directs the US Mint to issue quarters each year between 2022

and 2025 featuring five different female American trailblazers.



Dubai Opens Its Infinity Bridge For Traffic For The First Time :-

Adding another marvel to its truly incredible architecture, Dubai has thrown the 'Infinity Bridge' open to traffic for the first time. The bridge consists of six lanes and improves the link between Deira and Bur Dubai. It features a combined 3-metre track for pedestrians and cyclists. First announced in 2018, the Infinity Bridge is part of a Al Shindagha Corridor Project. Consisting of six lanes in each direction, the bridge has an arch shaped like

the infinity symbol - which symbolises Dubai's unlimited ambitions.



Oxford University Press declares 'Anxiety' as Children's Word of the Year 2021 :-

The Oxford University Press has picked up 'Anxiety' as the Children's Word of the Year 2021, based on their recent research. The word was selected based on a survey conducted on around 8,000 children aged 7-14 from 85 schools in the United Kingdom, who were asked to choose the words they most often used while talking about health and wellbeing.

10: Miscellaneous



National Dope Testing Laboratory Regained WADA Accreditation :-

Sports Minister Anurag Thakur on 23 December said that the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) has restored the accreditation of the National Dope Testing Laboratory

(NDTL), which was suspended in 2019 because of its failure to comply with global standards. The NDTL is based in the national capital and can resume testing with immediate effect. "NDTL regains the WADA accreditation," Thakur posted on his official Twitter page.



Vijay Raaz & Varun Sharma Named As Brand Ambassadors Of EaseMyTrip :-

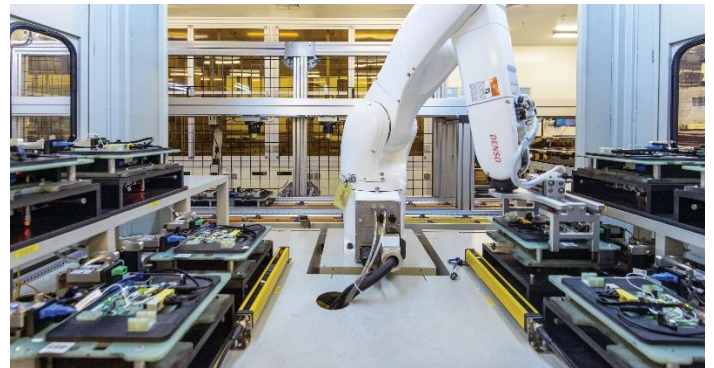
Online travel company EaseMyTrip has appointed actors Vijay Raaz and Varun Sharma as its brand ambassadors. The company said this is the first time it has appointed brand ambassadors. Raaz and Sharma will be coming together as a duo for the first time for any brand campaign. The actors with their mass appeal and strong connect with the audience will complement the brand's image, it said in a statement.

**Jawaharlal Nehru Road Renamed As 'Narendra Modi Marg' :-**

A second road linking Tsomgo lake and Nathula border pass with Gangtok christened as 'Narendra Modi Marg' was officially inaugurated by Governor Ganga Prasad. The older route is called Jawaharlal Nehru Road. The alternative double-lane road at 51 Kyongasala gram panchayat unit (GPU) spanning 19.51 km -- has been operational for almost a year now, officials said.

**UP's Jhansi Railway Station renamed as 'Veerangana Laxmibai Railway Station' :-**

The Uttar Pradesh government has renamed Jhansi railway station as Veerangana Laxmibai railway station. The move comes after the state government got the approval to rename the railway station from the central government. The UP government has also issued a notification in this regard on 29 December. The Home Ministry had received a proposal to change the name of Jhansi railway station three months ago. The UP government went ahead with the proposal to rename the railway station as as Veerangana Laxmibai railway station.

**China launches 5-year plan to become a hub of world robotics innovation :-**

After cementing its position across tech domains globally, China has unveiled a five-year plan to become an innovation hub for the global robotics industry by 2025, as industries like automobile, aerospace, railway transportation, logistics, and mining aim to roll out smart factories. The Ministry of Industry and Information Technology said in a statement that the operating income of China's robotics industry is expected to grow at an average annual rate of 20 per cent from 2021 to 2025. "The move is part of the nation's broader push to cope with a graying population and leverage cutting-edge technologies to advance industrial upgrades,

experts said," state-owned newspaper China Daily reported on 29 December.



Indian-Origin Captain Harpreet Chandi Reaches South Pole :-

Captain Harpreet Chandi, an Indian-origin British Sikh Army officer, has scripted history by completing a solo unsupported trek to the South Pole. Chandi announced her history-making feat on her blog at the end of Day 40 after travelling 1,127 kilometres while pulling a pulk or sledge with all of her kit and battling temperatures of minus 50 degrees Celsius and wind speeds of around 60mph.



National Youth Festival 2022: PM Narendra Modi cancels Puducherry visit due to rising COVID cases :-

In the wake of spiralling COVID cases, the 'National Youth Festival 2022', which was scheduled to be held from 12th January to 16th January 2022 to celebrate the 75th year of Indian Independence, will now be held in virtual mode only. PM Narendra Modi, who was scheduled to visit

Puducherry to inaugurate the festival on January 12, will now National Youth Festival 2022 addressing the youth via virtual mode. Earlier the Opposition DMK, Congress, CPI, CPM and VCK on 06 January appealed to the Centre and Puducherry government to either cancel or postpone the five-day National Youth Festival (NYF).



Shafali Verma appointed as Brand Endorser of Bank of Baroda :-

State-owned Bank of Baroda on 04 January said it has signed cricketer Shafali Verma as its brand endorser. Sanjiv Chadha, managing director and chief executive of Bank of Baroda said, "Bank of Baroda has a history of associating with ace athletes and sportspersons as its brand endorsers and being a crucial part of their journey. The Bank continuously supports the youth of the country through its various banking and non-banking initiatives and this announcement reflects the bank's ethos of adding value to its customer experience by choosing youth-icons like Shafali to inspire them."



LLC named Jhulan Goswami as Ambassador of All Women Match Official Team :-

Legends League Cricket has roped in pacer Jhulan Goswami as an Ambassador to promote Women's Empowerment initiatives. She will be the face of the League and also launch a special initiative to further promote women's participation in cricket. Legends League Cricket also announced an All Women Match Official Team for the League. This is for the first time in cricket that an all-women Match Officials team would be officiating an entire men's league. The League will have ICC empaneled female umpires and match referees from all across the world.

**Kevadia railway station renamed as Ekta Nagar railway station :-**

From now, Indian Railways' Kevadiya station to be known as Ekta Nagar railway station. The Ministry of Railways has approved the renaming of the Statue of Unity's Kevadiya railway station. This Gujarat's railway station which falls under the Vadodra division has been renamed as 'Ekta Nagar' railway station. The station code of Ekta Nagar railway station will be EKNR and the numerical code of the station will be 08224620. According to Western Railways, work has been started to change the railway station name on all station boards.

**South Africa All-Rounder Chris Morris Retires From Cricket :-**

South African all-rounder Chris Morris announced his retirement from all forms of cricket on January 12, 2022. The 34-year-old informed that he would be bringing the curtains down on his 9-year old international cricket career to take up a coaching role. Chris Morris has represented South Africa in 69 international matches, including 4 Tests, 42 ODIs and 23 T20Is. He had made his Test debut in 2016 against England, ODI debut in 2013 against Pakistan and T20I debut in 2012.

**Tata group to replace Vivo as IPL title sponsor from this year:-**

Tata Group is set to replace Chinese smartphone maker Vivo as the Indian Premier League's (IPL) title sponsor from this year, said IPL chairman Brijesh Patel. Vivo had won the IPL title sponsorship rights for five years from 2018 to 2022 for ₹2,200 crore. But after the India-China

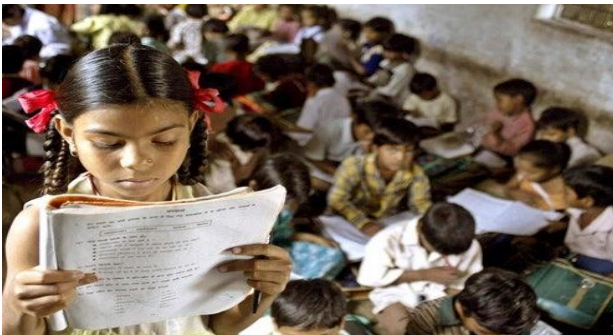
border standoff in eastern Ladakh led to several casualties in 2020, the deal was suspended for a year.



RajKummar Rao named as brand ambassador of RenewBuy :-

Online insurance platform RenewBuy has launched its first 360-degree ad campaign with film actor Rajkummar Rao as its first brand ambassador. The campaign, the company said, highlights its promise of addressing consumer's insurance needs through digital led insurance POSP (Point of Sale Person) advisor network. While consumers can always buy insurance directly, experience has shown that they still need a human connect who can help customers understand the product, its terms and conditions.

11: National



Dharmendra Pradhan launches reading campaign 'Padhe Bharat' :-

Union Education Minister Shri Dharmendra Pradhan launched a 100 days reading campaign 'Padhe Bharat' on January 01. The launch of 100 Days Reading Campaign is in alignment with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 which emphasises on promotion of joyful reading culture for children by ensuring availability of age appropriate reading books for children in local/mother tongue/regional/tribal Language. Shri Pradhan emphasised that reading is the foundation of learning, which motivates students to read books independently,

develops creativity, critical thinking, vocabulary and the ability to express both verbally and in writing.



PM Modi laid Foundation Stone Of Major Dhyana Chand Sports University :-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 02 January laid the foundation stone of Major Dhyana Chand Sports University in Uttar Pradesh's Meerut. While speaking on the occasion, PM Modi said Meerut and its surrounding region has contributed significantly in giving a new direction to independent India. PM Modi has also hailed the historic significance of Meerut, saying the city been

the birthplace of great child of the country, Major Dhyan Chand ji.



Ayush Minister lays foundation stone of International Yoga Academy :-

The Union Ayush Minister Shri Sarbananda Sonowal laid the foundation stone for the Heartfulness International Yoga academy on 03 January at Hyderabad. The Academy will set new benchmarks in yoga training. The Heartfulness International Yoga Academy comprises Yoga halls that can accommodate 100 Yoga students in each hall, therapeutic Yoga rooms for consultation, one to one training spaces or small group classes; pre-natal Yoga rooms; a lecture hall with 200 sitting capacity.



Himachal Pradesh became 1st LPG enabled & smoke free state of the country :-

Himachal Pradesh was declared as being the first "smoke-free" state in the country for achieving 85.42 per cent compliance with the relevant parameters. Health minister Kaul Singh Thakur declared HP a "smoke-free" state at a function here organised jointly by Himachal Pradesh Voluntary Health Association (HPVHA), International Union for Tuberculosis and Lung Diseases

(New Delhi) and Department of Health and Family Welfare. Speaking on the occasion, Thakur said that the focus should now shift to ridding the state of indoor smoking as passive smoking was more injurious than smoking in the open.



Raj Kumar Singh dedicates Automatic Generation Control to nation :-

Power and new and renewable energy minister Raj Kumar Singh on 04 January dedicated Automatic Generation Control (AGC) to the nation. The AGC sends signals to power plants every four seconds to maintain frequency and thereby reliability of India's power system. All possible measures are taken to ensure that the grid frequency always remains within the 49.90-50.05 Hz (hertz) band. While speaking on the 5th POSOCO Day, Shri R.K. Singh remarked that India is getting ready for integration of large-scale variable & intermittent renewable sources and one of the major tools for enabling the frequency control is AGC the statement said.



Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh inaugurates India's first Open Rock Museum :-

On the first day of his two-day visit, Union Minister of State, Dr Jitendra Singh on 06 January inaugurated India's first unique "Rock" Museum and later addressed the Hyderabad scientists at the CSIR-National Geophysical Research Institute (NGRI). The Open Rock Museum, set up with the aim to educate and enlighten the masses about several lesser-known facts, displays around 35 different types of rocks from different parts of India with ages ranging from 3.3 billion years to around 55 million years of the Earth's history.



Election Commission hikes expenditure limit for candidates in polls :-

The Election Commission on 06 January announced a hike in expenditure limit for candidates to Rs 95 lakh (up from Rs 70 lakh) for Lok Sabha elections, and Rs 40 lakh (up from Rs 28 lakh) for Assembly polls. The government's decision is based on the poll panel's recommendation. The EC had formed a committee to study cost factors and other related issues, and subsequently make suitable recommendations.



PM declares December 26 to be observed as 'Veer Baal Diwas' annually :-

On the occasion of the Prakash Purab of Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced that 26 December will be observed as 'Veer Baal Diwas' to mark the martyrdom of Sahibzada Zorawar Singh Ji and Sahibzada Fateh Singh Ji. 'Veer Baal Diwas' will be on the same day Sahibzada Zorawar Singh Ji and Sahibzada Fateh Singh Ji attained martyrdom after being sealed alive in a wall. These two greats preferred death instead of deviating from the noble principles of Dharma, the prime minister tweeted.



Rajnath Singh inaugurates Kalpana Chawla Centre For Research at Chandigarh University :-

Defence Minister Shri Rajnath Singh inaugurated Kalpana Chawla Centre for Research in Space Science & Technology (KCCRSST) at Chandigarh University on January 03, 2022. He also launched a Scholarship Scheme, worth Rs 10 crore, for the wards of Defence Personnel of the three Services. In his address, Shri Rajnath Singh described the establishment of the Research Centre as an important step towards strengthening the space sector of the country by stressing that it is only through these efforts that India can become a leader in future technologies.



India Skills 2021 Competition Concluded :-

IndiaSkills 2021 Nationals, the country's biggest skill competition, concluded 10 January with more than 150 participants being felicitated by Rajesh Aggarwal, Secretary, Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (MSDE), Government of India. The closed-door competition, organised by National Skill Development Corporation under the guidance of MSDE, witnessed participation in 54 skills such as concrete construction work, beauty therapy, car painting, health and social care, visual merchandising, graphic design technology, wall & floor tiling, welding, among others. Odisha topped the chart with 51 winners, followed by Maharashtra, 30 and Kerala, 25 winners.

**PM Modi Inaugurated MSME Technology Centre :-**

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi inaugurated a Technology Centre of the MSME Ministry, established at Puducherry, on the occasion of National youth day today. This World Class Technology Centre set up with an investment of about Rs. 122 crore is spread across 10 acres, will train 20,000 youth, support 2000 MSMEs and incubate 200 Start Ups, thereby propelling the local economy to great heights. The inauguration of this MSME Technology Centre by the Prime Minister will boost skill development and inculcate entrepreneurial spirit among the youth of the region.

**World's largest Khadi National Flag displayed at Longewala :-**

After Leh, the world's largest Khadi national flag was put to a grand public display along the India-Pakistan Border in Rajasthan's Longewala to celebrate Army Day. According to the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, tricolour was displayed at Longewala the centre stage of the history between India and Pakistan in 1971. This is the 5th public display of the national flag since its unveiling in Leh on 2nd October 2021.

**Kerala's Kumbalangi to be India's first sanitary-napkin free village :-**

A village called Kumbalangi in Ernakulam district of Kerala has been declared the first napkin-free village in

the country. According to a report, more than 5,000 menstrual cups have been distributed among girls and women and they have been given training by volunteers for three months about their use and advantages, said organisers of a campaign, "Avalkayi" (for her). Kerala Governor Arif Mohammad Khan said that Kumbalangi is a role model for all villages in the country and such schemes would go a long way in empowering women. "Our country will prosper only if our villages do," he added.



Goi Launches Stamp To Mark 1 Year Of Covid Vaccination :-

India released a commemorative postal stamp on Covid-19 vaccination on 16 January to mark the first anniversary of the country's national immunization programme against the virus. The stamp shows a health

worker inoculating a senior citizen with Covaxin. Covaxin is one of the two mainstays of India's immunisation programme against Covid-19, along with Covishield. It was developed by Hyderabad-based Bharat Biotech International Ltd in collaboration with the Indian Council of Medical Research.



Goi merges eternal flame of Amar Jawan Jyoti with National War Memorial flame :-

The Amar Jawan Jyoti flame at India Gate has been merged with the Eternal Flame at the National War Memorial, barely 400 metres away. This merger was accompanied by a military ceremony in New Delhi on 21 January. Inaugurated on January 26, 1971, by the then prime minister Indira Gandhi, the Amar Jawan Jyoti was constructed as a memorial for Indian soldiers who were killed in action in the 1971 Indo-Pak war. India's victory at the end of this war led to the creation of Bangladesh.

12: Obituaries



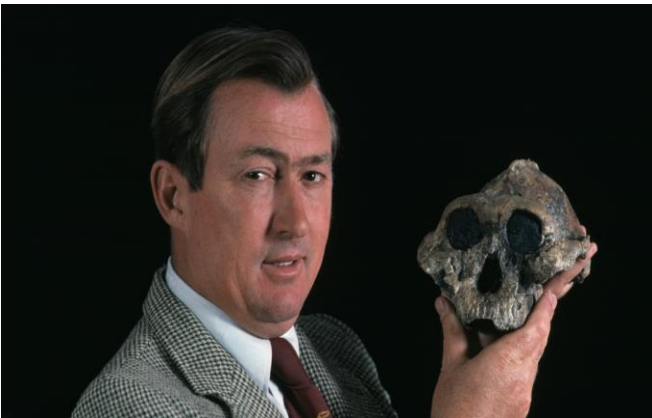
Seven-term Rajya Sabha MP and industrialist Mahendra Prasad passes away :-

Rajya Sabha MP from the Janata Dal(United) and industrialist Mahendra Prasad died at a private hospital here, his party said. The 81-year-old Prasad passed away on 23 December night after battling prolonged illness. Estimated to be one of the richest members of Parliament, the founder of Aristo Pharmaceuticals was a seven-term Rajya Sabha MP from Bihar and was also elected to the Lok Sabha once.

**Bollywood Film Producer Vijay Galani Passes Away :-**

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Bollywood producer Vijay Galani produced films including Ajnabee and Veer, has died. Producer Ramesh Taurani shared the news on his Instagram handle. It was also reported that he had travelled to the UK a few days ago for his treatment for cancer. The news of his death has left his family and close ones heartbroken.

**Legendary Kenyan Conservationist and Fossil-hunter Richard Leakey passes away :-**

World-renowned Kenyan conservationist and fossil hunter Richard Leakey, whose groundbreaking discoveries helped prove that humankind evolved in Africa, died on 02 January at the age of 77, the country's president said. Born on 19 December, 1944, Leakey was destined for palaeoanthropology — the study of the human fossil record — as the middle son of Louis and Mary Leakey, perhaps the world's most famous

discoverers of ancestral hominids. In the 1970s he led expeditions that recalibrated scientific understanding of human evolution with the discovery of the skulls of Homo habilis (1.9 million years old) in 1972 and Homo erectus (1.6 million years old) in 1975.

**Indian Navy's 1971 war veteran Vice Admiral S H Sarma passes away :-**

The Indian Navy's 1971 Indo-Pak war veteran Vice Admiral S H Sarma passed away in Bhubaneswar on 03 January, officials said. Sarma, who turned 99 last December, was the Flag Officer Commanding Eastern Fleet during the 1971 war, they mentioned. India had defeated Pakistan in the 1971 war leading to the creation of Bangladesh. Officials said Sarma also served as Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief of the Eastern Naval Command.

7



Sindhutai Sapkal popular as ‘Mother of Orphans’ passes away :-

Sindhutai Sapkal, better known as ‘Anathanchi Maye’ or ‘Mother of orphans’, passed away following a heart attack at a private hospital in Pune on 04 January. She was 74. She was known for her work in raising hundreds of orphans, abandoned and destitute children, as well as towards rehabilitation of women. Sindhutai died at 8.10 pm. She had undergone a surgery on November 24 last year for a large diaphragmatic hernia. She had recovered well, but about a week ago, she developed a lung infection. She suffered a massive cardiac arrest on 04 January and passed away.

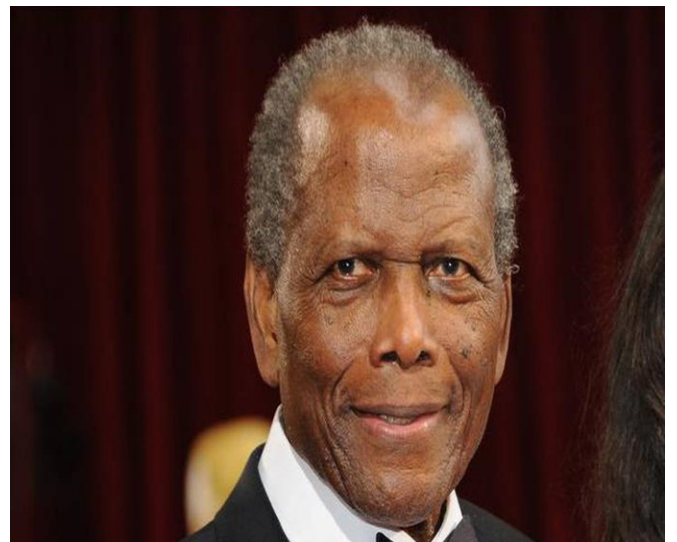
**3-time Olympic Gold winning Triple Jump Champion Viktor Saneyev passes away :-**

The three-time Olympic triple jump champion and former world record-holder Viktor Saneyev has died at the age of 76, the World Athletics said on 03 January. Viktor was born in Georgia on October 3, 1945. The Soviet Union man won his Olympic titles in three consecutive Games, first in Mexico City in 1968 and then again in Munich, 1972 and followed by Montreal in 1976. He won an Olympic silver medal four years later in Moscow. He also won two European titles in 1969 and 1974. Saneyev’s started his Olympic career at 23 years of age, and he made his debut by securing gold with a world

record leap of 17.39m, which was his second world record of the day on a day that the record was recorded newly four times.

**Shillong Chamber Choir founder Neil Nongkynrih passes away :-**

Shillong Chamber Choir founder and noted music composer Neil Nongkynrih died at a hospital in Mumbai January 06 after a brief illness, Choir officials said. He was 51. Uncle Neil, as he was fondly known to all, was admitted to Mumbai’s Reliance Hospital on 04 January. "He passed away today after a surgery," a spokesman for the group told. Neil Nongkynrih was in Mumbai for the past three months for work with the entire Choir.



First black man to win Best Actor Oscar, Sidney Poitier passes away :-

Bahamian-American actor Sidney Poitier, who was an Academy Award winner, has died at the age of 94. The star's death was confirmed on 07 January by the Bahamian Ministry of Foreign Affairs Office. In 1963, Poitier had made a film in Arizona, Lilies of the Field. The performance led to a huge milestone making him the first black winner of a lead-acting Oscar. Sidney's roles were legendary. He starred as Mark Thackeray in To Sir With Love, and Detective Virgil Tibbs in In the Heat of the Night in 1967. He also starred in Guess Who's Coming to Dinner, also released in the same.

**Oscar and Grammy-winning lyricist Marilyn Bergman passes away :-**

Marilyn Bergman, the Oscar, Emmy and Grammy-winning songwriter whose lyrics graced hits such as 'The Way We Were,' 'The Windmills of Your Mind,' 'In the Heat of the Night' and the songs from 'Yentl', has died at age 93. According to Variety, Bergman was the first woman president and chairman of the board of the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP), a post she held from 1994 to 2009.

**European Parliament President David Sassoli Passes Away :-**

European Parliament President David Sassoli passed away early on January 11, 2022 in a hospital in Italy. He was 65. Sassoli had led the European Union body that approves or rejects legislations and is responsible for establishing budgets and supervises a combination of institutions. His spokesman Roberto Cuillo confirmed the news on Twitter saying that Sassoli passed away at 1.15 am on January 11 at CRO in Aviano, Italy where he was undergoing treatment for immune system disorder.

**Kannada Writer 'Champa' Passes Away :-**

Noted Kannada writer and literary critic Professor Chandrashekar Patil, popularly known as Champa, passed away on 09 January at a private hospital in Bengaluru. He was 83 and suffering from age-related illnesses. Champa was known for his revolutionary literature (Bandaya Sahithya). Born in Hattimattur village of Haveri district in 1939, Champa was known for

participating in several social and literary movements including the agitation against the Emergency in 1975, protest for the implementation of Mandal report, farmer's movements and Gokak agitation.



India's oldest sloth bear 'Gulabo' passes away at Van Vihar National Park :-

India's oldest sloth bear, named Gulabo, died at the age of 40 at the Van Vihar National Park and Zoo in Bhopal 11 January. "The female sloth bear died on the intervening night of Sunday and Monday after attaining the age of 40. Gulabo was one of the star attractions in the park. She was the oldest sloth bear in the country," an official statement said. The female bear was rescued from a Madaari or street performer in May 2006 at the age of 25 years.



Olympic medal-winning Athlete Deon Lendore passes away :-

Trinidad and Tobago Olympian Deon Lendore has died aged 29 in a car accident in Texas, USA. The 400-meter

sprinter competed in three Olympics -- including the 2020 Tokyo games -- and won the bronze medal in the 4x400 meter at the 2012 games in London. Lendore also won silver in the World 4x400m in 2015.



Legendary Kathak dancer Pandit Birju Maharaj passes away :-

Legendary Kathak dancer, Pandit Birju Maharaj passes away after suffering a heart attack. He was 83. He was at his home in Delhi. Brijmohan Mishra, fondly called Pandit-ji or Maharaj-ji by his students and followers, he was one of India's best known artistes. He was a recipient of the country's second highest civilian honour, Padma Vibhushan. President Ram Nath Kovind called the demise of the Kathak dancer, "the end of an era," adding that his passing away, "leaves a deep void in the Indian music and cultural space".



Padma Shri winning social activist Shanti Devi passes away :-

Shanti Devi, a well-known Gandhian and social worker from Odisha, passed away on late Sunday (16 January) night at Gunupur in Rayagada district of Odisha. She was 88. She served the poor for six decades in the Maoist-dominated Rayagada district. Shanti Devi was recently conferred with India's third highest civilian honor, Padma Shri, by President Ram Nath Kovind for her six decades of service among poor and marginalized sections and upliftment of tribal girls.

**Former Mali's President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita Passes Away :-**

Mali's former President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita has died at the age of 76, his family said. He had promised to restore Mali's honour as a model for democracy in West Africa as he campaigned as a unifying figure in his fractured country, pledging "zero tolerance" for corruption. He won the election in a landslide in 2013 and was re-elected five years later. But slow reforms, a crumbling economy and decrepit public services and schools, along with a widely shared perception of government corruption, fed anti-Keita sentiment, sparking large protests in Bamako.

**Former PM Of Japan Toshiki Kaifu Passes Away :-**

The former Prime Minister of Japan, Toshiki Kaifu passed away at the age of 91 years in Japan. He served as the PM from 1989 to 1991. He is known for sending the Maritime Self-Defense Force to the Persian Gulf in 1991. Kaifu who was born on January 2, 1931, in Nagoya City, began his political career as a lawmaker secretary. Kaifu was elected after Prime Minister Sosuke Uno, lost an election due to an extramarital affair.

**Legendary Collarwali Tigress who gave birth to 29 cubs passes away :-**

Collarwali, the legendary tigress of Madhya Pradesh's Pench Tiger Reserve, died on 15 January evening due to old age. The 17-year-old tigress had earned the tag of "supermom" for giving birth to 29 cubs during its lifetime. The tigress, also known as T-15, had given birth to 29 cubs in eight litters during eleven years - between

2008 and 2018. Visuals showed several locals attending the funeral of the tigress, who was last seen on January 14 by the reserve visitors, according to a PTI report.



Legendary Bengali comics artist, writer and illustrator, Narayan Debnath passes away :-

Debnath, who was handed the Padma Shri award while undergoing treatment at the hospital, died at 10.15 am, his family said. "He was admitted to the hospital on December 24 with kidney and lung problems," his son, Tapas Debnath, said. The cartoonist was conferred with the Padma Shri, the fourth highest civilian award in India, in 2021 but could not visit New Delhi to collect the award. State home secretary BP Gopalika and cooperative minister Arup Roy handed him the medal and certificate on his hospital bed on January 13.



Noted environmentalist & 'Save Silent Valley' campaigner M.K. Prasad passes away :-

Noted environmentalist Prof M K Prasad, a prominent figure in the historic grassroots level movement to save the evergreen tropical rain forests in Kerala's Silent Valley from destruction, passed away on 17 January morning, his colleagues said. He was 89. He breathed his last at a private hospital here while undergoing treatment for Covid related complications, they said. Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan condoled the demise of Prasad recalling his contributions as a leader of ecological movements.



Renowned Bengali theatre personality Shaoli Mitra passes away :-

Shaoli Mitra, an eminent theatre personality and the daughter of legendary actors Sombhu Mitra and Tripti Mitra, died at her residence in South Kolkata on 16 January of heart ailments. Mitra, 73, a gifted actor, director, and playwright, died at her residence in South Kolkata at 3:40 pm. Mitra was homebound since the outbreak of the pandemic after suffering from pneumonia the year before. She breathed her last at her south Kolkata home of heart-related ailments.



Professional Mountaineer Major Hari Pal Singh Ahluwalia Passed Away :-

Major Hari Pal Singh Ahluwalia, an Indian mountaineer, author, social worker and retired Indian Army officer has passed away on 14 January 2022. During his career he made contributions in the fields of adventure, sports, environment, disability and social work. He is one of six Indian men and the twenty-first man in the world to climb Mount Everest. He has written over 13 books including his autobiography 'Higher Than Everest'. He was honoured with the country's most prestigious awards - Padma Bhushan, Padma Shri and the Arjuna Award. He also received the Tenzing Norgay National Adventure Award.



World's oldest living man, Saturnino de la Fuente, passes away at 112 :-

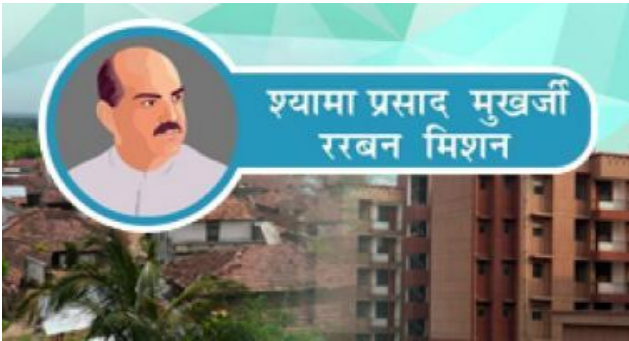
Saturnino de la Fuente García, the world's oldest man, passed away just days before his 113th birthday, according to the Guinness World Records. The 112-year-old died of natural causes on January 18 at his home in León, Spain ahead of his birthday on February 11, the Guinness World Record said in a statement. García was given the title of the oldest living male in September 2021 when he was 112 years and 211 days old. García had told the Guinness World Record that the secret of his longevity lies in leading a "quiet life" and "do not hurt anyone".

13: Ranks & Reports



RBI's Latest Report On 'Trend And Progress Of Banking In India' :-

The Reserve Bank of India on 28 December released a report on "Trend and Progress of Banking in India 2020-21". "This Report presents the performance of the banking sector, including co-operative banks, and non-banking financial institutions during 2020-21 and 2021-22 so far," said RBI in a statement. The RBI report said although credit offtake by banks remained subdued in an environment of risk aversion and muted demand conditions in FY21, a pickup has started in Q2 of FY22.



Telangana Topped In Shyama Prasad Mukherji Rurban Mission :-

Telangana stood first in the implementation of the Shyama Prasad Mukherji Rurban Mission (SPMRM) that was launched four years ago to stimulate local economic development, enhance basic services and create well planned clusters. Sangareddy and Kamareddy districts stood in the first two positions among the 300 clusters across the country where the programme was being implemented. Tamil Nadu and Gujarat took the second and third positions respectively. In Telangana, in as many as 17 clusters (12 non-tribal and five tribal), the programme was being implemented at an estimated cost of ₹1,885.12 crore.



Axis Bank Is 2nd Largest In PoS Machines :-

Axis Bank has become the second-largest merchant-acquiring bank in the country, leapfrogging two spaces during 2021 by installing over two lakh card-swipe machines during the year. This is part of the bank's 'Axis One' strategy where it approaches the customers offering its entire gamut of products instead of a

standalone service. The bank's market share in the number of devices has gone up from 15% in January 2021 to 16% up to October.



ICRA Rating Agency Expects India To Grow At 9% In FY22-23 :-

The Indian economy is expected to maintain a real GDP growth of 9.0% each in FY22 and FY23 amid the uncertainty triggered by the Omicron variant of Covid-19, ratings and research firm Icria said on 28 December. The rating agency said the available data for Q3 FY2022 does not offer convincing evidence that the Monetary Policy Committee's (MPC's) criteria of a durable and sustainable growth recovery had been met, to confirm a change in the Monetary Policy stance to neutral in February 2022.



IIT Madras Bagged The First Position In ARIIA Rankings 2021 :-

Seven Indian Institutes of Technology and Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru, are among the top 10 central institutions in promotion and support of innovation and entrepreneurship development, according to Atal Ranking of Institutions on Innovation Achievements (ARIIA) announced on 29 December. The top rank has been bagged by IIT Madras followed by IIT Bombay, IIT Delhi, IIT Kanpur and IIT Roorkee. IISc Bengaluru has bagged the sixth position in the ranking followed by IIT Hyderabad, IIT Kharagpur, National Institute of Technology (NIT), Calicut and Motilal Nehru National Institute of Technology, Uttar Pradesh.

crore, of which CGST is Rs 22,578 crore, SGST is Rs 28,658 crore, IGST is Rs 69,155 crore (including Rs 37,527 crore collected on import of goods) and cess is Rs 9,389 crore (including Rs 614 crore collected on import of goods),” the Finance Ministry said in a statement.

**Gol Keeps Interest Rates On Small Savings Schemes Unchanged :-**

For the 4th quarter of 2021-2022 (January – February – March 2022), the interest rates on small savings schemes will remain unchanged from the third quarter of 2021-22. (October-December 2021). It should be mentioned that West Bengal is the leading contributor to small savings schemes, with Uttar Pradesh coming in second. Also, keep in mind that the government publishes interest rates for comparatively tiny savings accounts on a timely basis. The annual interest rates on the Public Provident Fund (PPF) and National Savings Certificate (NSC) will remain at 7.1 percent and 6.8 percent, respectively, in the fourth quarter.

**GST Collection Stood At Rs 1.29 Lakh Crore In December 2021 :-**

GST revenue collected in December 2021 was over Rs 1.29 lakh crore, 13 per cent higher than the same month last year, the Finance Ministry said on January 1. Though the collection was lower than Rs 1.31 lakh crore mopped up in November, December is the sixth month in a row when revenue from goods sold and services rendered stood at over Rs 1 lakh crore. The gross GST revenue collected in the month of December 2021 is Rs 1,29,780



Telangana Tops In Highest Number Of ODF Villages

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Once again, Telangana stood first in the country in the list of highest number of open defecation free (ODF Plus) villages under the Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen) Phase-II programme till December 31, 2021. As many as 13,737 out of 14,200 villages in the State are in the ODF Plus list, which is 96.74%. This was followed by Tamil Nadu with 4,432 villages (35.39%) and Karnataka with 1,511 villages (5.59%). Gujarat took the 17th position with only 83 villages (0.45%).

**SBI Ecowrap: India's Real GDP projected to grow at around 9.5% in FY22 :-**

India's real GDP is expected to grow at around 9.5 per cent in 2021-22 on a year-on-year (YoY), an SBI Ecowrap report said on 08 January. The report comes a day after the National Statistical Office (NSO) released the First Advance Estimates of National Income for financial year 2021-22. Accordingly, the estimates had said that India's economy is expected to clock a growth of 9.2 per cent in terms of real GDP for FY22.

**Ind-Ra lowers India's GDP growth forecast by 10 basis points to 9.3% in FY22 :-**

Rising cases of the Omicron variant of Covid-19 and the subsequent curbs will have an adverse impact on India's Q4FY22 GDP, said India Ratings and Research (Ind-Ra). The rising cases have led to various curbs instituted by state governments such as reduced capacity of markets, night and weekend curfews to check human mobility. As per Ind-Ra's estimates, GDP growth in Q4FY22 will now come in at 5.7 per cent year-on-year (YoY) which is 40 basis points lower than the agency's earlier estimate of 6.1 per cent.

**RBI data: Forex reserves decline by USD 1.466 bn to USD 633.614 bn :-**

The country's foreign exchange reserves declined by USD 1.466 billion to USD 633.614 billion in the week ended

December 31, RBI data showed. In the previous week ended December 24, the reserves dipped by USD 587 million to USD 635.08 billion. It touched a life-time high of USD 642.453 billion in the week ended September 3, 2021. During the reporting week ended December 31, the decline in foreign exchange reserves was on account of a fall in foreign currency assets (FCA), a major component of the overall reserves, Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) weekly data released on 07 January showed.



Chennai International Airport ranks 8th in Global List for 'On-Time Performance' :-

Chennai International Airport has been ranked eight for on-time performance among large international airports globally for 2021 by Cirium — a provider of aviation data to the travel, finance, aerospace and aviation industries. It is the only Indian airport ranked in the top 10. The top three are Miami Airport in the United States, Fukuoka Airport and Haneda Airport from Japan.



NSO Projects Indian Economy To Grow 9.2% In FY22 :-

Supported by an uptick in the farm, mining and manufacturing sector outputs, India's gross domestic product (GDP) is projected to grow 9.2 per cent in the current financial year or 2021-22, according to the first advance estimates released by the National Statistical Office (NSO) on 07 January. In 2020-21, a national lockdown forced by the Covid-19 onslaught had left the economy battered with GDP contracting 7.3 per cent. The NSO estimate for the current financial year is a tad lower than the RBI's GDP projection in its December 2021 policy review.



Henley Passport Index 2022: India Ranks 83rd In Q1 :-

The power of the Indian passport has improved, with the country climbing seven places to rank in 83rd place in the Henley Passport Index, up from the 90th position in previous year's rankings. The Henley Global Mobility Report 2022 Q1, published quarterly by global immigration consultant firm Henley & Partners, shows that the Indian passport now has visa-free access to 60 destinations worldwide. But despite the latest rise, India

has only improved its visa-free score by just seven in the last 10 years. It was 53 in 2011.



UBS Projects India's GDP Forecast At 9.1% In FY22 :-

Citing the massive surge in Omicron infections and the resultant impact on overall economic activities in the March quarter, Swiss brokerage UBS Securities has revised downwards its India's growth forecast for the current financial year to 9.1 per cent from 9.5 per cent earlier. However, UBS Securities does not see the third wave impact extending to the next financial year as it has revised upwards its real GDP forecast to 8.2 per cent, up from 7.7 per cent earlier, expecting the real GDP growth to remain well above the historical average.



World Bank Projects India's GDP Growth At 8.3% In FY22 :-

The World Bank on 11 January retained its FY22 growth forecast for India at 8.3 per cent but upgraded it to 8.7 per cent for FY23, from 7.5 per cent estimated earlier,

citing improving growth prospects, especially a reviving private capex cycle. The World Bank said the economic damage brought about by the second Covid wave in India has already been unwound, with output effectively returning to pre-pandemic levels.



Retail Inflation Rises To 5.59% In December 2021 :-

Retail inflation in December 2021 rose to a six-month high of 5.59 per cent from 4.91 percent in November 2021, mainly due to sharp rise in food prices as food inflation for the period under review also rose steeply to 4.05 percent against 1.87 percent in November 2021. The rise in quite sharp when compared to December 2020 also, as during the year ago period, retail inflation was at 4.59 per cent while food inflation was at 3.41 per cent. According to data released by the ministry of statistics and programme implementation, prices of cereals, egg, milk products and prepared meals went up during December 2021.



UN Projects India GDP At 6.5% In FY22 :-

Indian economy expected to grow 6.5% in the current financial year ending March 2022, (FY22), down from the earlier forecast of 8.4% amid rapid vaccination progress, the United Nations said. The flagship United Nations World Economic Situation and Prospects (WESP) 2022 report, launched, said that "India's economic recovery is on a solid path, amid rapid vaccination progress, less stringent social restrictions and still supportive fiscal and monetary stances."



ISFR Report: India's forest & tree cover rose by 2,261 sq km in last 2 years :-

India's forest and tree cover has risen by 2,261 square kilometers in the last two years with Andhra Pradesh growing the maximum forest cover of 647 square kilometers, according to the India State of Forest Report (ISFR) 2021 released on 13 January. The biennial report by the Forest Survey of India (FSI), an assessment of the country's forest resources, was released by Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav.



India's Forex Reserves Declines By \$878 Mn To \$632.7 Bn :-

India's armoury of foreign exchange reserves is seen depleting in the recent weeks. Reserves dipped \$897 million during the week ended January 7 as the Reserve Bank sold dollars to meet dollar demand to touch \$632.7 billion. Both foreign currency assets as well as value of gold in reserves dipped during the week by \$497 million and \$360 million respectively, the latest Reserve Bank data shows. Market analysts point that there has been a broad-based dollar demand as the imports have been rising on rising crude and commodity prices.



RBI released Annual Report of Ombudsman Schemes, 2020-21 :-

Issues related to ATM/ debit cards, mobile/ electronic banking, credit cards, failure to meet commitments and non-observance of fair practices code were the top-five grounds of complaints received at the Office of Banking Ombudsman (OBO) during July 2020-March 2021, said an RBI report on 12 January. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has released the Annual Report of the Ombudsman Schemes for the year 2020-21, which has been prepared for the nine-month period from July 1, 2020, to March 31, 2021, in alignment with the change in the financial year of the RBI from 'July-June' to 'April-March' with effect from July 1, 2020.

**Oxfam India Released 'Inequality Kills' Report :-**

Throwing light on the widening financial gulf within Indian society since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, an Oxfam report has found that while the number of Indian billionaires grew from 102 to 142 in 2021, the share of the bottom 50 percent of the population in the national wealth declined to a mere 6 percent. The report, titled "Inequality Kills: The Davos India Supplement" by Oxfam India," was released on Monday, 17 January.

**ILO Report: Global unemployment level in 2022 projected at 207 million :-**

Global unemployment is expected to remain above pre-Covid-19 levels until at least 2023 and is estimated at 207 million this year, almost 21 million more than in 2019,

according to a report from the International Labour Organisation that gives assessments on how labour market recovery has unfolded worldwide. The Geneva-based United Nations agency has downgraded its forecast for labour market recovery in 2022, projecting a deficit in hours worked globally equivalent to 52 million full-time jobs, relative to the fourth quarter of 2019.

**RBI announces Digital Payments Index for September 2021 :-**

The RBI's Digital Payment Index, which shows the deepening of payments through digital modes in India, rose by 39.64 per cent to 304.06 in September 2021 against 217.74 in the year-ago month. Constructed with March 2018 as the base period the DPI score for March 2018 is set at 100 and the RBI-DPI was 173.49 in September 2019. Digital payments increased after Covid hit the nation in March 2020 and the government and the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) announced several measures to boost digital payments.

**India Ratings
& Research**
A Fitch Group Company

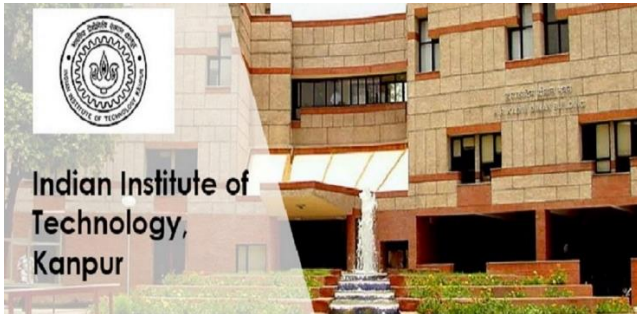
Ind-Ra Projects India's GDP Growth Rate At 7.6% In FY23 :-

India Ratings and Research (Ind-Ra) on 20 January said it expects India's GDP to grow 7.6% in FY23. After a gap of

two years, the Indian economy will show a meaningful expansion, as the real GDP in FY23 will be 9.1% higher than the FY20 (pre-Covid level) GDP level, the agency said. However, if the impact of Omicron on fourth

quarter growth turns out to be greater than Ind-Ra's estimate, then there could be some upside to the FY23 growth originating from the base effect.

14: Schemes & Committees



PM Modi Launches Blockchain-Based Digital Degrees At IIT Kanpur :-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 28 December launched blockchain-based digital degrees at the 54th convocation ceremony of Indian Institutes of Technology (IIT) Kanpur. At the convocation, all the students were issued digital degrees through an in-house blockchain-driven technology developed at the Institute under the National Blockchain Project. These digital degrees can be verified globally and are unforgeable.



PM Modi Inaugurated Bina (MP)-Panki (UP) Multiproduct Pipeline Project :-

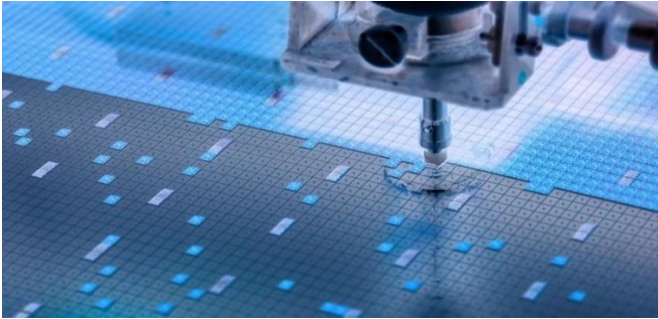
The Multiproduct pipeline from Bina Refinery (MP) to POL Terminal at Panki, Kanpur (UP) dedicated to the nation by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi. 356 Km long project has a capacity of around 3.45 million metric tonne per annum. This Project also includes augmentation of Tankage capacity and construction of Rail Loading Gantry at Panki POL Terminal. Total cost of the project is Rs.1524 crore (Rs. 1227 crore in UP and Rs. 297 crore in MP). project will cover 5 districts of UP: Lalitpur, Jhansi, Jalaun, Kanpur Dehat and Kanpur Nagar, and 2 of MP: Sagar and Tikamgarh. The project has been completed and commissioned one month ahead of approved completion schedule of December 2021 (3 years from PNGRB authorisation) and within the approved cost.



Sushmita Dev in 31-member Panel to examine bill on raising legal age of marriage :-

Trinamool MP Sushmita Dev is the only woman member of the parliamentary panel that will examine the Prohibition on Child Marriage (Amendment) Bill seeking to increase the age of legal marriage of women from 18 to 21 years. During the winter session of Parliament, the

bill was introduced in the Lok Sabha by Union minister Smriti Irani. Then it was sent to the 31-member committee for examination. According to the members' list of the parliamentary standing committee, led by senior BJP leader Vinay Sahasrabudhe, available on the Rajya Sabha website, Sushmita Dev is the only woman among the 31 members.



Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw launched "India Semiconductor Mission" :-

Information Technology Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw launched the India Semiconductor Mission on 29 December. Speaking to journalists, Vaishnaw said companies which are interested in tapping the Rs 76,000-crore incentives earmarked by the Centre for development of semiconductors and display manufacturing ecosystem in India can begin applying for the same from January 1.



Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan Launches NEAT 3.0 :-

Union Education Minister and Skill Development Minister Dharmendra Pradhan on January 03 launched

NEAT 3.0, a single platform to provide the best-developed ed-tech solutions and courses to students of the country. The minister also launched AICTE prescribed technical books in regional languages. Pradhan said NEAT will be a game-changer in bridging the digital divide, especially among the economically disadvantaged students and also in fulfilling the knowledge-based requirement of India and the world.



GoI Flagship UJALA Scheme Completed 7 Years :-

The Power Ministry on January 05 successfully completed seven years of distributing and selling LED lights under its flagship UJALA programme. The initiative evolved into the world's largest zero subsidy domestic lighting programme with more than 36.78 crore LEDs distributed across the country. Launched in 2015, the Unnat Jyoti by Affordable LEDs for All (UJALA) succeeded in bringing down the retail price of LED bulbs from ₹300-350 a bulb to ₹70-80.



TCS Bags Phase 2 Of Centre's Passport Plan :-

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has again chosen Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) to implement the second phase of the Passport Seva Program, the country's largest mission critical e-governance programme till date. TCS will be managing the project for another nine-and-a-half years, which can be extended for two more years. While the company did not disclose the financial details of the contract, analysts tracking the company said the deal could be in the range of Rs 6,000-8,000 crore.

**Sudhir Kumar Saxena committee constituted to enquire security lapses during PM Punjab visit :-**

The Ministry of Home Affairs has constituted a committee to enquire into the serious lapses in the security arrangements during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Punjab. The three-member committee will be led by Sudhir Kumar Saxena, Secretary (Security), Cabinet Secretariat and also comprising Balbir Singh, Joint Director, IB and S. Suresh, IG, SPG. The committee has been advised to submit the report at the earliest.

**Finance Ministry: Deposits in Jan Dhan accounts cross Rs 1.5 lakh crore :-**

Deposits in bank accounts opened under the Jan Dhan Yojana, launched by the government about seven and a half years ago, have crossed Rs 1.5 lakh crore. According to the latest Finance Ministry data, the total balance in over 44.23 crore Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) accounts stood at Rs 1,50,939.36 crore at the end of December 2021. PMJDY, the National Mission for Financial Inclusion, completed seven years of implementation in August last year. This was announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his Independence Day address on 15 August 2014.

**Indian Railways launches Mission Amanat to help passengers track their lost belongings :-**

Thousands of railway passengers lose their belongings in the trains every year. Getting these items back is a challenging task for an average person, and therefore, the Western Railway has launched a new service, Mission Amanat. As part of the service, the Railway Protection Force (RPF) will locate the lost luggage of railway passengers and upload a photo and description of the belongings on the Western Railway website. Passengers can then identify and retrieve their luggage.

**India's First Heli-Hub To Be Set Up In Gurugram :-**

Haryana Deputy Chief Minister Dushyant Chautala announced that Gurugram will get India's first heli-hub with all aviation facilities. Chautala said "The heli-hub will be the first of its kind in the country to have all facilities at one place for helicopters." Deputy CM has directed the officers of the civil aviation department to find additional land around Bhiwani, Narnaul and Pinjore airstrips so that aviation-related activities can be expanded.

**Supreme Court appoints 5-member panel headed by former judge Indu Malhotra :-**

The Supreme Court on 12 January appointed an inquiry committee under its former judge Justice Indu Malhotra to probe the security breach during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Punjab on January 5. A bench headed by Chief Justice of India said that the committee

will also include the Registrar General of the Punjab and Haryana Court, the Director General of the National Investigation Agency or an officer nominated by him not below the rank of Inspector General, and ADGP (Security) of Punjab Police.

**'North East on Wheels Expedition' launched to promote Culture of Northeastern States :-**

Minister of State for Culture Meenakshi Lekhi launched 'North East on Wheels Expedition' in New Delhi on 13 January to promote the Culture of Northeastern States. The Bike Expedition is scheduled between 8th to 16th April this year to mark the celebrations of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav. 75 Bikers participating in this expedition will be selected from all over the country and will cover about 9000 km in the North East Region in 6 groups.

**Defence Ministry sets up Raksha Pension Shikayat Nivaran Portal :-**

The Defence Ministry has set up an online portal to resolve pension-related grievances of ex-servicemen (ESM) and their dependents, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh announced on 14 January. The portal will allow them to lodge grievances directly with the Department

of Ex-Servicemen Welfare (DESW), he stated on the occasion of Armed Forces Veterans Day. The portal will help existing and future military pensioners, he mentioned.

15: Science & Technology



Haryana CM Launched 'Haryana Kaushal Rozgar Nigam' Web-Portal :-

On December 25, 2021, Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar launched the portal of Haryana Kaushal Rozgar Nigam in a program organized on the State Level Good Governance Day. Moving forward in the direction of good governance, the state government has taken various bold decisions in order to strengthen and revive the system, CM said. As an example, the chief minister pointed out that now all the problems of the public are being solved easily through the 'CM Window'. So far, more than 8.5 lakh issues have been resolved, he added.



Houston COVID-19 Vaccine Corbevax Gets DCGI Approval For Use In India :-

In the wake of rising concerns around new Covid-19 variant, the Texas Children's Hospital (TCH) and Baylor College of Medicine (BCM) from Houston, United States has announced that Corbevax, a protein subunit Covid vaccine, has received approval from the Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) to launch it in India. TCH said the vaccine has been through phase three clinical trials with more than 3,000 subjects and was found to be safe and well-tolerated. The trials suggested a better immune response to the Ancestral-Wuhan strain of the virus as well as the delta variant compared to Covishield, developed by Oxford-AstraZeneca.



1st Electric Boat Built For Kochi Water Metro Project :-

The Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL) on December 31 handed over the first of the 23 battery-powered electric boats being constructed for the water metro project under the Kochi Metro Rail Limited (KMRL). In an event

at the shipyard here, the first boat was handed over to the KMRL in the presence of its MD Loknath Behra and his wife Madhumita Behra. CSL Chairman and Managing Director Madhu S Nair, KMRL Directors K R Kumar, D K Sinha, CSL Directors Bjoy Bhaskar, V J Jose, Water Metro General Manager Shaji Janardhanan and others were present during the event. Madhmita Behra named the boat Muziris.



Kerala's High Court: India's First Paperless Court :-

The Kerala High Court has made a major technological leap by implementing a state-of-the-art application that enables not just paperless court proceedings but also has artificial intelligence-based features for roster analysis and distribution of cases to reduce pendency. However, the shift to paperless procedures right from filing of petitions to the judgement has triggered fear among thousands of advocate clerks of going jobless. There are also concerns among the lawyers that they will be burdened with the task of filing petitions and other clerical procedures. The paperless court project of the Kerala High Court was formally inaugurated on January 1.



David Bennett world first human receives a Pig Heart Transplant :-

In a rare medical feat, US doctors have successfully transplanted a genetically-modified pig heart to a 57-year-old patient with terminal heart disease. The patient, David Bennett, a Maryland resident, who had been hospitalised and bedridden for the past few months, is doing well three days after a first-of-its-kind surgery, said doctors at University of Maryland Medicine (UMMC) in a statement. The organ transplant demonstrated for the first time that a genetically-modified animal heart can function like a human heart without immediate rejection by the body, it added.



ISRO successfully tests Cryogenic Engine for Gaganyaan Rocket :-

Achieving another milestone in its ongoing Gaganyaan programme, Indian Space Research Organisation (Isro) on 12 January successfully conducted the qualification test of the cryogenic engine of the human-rated GSLV rocket to be used in the country's maiden human spaceflight mission, scheduled to be launched in 2023. The successful long-duration test is a major milestone as it ensured the reliability and robustness of the cryogenic engine for induction into the human-rated launch vehicle.



Union Minister Jitendra Singh launched AI-driven Start-Up for Water Purification by IIT alumni :-

Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Science & Technology; Minister of State (Independent Charge) Earth Sciences, Dr Jitendra Singh has launched Artificial Intelligence (AI) driven Start-Up by IIT alumni for water purification through innovative technology. The facility aims to provide clean drinking water at a price much lesser than the market price. Speaking on the occasion, the Minister said, the Artificial Intelligence (AI) driven Start-Up initiative should be motivating for other Start-Ups as well.



South Africa Launches 1st 'Made In Africa' Satellites :-

South Africa has launched its first satellite constellation developed entirely in the continent of Africa, SpaceX's Transporter-3 mission. Three locally produced nanosatellites, which made up the country's first Maritime Domain Awareness Satellite (MDASat) constellation, were launched from Cape Canaveral in the United States on 20 January as part of American aerospace company SpaceX's Transporter-3 mission. South Africa's satellites will be deployed in low Earth orbit at an altitude of 525 kilometres, the government's Department of Science and Innovation said in a statement.



SEBI Launches Saaṛṭhi Mobile App On Investor Education :-

Markets regulator Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) on 19 January launched "Saaṛṭhi" – a mobile app on investor education in Mumbai. The new app aims to create awareness among investors about the basic concepts of the securities market. Additionally, the app will also explain about KYC process, trading and settlement, mutual funds (MF), recent market developments, investor grievances redressal mechanism, etc, the market regulator said in a press release.

16: Sports



Uttar Pradesh won 11th Hockey India junior national championship :-

Uttar Pradesh has maintained their unbeaten record in the 11th Hockey India Junior Men National Championship 2021 in Kovilpatti in Tamil Nadu with a decisive 3 - 1 victory over Chandigarh in the final of the competition. Tournament top scorer Sharda Nand Tiwari opened the scoring for Uttar Pradesh in the 15th minute with a trademark penalty corner before Arun Sahani (16', 34') stretched Uttar Pradesh Hockey's lead further with a brace. Raman pulled one goal back for Hockey Chandigarh in the 51st minute, but Uttar Pradesh Hockey held on to the lead to be crowned champions of the tournament.



Mohammed Shami becomes 11th Indian bowler to take 200 wickets in Test cricket :-

At SuperSport Park in Centurion, Mohammed Shami became only the fifth Indian fast bowler to reach 200 Test wickets, scything through the South African batting line-up and claiming 5/44 from 16 overs. Kagiso Rabada was his 200th scalp. About a couple of months ago, after India's T20 World Cup loss to Pakistan, the fast bowler was at the receiving end of deplorable social media abuse, targeting his religion. Only his captain, Virat Kohli, publicly stood by him then. On a fair-weather day, adulation poured in.



Jasprit Bumrah Achieves Milestone Of Picking 100 Test Wickets :-

Adding another feather to his cap, Jasprit Bumrah on 29 December achieved the milestone of picking 100 wickets away from home in Test cricket. The pacer got to the feat on Day 4 of the first Test between South Africa and India at the SuperSport Park in Centurion. Van der Dussen became Bumrah's 100th Test victim in overseas conditions. The 28-year-old now has 105 wickets, out of which 101 have come away from home.



New Zealand's Ross Taylor Announces Retirement From International Cricket :-

Veteran New Zealand batter Ross Taylor on 30 December announced that he will retire from international cricket at the end of the ongoing domestic season. Taylor hence will play his final appearance in the second Test against Bangladesh, where he will equal Daniel Vettori's record of 112 tests for New Zealand. The 37-year-old will not feature in the Test series against South Africa, but will be part of the one-day international series in Australia in February and against the Netherlands at home in late March.

**India Defeat Sri Lanka In U-19 Asia Cup 2021 Finals :-**

A disciplined bowling effort followed by Raghuvanshi's half-century has helped India clinch their eighth U19 Asia Cup title at the Dubai International Stadium. The rain-marred final was reduced to 38 overs after a two-hour interruption. In eight editions of the U-19 Asia Cup, India have now won it eight times, which includes a shared trophy in 2012. The team also owns the record of having never lost a final.

**Quinton de Kock announces retirement from Test cricket :-**

South Africa's star wicketkeeper-batter Quinton de Kock on December 30 announced his retirement from Test cricket with immediate effect, said the country's apex body, CSA, hours after the team's defeat in the first Test against India. A former Test captain, De Kock is only 29 and it is believed that he will continue playing in the other formats for the Proteas, with a lot of focus on franchise-based T20 leagues.

**Pakistan all-rounder Mohammad Hafeez announces retirement from cricket :-**

Veteran Pakistan all-rounder Mohammad Hafeez has decided to retire from international cricket, ending an illustrious career that spanned over 18 years. One of the longest serving Pakistan cricketers, Hafeez had drawn curtains on his Test career back in 2018. After making his international debut against Zimbabwe in 2003, Hafeez represented Pakistan in 55 Tests, 218 ODIs and 119 T20Is and amassed 12,780 runs across formats. During his career, he had won 32 Man of the Match awards, the fourth-highest among Pakistan players in all formats. The

likes of Shahid Afridi (43), Wasim Akram (39) and Inzamam-ul-Haq (33) are above him.



Winter Olympics-bound Md Arif Khan included in Target Olympic Podium Scheme :-

The Sports Ministry's Mission Olympic Cell (MOC) has approved the inclusion of Alpine Skiing athlete Md Arif Khan in the Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS) Core group, until the Winter Olympics, scheduled this February in Beijing, China. Khan will take part in the Winter Olympics in the Slalom and Giant Slalom events. He has also been approved an amount of Rs 17.46 Lakh under TOPS towards training in Europe and procurement of equipment, ahead of the grand event in China. Khan's current training base is in Austria, where he is accompanied by his coach and physio.



World Rapid Chess Championship 2021 won by Nodirbek Abdusattorov :-

The 2021 Open World Rapid Championship ended with the 17-year-old Uzbeki GM, Nodirbek Abdusattorov,

defeating the 2021 Challenger Ian Nepomniachtchi in the tiebreak, and taking the crown from the World Champion Magnus Carlsen. On the first round of the final day of the 2021 Open Rapid Championship, Carlsen was a half-point ahead, giving Abdusattorov the space to take the lead. Their game was very exciting to watch, with the World Champion showing once again his great endgame technique, but a wrong plan on move 81 cost him the game.



Gael Monfils wins 2022 Adelaide International 1 tennis tournament :-

Gael Monfils captured his 11th ATP Tour title January 09, overcoming Karen Khachanov 6-4, 6-4 in the Adelaide International 1 final to begin his season in perfect fashion. Gael, who was competing in his first Australian tour-level championship match, played with flair and demonstrated great agility throughout against Khachanov, closing the net effectively and covering the court well to triumph after 80 minutes.



Rafael Nadal wins 2022 Melbourne Summer Set tennis tournament :-

Rafael Nadal kick start the year 2022 on a high by winning his 89th tour-level title at the Melbourne Summer Set trophy on 09 January by beating the American qualifier Maxime Cressy 7-6(6), 6-3. Nadal beat American Maxime Cressy, 7-6 (6), 6-3 at Melbourne in one of six tournaments this week ahead of the Australian Open, which begins January. After his win, Nadal withdrew from his next doubles match against Andrey Golubev and Franko Skugor due to fatigue.

**Bharath Subramaniyam named India's 73rd chess Grandmaster :-**

Fourteen-year old Bharath Subramaniyam on 09 January became India's 73rd chess Grandmaster, securing the third and final GM norm at an event in Italy. The Chennai-based player scored 6.5 points from nine rounds along with four others to finish seventh overall in the event held at Cattolica. He obtained his third GM norm here and also touched the requisite 2,500 (Elo) mark.

**Mission Olympic Cell Adds 10 Athletes To The TOPS List :-**

Ace rider Fouaad Mirza, golfers Anirban Lahiri, Aditi Ashok and Diksha Dagar and Alpine Skier Mohammed Arif Khan are among the 10 athletes added by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports' Mission Olympic Cell (MOC) to the list of athletes who would be provided support under the Target Olympic Podium Scheme. While these five athletes have been included in the Core group, golfers Shubhankar Sharma and Tvesa Malik and Judokas Yash Ghangas, Unnati Sharma and Linthoi Chanambam have been added to the Development group. These additions take the number of athletes under TOPS to 301, including 107 in the Core group.

**AISCD gets approval to hold first World Deaf T20 Cricket championship 2023 :-**

The All India Sports Council of the Deaf AISCD said it has got the the approval from the International Committee of Sports for the Deaf (ICSD) to host the first World Deaf T20 Cricket Championship in Kerala from January 10 to 20, 2023. Honorary General Secretary, AISCD, G Suresh Kumar said the first World Deaf T20 cricket championship will be held in Thiruvanthapuram, Kerala from January 10 to January 20, 2023. This championship was planned to be conducted in 2020-2021 but due to the sudden outbreak of coronavirus it was postponed first to 2022 and now fixed for January 2023.



Kohli Quits As India's Test Captain After Seven Years :-

Virat Kohli has announced that he is stepping down from Test captaincy of the Indian team after the recently-concluded South Africa series. The 33-year-old took to social media on Saturday, January 15 and said that his 7-year-journey as the Test captain of India has come to a halt. The unforeseen decision comes a day after India lost a 3-Test series 1-2 to South Africa in South Africa. Virat Kohli led India in 68 Tests between 2014 and 2022 and won 40 out of them.



Lakshya Sen defeats Loh Kean Yew to win maiden Super 500 title :-

India's Lakshya Sen secured his maiden Super 500 title by winning the Yonex-Sunrise India Open with a stunning

straight-game victory over reigning world champion Loh Kean Yew of Singapore in the men's singles final in Delhi on 16 January. The 20-year-old Sen, who had claimed his maiden world championships medal with a bronze in Spain last month, produced a fine performance to outshine the fifth seeded shuttler 24-22 21-17 in the summit clash that lasted 54 minutes.



Tasnim Mir became the World No 1 in Badminton U-19 Girls Singles :-

Sixteen-year-old Tasnim Mir became India's first junior singles world number 1 in badminton on 12 January. According to the latest Badminton World Federation (BWF) rankings, the next highest ranked Indian is another 16-year-old, Anupama Upadhyaya, who jumped 29 places to reach the tenth spot. Tasnim Mir, who is from Mehsana, Gujarat, climbed three places in the rankings from fourth to first, on the back of winning three junior tournament titles in Bulgaria, France and Belgium towards the end of last year.



Goalkeeper Savita Punia named captain of India Women's Hockey team :-

Experienced goalkeeper Savita will lead India at the upcoming women's Asia Cup in Muscat as Hockey India on 12 January named a strong 18-member squad for the event, including 16 players that featured at the Tokyo Olympics. Since regular skipper Rani Rampal is recovering from an injury in Bengaluru, Savita will lead the side in the tournament, which is scheduled to be held between January 21-28 at the Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex.

**9th women National Ice Hockey Championship-2022 :-**

Chief minister Jai Ram Thakur inaugurated the 9th National Ice Hockey Championship-2022 at the Ice Skating Rink, Kaza, in Lahaul-Spiti district on 16 January. Speaking on the occasion, the chief minister said it was for the first time that the national-level ice hockey competition and development camp was being held in Himachal Pradesh. He said ice hockey was one of the most popular winter sports in the world. Thakur said the championship would also boost the tourism development in the region besides promoting ice hockey amongst the younger generation.

**Russia's Aslan Karatsev wins Sydney Tennis Classic :-**

Former world number one Andy Murray's quest for a first ATP title in over two years ended in defeat at the hands of top seed Aslan Karatsev at the Sydney Tennis Classic on 15 January, with the Russian easing his way to a 6-3 6-3 win. Murray, playing in his first final since the European Open in Antwerp in October 2019, started tentatively. He was broken in the first game as Karatsev raced into an early lead after a couple of solid holds.



The Best FIFA Football Awards 2021 Announced :-

On 17 January FIFA announced the "Best FIFA Football Awards" for 2021. In the sixth iteration of these honors, Chelsea men and women raked in the honors, and Bayern Munich star Robert Lewandowski got his best Men's Player award after his Ballon D'or snub and the Best Women's Player award was clinched by Alexia Putellas of Barcelona.

**India to host AFC Women's football Asian Cup 2022 :-**

The 20th edition of the AFC Women's Asian Cup trophy holds a special significance for India as this is the second time the country will be hosting the tournament after 1979. Slated to be held from 20 January to 6 February in India, the AFC Women's Asian Cup 2022 will see twelve teams compete for the prestigious trophy. Mumbai and Pune will host the matches in India. The championship will be played in Mumbai Football Arena in Mumbai, D Y Patil Sports Stadium in Navi Mumbai and Shree Shiv Chhatrapati Sports Complex in Pune.

**India Tennis Star Sania Mirza To Retire After 2022 Season :-**

Former Wimbledon doubles champion Sania Mirza, one of India's most celebrated sports stars, has announced she will retire from tennis after 2022. Mirza's comments came after her first-round loss in the women's doubles in the Australian Open, reports said. She came close to securing an Olympics medal at the 2016 Rio Olympics when she and Rohan Bopanna played the semi-finals against Venus Williams and Rajeev Ram, but eventually lost.

**Pakistani Skipper Babar Azam Named Captain of ICC Men's T20I Team of the Year :-**

Pakistan captain Babar Azam has been named as the captain of the ICC Men's ODI Team of the Year for 2021, announced by the global cricket body on Thursday, January 20. He was also named as the captain of the ICC T20I Team of the Year announced on 19 January. Once again, no Indian has featured in the ODI Team of the Year. There were no Indians in the ICC T20I Men's Team of the Year but Smriti Mandhana found a spot in the Women's T20I Team of the Year.

17: States



Odisha Launched Digital Life Certificate System For Pensioners 2022 :-

Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik 29 December launched an online service for the verification of identity and submission of life certificates for pensioners of the state government. The chief minister virtually launched the new initiative while attending the orientation programme for newly recruited 153 officers of Odisha Civil Services. Claiming that Odisha is the first state in the country to implement such a digital service for pensioners, Patnaik expressed happiness over the initiative. Under the Digital Life Certificate system, identification and life certificates can now be submitted by the pensioners using artificial intelligence-based video-verification process.



Ladakh Celebrated Traditional New Year 'Losar Festival' :-

Losar festival, which has its origin in the 15th century, celebrates the Ladakhi or Tibetan New Year. It is said to last 15 days, but the first 3 days are the most important ones. It is mainly celebrated over a period of 3 days in late January or February, according to the Tibetan calendar. In Ladakh, Losar is regarded as the most important socio-religious event. The festival is marked by making offerings to the Gods, both in Gompas and their shrines.



Odisha's Ganjam District Is Now Child Marriage Free :-

The coastal Ganjam has earned the distinction of becoming Odisha's first district as a whole to be conferred the tag of child marriage-free zone, officials said on 04 January. The district registered 48,383 total marriages in the year 2020-21 out of which 26 were child marriage which the authorities addressed through Child Welfare Committee (CWC). To nip the abhorrent practice

in the bid, the district administration has announced a ten-fold increase in cash incentives from Rs 5,000 to Rs 50,000 for credible information on child marriage. Poverty coupled with the ignorance of illiterate parents contributes towards the prevalence of this illegal practice. Ironically the majority of parents are unaware of legal provisions of the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006, which is a cognizable offence.



Gujarat CM Bhupendra Patel launched Student Start-ups and Innovation Policy 2.0 :-

Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel has launched Student Start-ups and Innovation Policy (SSIP) 2.0 which is aimed at financially supporting school students in innovation. He announced the policy, while inaugurating the two-day International Conference on Academic Institutions at Gujarat Science City in Ahmedabad on 04 January. This policy has a provision of setting up active innovation and incubation centres across all universities in the state.



Sikkim Celebrated Losoong (Namsoong) Festival :-

Losoong is a Sikkimese New Year festival and carnival which celebrates the end of the annual harvest season at the conclusion of the tenth month of the Tibetan Lunar Calendar. The festival is primarily celebrated by Bhutia and Lepcha tribes in India, Bhutan and Nepal. The festival is marked in the month of December/January. The dates for 2022 are January 3 in Sikkim and January 4 in Mizoram.



Uttar Pradesh Govt Declares 4 Villages Near Nepal Border as Revenue Villages :-

The Uttar Pradesh government declared four villages located near the Nepal border in the district as revenue villages, an official said on 09 January. These four villages

are Bhavanipur, Tedhia, Dhakia and Bichhia located in Mihinpurwa tehsil of the district. All these villages are Vantangiya villages. The Vantangiya' community comprises people brought from Myanmar during the colonial rule to plant trees.



Kochi Became India's First City To Have A Water Metro Project :-

Kochi has become the first city with a water metro project as it launches the first in a series of battery-powered electric boats in the city. The new project by the Kochi Metro Rail Ltd will likely have an integrated water transport system with 15 identified routes. It will connect 10 islands along a network of routes that span 76 km with a fleet of 78 fast, electrically propelled hybrid ferries plying to 38 jetties.



9th Edition Of North East Festival Concludes :-

The three-day 9th edition of the North East Festival held at Radisson Blu here from January 7 ended on a high note on Sunday (January 9, 2021). The main purpose of this festival is to promote and highlight the commercial and tourism potential of the North East region. According to the organisers, only individuals that have proof of having received at least two COVID-19 vaccine jabs were allowed entry. The closing day was graced by Assam's Agriculture Minister Atul Bora, who interacted with entrepreneurs participating from across the North-East region.



18th Kachai Lemon Festival Begins In Manipur :-

The 18th edition of two-days long 'Kachai Lemon' festival began in Ukhrul, Manipur on January 14. The festival is being organised under the theme "Organic Kachai Lemon for Safe Environment and Rural Transformation". Around 360 stalls are participating in the festival by producing a record 300 MT of lemons. Three farmers have been awarded for growing 'Best Kachai Lemon'.

18: Summits & Conferences



IAMAI Organises 16th India Digital Summit 2022 :-

Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI) consociates with Easebuzz as Digital Finance Management Partner in 16th India Digital Summit held on 11th & 12th January 2022, a two-day virtual conference on supercharging startups and SMEs where industry experts dove deeper into the start-up ecosystem. The conference was held virtually with esteemed speakers such as Shri Piyush Goyal- the Honorable Minister of Commerce and Industry, Minister of Consumer Affairs. India Digital Summit is the oldest event of the digital industry in India. During the event, the Minister unveiled 'LEAP' as the way forward for Startups, - "Leverage, Encourage, Access & Promote".



India To Chair Counter Terrorism Committee Of UNSC In January 2022 :-

Coinciding with the 75th anniversary of India's Independence, India will chair the United Nations Security Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee for one year starting January 01, 2022. Expressing happiness over the same, earlier in the year 2021, India's Permanent Representative to United Nations, T.S. Tirumurti said, "The chairing of this committee has a special resonance for India, which has not only been in the forefront of fighting terrorism, especially cross-border terrorism but has also been one of its biggest victims." India to succeed the chair of the key- subsidiary body of the UNSC- the Counter-Terrorism Committee after a long gap of 10 years. The last time India held the chairmanship of the committee was in the year 2011-12.



IAF chief holds talks with top military brass of South Korea :-

Chief of Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal VR Chaudhari held extensive talks with the top military brass of the Republic of Korea to further enhance bilateral military ties. The Chief of Air Staff (CAS) was on a four-day trip to the Republic of Korea from 27 December. "As part of the visit, #CAS called on Minister of National Defence & Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff. CAS also met Chief of Staff

of the Republic of Korea Air Force. Wide ranging issues on enhancing bilateral defence engagement were discussed during the meetings,” the IAF tweeted on 30 December. Earlier, India and the Republic of Korea agreed to strengthen strategic cooperation including in dealing with challenges of terrorism, extremism and radicalisation.



GST Council decides to retain status quo on GST rate on textile to 5% :-

The 46th meeting of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council was held in the national capital under the chairmanship of Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman. Finance ministers of States and Union Territories and senior officials attended the meeting at Vigyan Bhawan in New Delhi. The meeting took place ahead of the Union Budget for 2022-23, which is scheduled to be presented in Parliament on February 1, 2022. The GST Council decision had met with a lot of resistance from opposition and many states. Nirmala Sitharaman says the GST Council decided to retain the status quo on GST rates on textile.



Nirmala Sitharaman Chairs 46th GST Council Meet In Delhi :-

The 46th meeting of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council is being held in the national capital under the chairmanship of Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman. Finance ministers of States and Union Territories and senior officials are attending the meeting held at Vigyan Bhawan in New Delhi. Union ministers of state in the Ministry of Finance, Pankaj Chaudhary and Bhagwat Kishanrao Karad, besides the senior officials in the Ministry of Finance, are also attending the meeting. The meeting holds significance as it is taking place ahead of the Union Budget for 2022-23, which is scheduled to be presented in Parliament on February 1, 2022.



France Takes Over EU Presidency For Six Months 2022 :-

France takes over the presidency of the council of the European Union for six months, starting from January 1, 2022, until June 30th. This presidency comes at a key period for French President Emmanuel Macron who is expected to run for re-election in April. If Macron lose the 2022 election, his successor will take over the rest of the term to chair the meetings.



TS Tirumurti assumes Chair of UNSC Counter-Terrorism Committee :-

TS Tirumurti, India's permanent representative to the United Nations was named the new Chair of the UN Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC) on 04 January. Prior to taking up his current position as Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations, in May 2020, Tirumurti served as Secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs. Tirumurti previously served at the Embassy of India to Egypt, in Cairo; at the Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations in Geneva; as the first Representative of India to the Palestinian Authority, in Gaza; as Counsellor in the Embassy of India to the United States, in Washington.



Antigua And Barbuda Joined ISA As The 102nd Member :-

Antigua and Barbuda has become the 102nd country to join International Solar Alliance. Antigua and Barbuda joined the International Solar Framework in the presence of Indian High Commissioner Dr. K. J. Srinivasa. Antigua and Barbuda has joined the ISA by signing the International Solar Alliance Framework Agreement on 04 January. The International Solar Alliance is conceived as a coalition of solar resource-rich countries to address their special energy needs and to provide a platform for collaboration to address the identified gaps through a common and agreed approach.



Union Minister Jitendra Singh inaugurates 24th Conference on e-Governance 2020-21 :-

The Department of Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances (DARPG) and Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY), Government of India, in association with the State Government of Telangana organized the 24th Conference on e-Governance (NCeG) 2021 on 7th – 8th February 2022 at Hyderabad, Telangana. The theme of this Conference is “India’s Techade: Digital Governance in a Post Pandemic World”. At the Valedictory Session, ‘Hyderabad Declaration’ on e-Governance was adopted after intensive deliberations during the sessions held over two days. The Conference was inaugurated by the Chief Guest, Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh.



Bhupender Yadav chaired 19th Meeting of National Tiger Conservation Authority :-

The 19th Meeting of National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) was held on January 05 under the chairmanship of Union Minister for Environment, Forest & Climate Change Shri Bhupender Yadav. In his address, Shri Bhupender Yadav underlined the need to have at least three meetings of NTCA in the first week of April, August & December every year. He said while tiger continues to be an endangered species and the situation calls for adopting as well as active management.



IAMAI Organises 16th India Digital Summit 2022 :-

Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI) consociates with Easebuzz as Digital Finance Management Partner in 16th India Digital Summit held on 11th & 12th January 2022, a two-day virtual conference on supercharging startups and SMEs where industry experts dove deeper into the start-up ecosystem. The conference was held virtually with

esteemed speakers such as Shri Piyush Goyal- the Honorable Minister of Commerce and Industry, Minister of Consumer Affairs. India Digital Summit is the oldest event of the digital industry in India. During the event, the Minister unveiled 'LEAP' as the way forward for Startups, - "Leverage, Encourage, Access & Promote".



PM Narendra Modi virtually address WEF's Davos Agenda 2022 Summit :-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 17 January addressed the World Economic Forum's Davos Agenda via video conferencing. During his speech, he talked about some of the pressing issues like Covid, climate change, cryptocurrency, reforms and initiatives taken by his government for ease of doing business. He started the speech by saying that India is moving forward with great strength and vigour. "We have recently completed the enormous task of administering 160 crore vaccine doses," he said.

#startupindia

INNOVATION
WEEK

10th - 16th January 2022
Virtual Platform

DPIIT organized Startup India Innovation Week from 10 to 16 January :-

The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) organized the Startup India Innovation Week during 10-16 January. The virtual innovation celebration aims to commemorate the 75th year of India's independence and is designed to showcase the spread and depth of entrepreneurship across India, the Ministry of Commerce & Industry said in a release. The programme is expected to bring together top policy makers, industry, academia, investors, startups, and all ecosystem enablers from across the globe, the statement said.

**The MoHUA Announced The Initiation Of The Open Data Week :-**

Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) has announced the initiation of the Open Data Week to

encourage adoption of open data and promote innovation across India's urban ecosystem. Leading up to the 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav - Smart Cities: Smart Urbanization' conference scheduled to be held in Surat, during February 2022, the Open Data Week is part of a series of pre-event initiatives being undertaken by MoHUA to promote awareness and use of open data. It will be conducted during the third week of January, i.e., from 17th January 2022 to 21st January 2022.

**1st BRICS Sherpas meeting of 2022 held under Chinese chairship :-**

The first BRICS Sherpas meeting of 2022 was held virtually on January 18-19 under the Chinese chairship with the members thanking India for its BRICS chairship in 2021. Programme and priorities for the year were discussed at the first BRICS Sherpas Meeting of 2022 held virtually on January 18-19, under the Chinese chairship, Ministry of External Affairs Spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said on Twitter. Members thanked India for its BRICS Chairship in 2021, he said.

SECTION 2



Practice Questions with Answers



PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. Hyundai Motors India has appointed which of the following as it's Managing Director?

- A) Alfons Dinter
- B) Jim Farley
- C) Seon Seob Kim
- D) Unsoo Kim

2. To reuse plastic waste which of the following organization has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the National Cadet Corps (NCC)?

- A) Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited
- B) National Highways Authority of India
- C) Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited
- D) Bhabha Atomic Research Centre

3. Girish Thakorlal Nanavati has passed away in December 2021. He was related to which of the following field?

- A) Author
- B) Journalist
- C) Politician
- D) Judge

4. Shri Krishna Balram Rath Yatra was declared as state festival by which of the following state?

- A) Chattisgarh
- B) Karnataka
- C) Punjab

D) Rajasthan

5. To build houses for the urban poor in Tamil Nadu how much loan amount was approved by the Asian Development Bank?

- A) \$80 million
- B) \$150 million
- C) \$125 million
- D) \$100 million

6. Who among the following was named as the CEO and MD of BrahMos Aerospace Limited?

- A) Ashok Dinkar Rane
- B) Ashok Kumar Rane
- C) Ashok Kumar Tandon
- D) Atul Dinkar Rane

7. Who among the following was appointed as the President of the Indian Newspaper Society?

- A) Vinod Kumar Jain
- B) Mohit Jain
- C) Manoj Jain
- D) Ashok Jain

8. Which organization was honored with the prestigious Golden Peacock Environment Management Award for 2021?

- A) Steel Authority of India
- B) Indian Oil Corporation Limited

C) Bharat Petroleum Corporation

D) Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited

9. K. P. Geethakrishnan has passed away in December 2021. He was related to which of the following field?

A) Actor

B) Author

C) Hockey player

D) Politician

10. To promote Indian culture which organisation has signed an MoU with the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR)?

A) Defence Research and Development Organisation

B) Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited

C) Prasar Bharati

D) Yuvavani

11. To encourage continuous learning and skill development for NPCI employees Which firm has partnered with the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)?

A) Byjus

B) Coursera

C) Great Learning

D) Udemy Business

12. Who among the following was named as the BBC Sports Personality of the Year 2021?

A) Adam Peaty

B) Emma Raducanu

C) Lewis Hamilton

D) Tom Daley

13. To provide better opportunities for students which of the following state/UT signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with University College Birmingham (UCB) at the India Global Forum, Dubai?

A) New Delhi

B) Maharashtra

C) Uttarakhand

D) Jammu and Kashmir

14. Which airport bags the National Energy Conservation Award 2021?

A) Chennai International Airport

B) Indira Gandhi International Airport

C) GMR Hyderabad International Airport

D) Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose International Airport

15. Tested by the Defence Research and Development Organisation from the Odisha coast what is the name of the short-range ballistic missile?

A) Praga

B) Pralay

C) Prana

D) Vaayu

16. For Do-It-Yourself income tax filing returns which of the following platform was launched by Axis Direct?

- A) Tax Digital
- B) DIY Tax
- C) Direct Tax
- D) DIGITAX

17. In which of the following bank the Oriental Insurance Company was categorized as a public shareholder?

- A) Axis Bank
- B) HDFC Bank
- C) ICICI Bank
- D) IndusInd Bank

18. launched by the National Stock Exchange (NSE) what is the name of the new corporate governance initiative?

- A) NSE Corporate
- B) NSE Governance
- C) NSE Prime
- D) NSE Striker

19. For Beijing Winter Olympics 2022 Who was appointed as India's Chef de Mission?

- A) Harjinder Singh
- B) Igor Stimac
- C) Sunil Chettri
- D) Virat Kohli

20. According to the report released by Hurun Research Institute what is the rank of India in the list of countries hosting unicorns?

- A) 5th

- B) 4th
- C) 3rd
- D) 2nd

21. To help self-help groups (SHGs) Prime Minister Narendra Modi has announce how much amount to their bank accounts?

- A) ₹1,000 crores
- B) ₹2,000 crores
- C) ₹4,000 crores
- D) ₹5,000 crores

22. When the National Consumer Rights Day is observed annually?

- A) 25 December
- B) 24 December
- C) 23 December
- D) 21 December

23. Odisha's longest bridge 'T-Setu' was inaugurated by Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik over the which of the following river?

- A) Ganga
- B) Godavari
- C) Mahanadi
- D) Narmada

24. The top position in Digital payments for 2020–21 was achieved by which of the following bank?

- A) Bank of Baroda
- B) HDFC Bank

- C) State Bank of India
- D) Union Bank of India

25. Who among the following was named as the MD and CEO of IFFCO-TOKIO General Insurance?

- A) Sanjeev Nautiyal
- B) HO Suri
- C) BC Patnaik
- D) Ashwini Kumar Tewari

26. Men's Hockey Asian Champions trophy 2021 was won by which of the following country?

- E) South Korea
- F) Nepal
- G) Maldives
- H) India

27. In the 2021 Men's Hockey Asian Champions trophy India has won the bronze medal by defeating which of the following country

- A) Sri Lanka
- B) Pakistan
- C) Nepal
- D) Bangladesh

28. When the Good Governance Day in India is observed annually?

- A) 22 December
- B) 23 December
- C) 24 December
- D) 25 December

29. When the International Day of Epidemic Preparedness is observed annually?

- A) 24 December
- B) 25 December
- C) 27 December
- D) 28 December

30. To provide a continuous piped water supply in three cities which state government received an additional \$150 million from World Bank?

- A) Telangana
- B) Madhya Pradesh
- C) Karnataka
- D) Andhra Pradesh

31. To boost its MSME sector which state government has signed a pact with Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI)?

- A) Jharkhand
- B) Kerala
- C) Tamil Nadu
- D) West Bengal

32. A monetary penalty on One Mobikwik Systems and Spice Money was imposed by which of the following organization?

- A) National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT)
- B) Reserve Bank of India (RBI)
- C) Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)
- D) Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI)

33. To improve the flow of credit which bank has entered into a co-lending arrangement with Lendingkart?

- A) Bank of Baroda
- B) Punjab National Bank
- C) State Bank of India
- D) Union Bank of India

34. To offer cross-border payments through UPI which of the following bank has partnered with the National Payments Corporation of India?

- A) Axis Bank
- B) HDFC Bank
- C) ICICI Bank
- D) IndusInd Bank

35. Who among the following was named as the additional director on the RBL board?

- A) N. K. Singh
- B) Rajiv Verma
- C) Subhash Chandra Khuntia
- D) Yogesh Dayal

36. Where was the FIS Alpine Skiing Competition held in which Indian skier Aanchal Thakur won a bronze medal?

- A) Albania
- B) Croatia
- C) Kosovo
- D) Montenegro

37. Which of the following state bags the 11th Hockey India Junior National Men's Championship?

- A) Uttar Pradesh
- B) Tamil Nadu
- C) Maharashtra
- D) Madhya Pradesh

38. Who among the following clinched the 2021 National Billiards title?

- A) Vinay Sharma
- B) Sourav Kothari
- C) Pankaj Advani
- D) Aditya Mehta

39. K. S. Sethumadhavan passed away in December 2021. He was related to which of the following field?

- A) Actor
- B) Cricketer
- C) Director
- D) Politician

40. Sanath Sett passed away in December 2021. He was related to which of the following sport?

- A) Basketball
- B) Cricket
- C) Football
- D) Hockey

41. Who among the following was named as the MD and CEO of Punjab National Bank (PNB)?

- A) Atul Kumar Goel
- B) Karnam Sekar
- C) Mallikarjuna Rao
- D) Soma Shankar Prasad

42. In which of the following bank Soma Shankara Prasad was appointed as the Managing Director (MD) and Chief Executive Officer (CEO)?

- A) Union Bank of India
- B) UCO Bank
- C) Punjab National Bank
- D) Indian Bank

43. According to the NITI Aayog's fourth Health Index 2019–2020 which state achieved the first position?

- A) Kerala
- B) Maharashtra
- C) Tamil Nadu
- D) Uttar Pradesh

44. Released by the Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation which of the following state topped the Good Governance Index 2021?

- A) Tamil Nadu
- B) Sikkim
- C) Kerala
- D) Gujarat

45. Who among the following was selected as the interim MD and CEO of RBL Bank?

- A) Rajeev Ahuja
- B) Robert Ahuja

- C) Yogesh Ahuja
- D) Yogesh Dayal

46. According to the credit rating agency ICRA Limited what is the GDP growth projection of India's economy for FY22 and FY23?

- A) 9.0%
- B) 8.7%
- C) 8.5%
- D) 8.2%

47. For enabling and implementing e-RUPI which state government has partnered with the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) and the State Bank of India (SBI)?

- A) Maharashtra
- B) Madhya Pradesh
- C) Kerala
- D) Karnataka

48. When India's economy will grow to become the world's third-largest economy according to the Centre for Economics and Business Research (CEBR) in the United Kingdom?

- A) 2030
- B) 2025
- C) 2023
- D) 2031

49. To launch a RuPay debit card for corporates which of the following bank has tied up with the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)?

- A) Union Bank of India

- B) Indian Bank
- C) Central Bank of India
- D) Canara Bank

50. For anchor investors what is the new lock-in period fixed by the Securities and Exchange Board of India?

- A) 60 days
- B) 50 days
- C) 45 days
- D) 90 days

51. Who among the following was named as PETA India's Person of the Year 2021?

- A) Vicky Kaushal
- B) Priyanka Chopra
- C) Katrina Kaif
- D) Alia Bhatt

52. Harry Reid has passed away in December 2021. What was his profession?

- A) Sand Artist
- B) Politician
- C) Cricketer
- D) Actor

53. Who among the following became the 11th Indian bowler to pick up 200 or more wickets and only the fifth fast bowler to reach this milestone in Test cricket?

- A) Irfan Pathan
- B) Mohammed Shami
- C) R. Ashwin

- D) Ishant Sharma

54. Ray Illingworth passed away in December 2021. Which country's cricket team he was from?

- A) Australia
- B) England
- C) South Africa
- D) West Indies

55. The newest member of BRICS' New Development Bank is which of the following country?

- A) Uruguay
- B) The United Arab Emirates
- C) Egypt
- D) Bangladesh

56. According to the Reserve Bank of India what is the extended deadline for the periodic KYC updates?

- A) 30 April 2022
- B) 31 March 2022
- C) 28 February 2022
- D) 31 January 2022

57. Durga Shankar Mishra was appointed as Chief Secretary of which of the following state government?

- A) Uttar Pradesh
- B) Karnataka
- C) Madhya Pradesh
- D) Uttarakhand

58. Who among the following was appointed as the Chief Executive Officer of Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL)?

- A) Radha Patnayak
- B) Radhika Jha
- C) Tripti Kumari
- D) Radha Jha

59. At the Mumbai Press Club's RedInk Awards for Excellence in Journalism who among the following was posthumously awarded the Journalist of the Year 2020 award?

- A) Radhika Jha
- B) Rachna Khaira
- C) Prem Shankar Jha
- D) Danish Siddiqui

60. To enable cardholders to tokenise their cards which payment platform has collaborated with SBI Cards and Payment Services?

- A) Google Pay
- B) PayPal
- C) Paytm
- D) PhonePe

61. According to the IRDAI which of the following insurance firm is not retained as a Domestic Systemically Important Insurer (D-SII) for 2021-22?

- A) United India Insurance Limited
- B) New India Assurance (NIA)
- C) Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC)
- D) General Insurance Corporation of India

62. A 9.95% stake was acquired by which of the following bank in India International Exchange (IFSC)?

- A) Amazon
- B) Google
- C) State Bank of India
- D) Tech Mahindra

63. To become a hub of global robotics innovation a five-year plan was launched by which of the following country?

- A) Russia
- B) Japan
- C) India
- D) China

64. Who among the following was selected as the next Ambassador of India to Mexico?

- A) Manish Sharma
- B) Pankaj Sharma
- C) Sanjay Gupta
- D) Vinay Kumar

65. Which of the following position the Indo-Tibetan Border Police Director-General Sanjay Arora is set to hold the additional charge of?

- A) Border Security Force (BSF)
- B) Indian Coast Guard
- C) National Security Guard
- D) Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB)

66. 100% stake in Allyis India and Green Investments LLC was acquired by which of the following company?

- A) Amazon
- B) Google
- C) TCS
- D) Tech Mahindra

67. When the Global Family Day is observed annually?

- A) 1 January
- B) 2 January
- C) 3 December
- D) 31 December

68. When DRDO celebrates its Foundation Day and when it was founded?

- A) 1 January 1947
- B) 3 January 1949
- C) 2 January 1952
- D) 1 January 1958

69. Union Government has approved the sale of the _____tranche of electoral bonds.

- A) 16th
- B) 17th
- C) 18th
- D) 19th

70. As part of its effort to enhance its digital footprint to sell policies online, which initiative was launched by Life Insurance Corporation of India?

- A) Digi Zone
- B) Smart Zone
- C) Digi Policy
- D) Policy Zone

71. Who among the following was appointed as the CEO of Tamil Nadu Startup and Innovation Mission (TANSIM)?

- A) Ramakrishnan
- B) Ranga Prabhu
- C) Sivarajah Ramanathan
- D) Sivaraman Ranganathan

72. The issue of the electoral bonds is authorized by which of the following bank?

- A) Canara Bank
- B) ICICI Bank
- C) Indian Bank
- D) State Bank of India

73. Who among the following has stepped down as the President of Tamil Nadu Cricket Association (TNCA)?

- A) Anjum Chopra
- B) Rani Kelkar
- C) Manju Das
- D) Rupa Gurunath

74. Amir Subhani was appointed by which of the following state as its Chief Secretary?

- A) Uttarakhand
- B) Sikkim

- C) Bihar
- D) Assam

75. For the novel 'Things to Leave Behind' who has received the Sahitya Akademi Award 2021?

- A) Daya Prakash Sinha
- B) Gorati Venkanna
- C) Megha Majumdar
- D) Namita Gokhale

76. _____ will soon become the first Union Territory in the country to have a district-level Good Governance Index.

- A) Andaman and Nicobar Islands
- B) Jammu and Kashmir
- C) Ladakh
- D) Puducherry

77. India has exchanged a list of nuclear installations and facilities through diplomatic channels along with which of the following country?

- A) Australia
- B) Pakistan
- C) Russia
- D) Sri Lanka

78. How much Immediate Payment Service (IMPS) transaction limit was increased by the State Bank of India (SBI)?

- A) ₹5 lakhs
- B) ₹4 lakhs
- C) ₹3 lakhs

- D) ₹2 lakhs

79. Which of the financial institution has acquired the reputation of a Scheduled Bank from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI)?

- A) Paytm Payments Bank
- B) Jana Small Finance Bank
- C) Fino Payments Bank
- D) Airtel Payments Bank

80. Which bank has introduced the release of a facility for payment of customs duty online for each its retail and corporate customers?

- A) State Bank of India
- B) IndusInd Bank
- C) HDFC Bank
- D) Axis Bank

81. Sanjeev Churiwala was appointed by which of the following company as its new Chief Financial Officer?

- A) Tata Power
- B) Indian Oil Corporation
- C) Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited
- D) Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited

82. For tackling a situation strategically using robotic process automation which of the following bank has won the UiPath Automation Excellence Awards 2021?

- A) IndusInd Bank
- B) Karur Vysya Bank
- C) Kotak Mahindra Bank

D) South Indian Bank

83. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has cancelled Certificate of Authorisation (CoA) of which of the following payment system operator?

- A) Eko India Finance Services Private Limited
- B) Manappuram Finance Limited
- C) Muthoot Vehicle and Asset Finance Limited
- D) Both (A) and (C)

84. Union Minister of State for Science and Technology Dr. Jitendra Singh inaugurate India's first open rock museum at_____.

- A) Mumbai
- B) Hyderabad
- C) Chennai
- D) Bengaluru

85. For the second phase of the Green Energy Corridor how much allocated budget was approved by the Union Cabinet?

- A) ₹15,000 crores
- B) ₹12,060 crores
- C) ₹12,000 crores
- D) ₹1,200 crores

86. Justice Ayesha Malik was appointed by which country as their first woman Supreme Court Judge?

- A) Russia
- B) Nepal
- C) Bangladesh
- D) Pakistan

87. Who among the following assumed the Chair of the Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee for 2022, who is also India's permanent representative to the United Nations?

- A) Dinesh Bhatia
- B) Pratibha Parkar
- C) Rudrendra Tandon
- D) T. S. Tirumurti

88. To set up a food processing and logistics hub which state/UT has signed an MoU with LuLu Group?

- A) Jammu and Kashmir
- B) New Delhi
- C) Sikkim
- D) Kerala

89. To enhance the effectiveness of the Mid-Day Meal scheme in India United Nations World Food Programme partnered with_____.

- A) Smile Foundation
- B) Akshaya Patra Foundation
- C) Give India Foundation
- D) Care India

90. Which of the following country is currently hosting anti-submarine warfare exercise 'Sea Dragon 22'?

- A) China
- B) US
- C) Russia
- D) South Korea

91. In which of the following state the Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) launch India's first mobile honey processing van?

- A) Uttarakhand
- B) Uttar Pradesh
- C) Madhya Pradesh
- D) Andhra Pradesh

92. According to the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) guidelines what is the maximum limit of the approved cash withdrawal transactions per customer per terminal per day for Aadhaar Enabled Payment System (AePS)?

- A) Five
- B) Four
- C) Three
- D) Two

93. According to the India Ratings and Research (Ind-Ra) what is the GDP growth projection of India for FY22?

- A) 9.3%
- B) 9.2%
- C) 9.1%
- D) 9%

94. Reserve Bank of India has reappointed who among the following as the Executive Director of ICICI Bank?

- A) Rajiv Mehta
- B) Ashok Mittal
- C) Anup Bagchi

D) Anup Aggarwal

95. Haitham Al Ghais was appointed as new Secretary-General of which of the following international organization?

- A) World Wide Fund for Nature
- B) Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries
- C) International Olympic Committee
- D) International Maritime Organization

96. At which of the following country Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh flag off India's first multi-dimensional adventure sports expedition?

- A) Russia
- B) Italy
- C) France
- D) Australia

97. _____ has become India's first city to have a water metro project.

- A) Mumbai
- B) Kochi
- C) Chennai
- D) Bengaluru

98. Which of the following company has acquired a 73.37 per cent stake in the Mandarin Oriental Hotel?

- A) TATA
- B) Reliance Industries
- C) Airtel
- D) WIPRO

99. When did the Union Government observed the first-ever Startup India Innovation Week?

- A) 10–16 January
- B) 4–10 January
- C) 2–9 January
- D) 1–6 January

100. Former RBI Governor Urjit Patel was appointed by which of the following international organization as its Vice- President?

- A) World Bank
- B) International Monetary Fund (IMF)
- C) Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB)
- D) Asian Development Bank (ADB)

101. Danushka Gunathilaka of which country has announced his retirement from Test cricket?

- A) Australia
- B) South Africa
- C) Sri Lanka
- D) West Indies

102. Under the Best Motion Picture (Drama) category which film received the Golden Globe Awards 2022?

- A) Drive My Car
- B) Encanto
- C) The Power of the Dog
- D) West Side Story

103. Chandrashekhar Patil has passed away in January 2022, what was his profession?

- A) Actor
- B) Singer
- C) Social activist
- D) Writer

104. To set up a ₹2000 crore dairy joint venture which of the following state government has signed an agreement with the National Dairy Development Board?

- A) Assam
- B) Gujarat
- C) Karnataka
- D) Kerala

105. How much stake per cent is held by the Union Government in Vodafone India?

- A) 35.8%
- B) 26%
- C) 20%
- D) 5%

106. Pierre-Olivier Gourinchas was appointed by which of the following international organisation as its next Chief Economist?

- A) World Bank
- B) International Monetary Fund (IMF)
- C) Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB)
- D) Asian Development Bank (ADB)

107. Alikhan Smailov was elected by which of the following country as its Prime Minister?

- A) Kazakhstan
- B) Uzbekistan

C) Tajikistan

D) Barbados

108. For its work towards combating crime and violence against children which organization won the SKOCH Award in the 'Silver' category?

A) Central Building Research Institute

B) Chemtron Science Laboratory

C) Forensic Science Laboratory

D) Thiruchirapalli Institute of Social Science Laboratory

109. To provide investors with access with the Russian market which of the following company has tied up with Sova Capital?

A) Export-Import Bank of India

B) India INX

C) National Stock Exchange

D) Securities and Exchange Board of India

110. For co-lending to the priority segment which of the following bank has partnered with Edelweiss Housing Finance Limited (EHFL) and ECL Finance Limited (ECLF)?

A) Axis Bank

B) Canara Bank

C) ICICI Bank

D) Indian Bank

111. Launched by UCO Bank in association with the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) what is the ATM cash withdrawal limit in the RuPay Select contactless debit card?

A) ₹10,000

B) ₹20,000

C) ₹25,000

D) ₹50,000

112. For smoother biometric-based net banking payments which of the following bank has tied up with MinkasuPay?

A) Axis Bank

B) HDFC Bank

C) ICICI Bank

D) IndusInd Bank

113. In a new report released by the World Bank in January 2022 what is the GDP growth projection of India for 2021–22 (FY22)?

A) 8.7%

B) 8.3%

C) 8.2%

D) 8%

114. An instant 30-minutes loan approval portal was launched by which of the following bank for MSMEs?

A) ICICI Bank

B) HDFC Bank

C) Federal Bank

D) Axis Bank

115. For which of the following film Harshaali Malhotra was honoured with Bharat Ratna Dr. Ambedkar Award 2022?

A) Jai Bheem

B) Slumdog Millionaire

C) Bajrangi Bhaijaan

D) Jai Ho

116. Chris Morris of which country announced retirement from cricket on January 2022?

A) Australia

B) South Africa

C) England

D) West Indies

117. The President of the European Parliament David Sassoli has passed away in January 2022, he belongs to which of the following country?

A) France

B) Italy

C) Russia

D) United States

118. To track the lost belongings of passengers which of the following mission was launched by Indian Railways?

A) Saathi

B) Satark

C) Amanat

D) Hifazat

119. In which of the following state Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurate the MSME Technology Centre and an auditorium with an open-air theatre Perunthalaivar Kamarajar Manimandapam?

A) Karnataka

B) Maharashtra

C) Puducherry

D) Punjab

120. To probe Prime Minister's security lapse who heads the five- membered committee set up by the Supreme Court?

A) Indu Malhotra

B) Krishi Malhotra

C) Rohinton Fali Nariman

D) Samuel Alito

121. Ajaz Patel of which country has won the ICC Player of the Month Award for December 2021?

A) West Indies

B) South Africa

C) New Zealand

D) Australia

122. At the Global Private Banking Awards 2021 which of the following bank was named as the 'Best Private Bank' in India?

A) Axis Bank

B) HDFC Bank

C) ICICI Bank

D) IndusInd Bank

123. Three-time Olympic sprinter Deon Lendore has passed away in January 2022. Which country does he hail from?

A) Barbados

B) Romania

C) Russia

D) Trinidad and Tobago

124. When the Army Day (India) was observed?

- A) 14 January
- B) 13 January
- C) 11 January
- D) 15 January

125. In which of the following state the eighteenth edition of the two-day-long Kachai Lemon Festival was started?

- A) Assam
- B) Manipur
- C) Meghalaya
- D) Sikkim

126. To collect direct and indirect taxes which of the following bank has received the authorization from the Reserve Bank of India in January 2022?

- A) Axis Bank
- B) ICICI Bank
- C) IndusInd Bank
- D) South Indian Bank

127. To provide instant digital loans to medium, small and micro enterprises (MSMEs) which payment platform has partnered with Indifi Technologies?

- A) PhonePe
- B) Paytm
- C) Google Pay
- D) BharatPe

128. Along with Africa50 the Power Grid Corporation of India Limited is set to develop a transmission project at_____.

- A) Italy
- B) Kazakhshtan
- C) Kenya
- D) Nigeria

129. Toshiki Kaifu has passed away in January 2022, he was former prime minister of which of the following country?

- A) South Korea
- B) North Korea
- C) Japan
- D) China

130. When the National Startup Day was observed?

- A) 16 January
- B) 14 January
- C) 12 January
- D) 10 January

131. Legendary cricketer Clive Lloyd of which country was awarded knighthood honour during an investiture ceremony performed by the Duke of Cambridge Prince William?

- A) Australia
- B) South Africa
- C) England
- D) West Indies

132. Which of the following organization has appointed Shersingh Khyalia as its Chief Executive Officer (CEO)?

- A) TATA Power

- B) Adani Power
- C) Airtel
- D) JIO

133. At the Yonex-Sunrise India Open 2022 who has won the men's doubles title?

- A) Chirag Shetty
- B) Mohammad Ahsan
- C) Satwiksairaj Reddy
- D) Both (A) and (C)

134. Who among the following has clinched men's singles title on his debut at the Yonex-Sunrise India Open 2022?

- A) Hendra Setiawan
- B) Kidambi Srikanth
- C) Lakshya Sen
- D) Mohammad Ahsan

135. Tasnim Mir of which of the following state became the first Indian to clinch the number one spot in U-19 girls' singles badminton?

- A) Gujarat
- B) Haryana
- C) Kerala
- D) Maharashtra

136. Held at Nevada, Las Vegas Shaylyn Ford of which country was crowned the Mrs. World 2022 title in the final of the beauty pageant?

- A) UAE
- B) USA
- C) Jordan

- D) Ireland

137. At the IBS Intelligence Global FinTech Innovation Awards 2021 which bank has won award for the 'Best CRM System Implementation'?

- A) Axis Bank
- B) Bandhan Bank
- C) HDFC Bank
- D) ICICI Bank

138. Sumit Bhale of which state/UT has won the gold medal at the International Folk Art Festival in Dubai?

- A) Andhra Pradesh
- B) Maharashtra
- C) Madhya Pradesh
- D) New Delhi

139. For the Asia Cup in Muscat who among the following was appointed as the captain of the Indian women's hockey team?

- A) Savita Punia
- B) Manpreet Kaur
- C) Dalima Chibber
- D) Aditi Chauhan

140. A solid-fuel satellite carrier rocket was launched by which of the following country into space?

- A) China
- B) Iran
- C) Japan
- D) Russia

141. M. K. Prasad has passed away in January 2022. What was his profession?

- A) Social activist
- B) Politician
- C) Environmentalist
- D) Author

142. Announced by the Union Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs when the "Open Data Week" was observed?

- A) 18 to 22 January
- B) 15 to 21 January
- C) 17 to 21 January
- D) 14 to 17 January

143. Maya Angelou has become the first Black woman to feature on the US coin, what was her profession?

- A) Dancer
- B) Drummer
- C) Poet
- D) Politician

144. To aid small non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) and microfinance institutions (MFIs) which bank has received ₹650 crores of aggregate fund from the Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI)?

- A) AU Small Finance Bank
- B) Equitas Small Finance Bank
- C) Jana Small Finance Bank
- D) Both (A) and (C)

145. _____ is the revised timeline for filing settlement applications fixed by the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI).

- A) 120 days
- B) 60 days
- C) 45 days
- D) 30 days

146. To provide low-cost business loans of up to ₹10 lakhs to micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) across India which bank has tied up with Lendingkart?

- A) Canara Bank
- B) HDFC Bank
- C) ICICI Bank
- D) Indian Bank

147. _____ was appointed as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Worldline India.

- A) Deepak Chandnani
- B) Ramesh Muralikrishnan
- C) Ramesh Narasimhan
- D) Suresh Narayanan

148. 'US Dollar offshore fund' was launched by which of the following bank in association with Equirus Wealth exclusively for their customers?

- A) Canara Bank
- B) Federal Bank
- C) ICICI Bank
- D) Indian Bank

149. At the Best FIFA Football Awards 2021 who was named as the Best FIFA Men's Coach 2021 held in Zurich, Switzerland?

- A) Cristiano Ronaldo
- B) Thomas Tuchel
- C) Erik Lamela
- D) Robert Lewandowski

150. Who among the following has clinched the Best FIFA Men's Goalkeeper 2021 award at the Best FIFA Football Awards 2021?

- A) Cristiano Ronaldo
- B) Edouard Mendy
- C) Erik Lamela
- D) Christiane Endler

ANSWERS

1. Correct Answer: D

Hyundai Motor Company has announced a top level change in its Indian operations with Unsoo Kim slated to take over as Managing Director from January 1, 2022.

2. Correct Answer: B

The National Cadet Corps (NCC) and National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to reuse the plastic wastes collected by the NCC cadets.

3. Correct Answer: D

Girish Thakorlal Nanavati was an Indian judge who was a Justice of the Supreme Court of India.

4. Correct Answer: C

The Chief Minister of Punjab, Charanjit Singh Channi has declared Lord Krishna Balram Jagannath Rath Yatra as an annual state festival.

5. Correct Answer: B

The Government of India has announced signing of a \$150-million loan from Asian Development Bank (ADB) for a housing project for the urban poor in Tamil Nadu.

6. Correct Answer: D

DRDO scientist Atul Dinkar Rane has been appointed as the new chief executive officer (CEO) and chief managing director (CMD) of the Indo-Russian multinational aerospace and defence corporation, BrahMos Aerospace Limited on Friday, December 24.

7. Correct Answer: B

Mohit Jain of The Economic Times was elected president of The Indian Newspaper Society.

8. Correct Answer: A

Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) has been awarded with the prestigious Golden Peacock Environment Management Award for the year 2021 in the Steel Sector by the Institute of Directors.

9. Correct Answer: D

Former Union finance secretary K P Geethakrishnan died in Chennai. He was 86.

10. Correct Answer: C

Prasar Bharati and Indian Council for Cultural Relations have signed an MoU to promote Indian culture.

11. Correct Answer: D

National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) has signed a partnership agreement with Udemy Business, to encourage innovative learning and skill development for employees of NPCI.

12. Correct Answer: B

Emma Raducanu is the BBC's Sports Personality of the Year for 2021.

13. Correct Answer: D

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed between the Jammu and Kashmir government and University College Birmingham (UCB) at the India Global Forum, Dubai to provide better opportunities for students.

14. Correct Answer: C

As part of the prestigious National Energy Conservation Awards (NECA 2021), GMR Hyderabad International Airport Ltd (GHIAL), has been awarded the certificate of merit for the excellent efforts in the areas of energy conservation by Bureau of Energy Efficiency.

15. Correct Answer: B

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) successfully test fired the indigenously developed surface-to-surface missile 'Pralay', from Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Island off the coast of Odisha.

16. Correct Answer: D

Axis Direct has announced the launch of a simplified, do-it-yourself (DIY) income tax return filing platform. The platform DIGITAX is powered by Quicko Infosoft Pvt Ltd.

17. Correct Answer: A

Axis Bank has said The Oriental Insurance Company has been categorised to public category from promoter category shareholder in the bank.

18. Correct Answer: C

The National Stock Exchange (NSE) has launched a new corporate governance initiative – 'NSE Prime'.

19. Correct Answer: A

Harjinder Singh was named as India's Chef de Mission for Beijing Olympics 2022.

20. Correct Answer: B

According to the report released by Hurun Research Institute India was placed fourth in the list of countries hosting unicorns.

21. Correct Answer: A

Addressing a programme in Uttar Pradesh's Prayagraj, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday, 21 December, announced the transfer of Rs 1,000 crore to bank accounts of self help groups (SHGs), a scheme that will benefit around 16 lakh women.

22. Correct Answer: B

National Consumer Day is observed every year on December 24 to spread awareness to about consumer importance, their rights, and responsibilities.

23. Correct Answer: C

Chief Minister of Odisha, Naveen Patnaik has inaugurated the state's longest bridge, 'T-Setu', built over the Mahanadi River in Cuttack District, Odisha

24. Correct Answer: A

Bank of Baroda has announced it has won the #1 position in overall digital transactions amongst large banks for FY20-21.

25. Correct Answer: B

IFFCO-TOKIO General Insurance on December 22 announced the appointment of HO Suri as its new managing director and chief executive officer.

26. Correct Answer: A

South Korea has won Men's Hockey Asian Champions trophy 2021

27. Correct Answer: B

India defeated Pakistan 4-3 to secure the bronze medal, while Korea defeated Japan 4-2 to emerge Asian Champions Trophy men's hockey tournament held in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

28. Correct Answer: D

Good governance is celebrated annually on 25 December, the anniversary of the birth of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

29. Correct Answer: C

The International Day of Epidemic Preparedness is observed on 27 December annually.

30. Correct Answer: C

State of Karnataka gets additional \$150 million from World Bank to provide continuous piped water supply in three cities.

31. Correct Answer: D

Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) has entered into a memorandum of understanding with the West Bengal government to develop its MSME ecosystem.

32. Correct Answer: B

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has imposed monetary penalties on two payment system operators, One

Mobikwik Systems Private Limited and Spice Money Limited, for violation of norms.

33. Correct Answer: B

To align with the Government of India reform agenda and to improve the flow of credit to the unserved and underserved sector of the economy, Punjab National Bank has entered into 4th Co-Lending arrangement with Lendigkart Finance Limited.

34. Correct Answer: D

IndusInd Bank has signed an agreement with the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) for offering real-time cross-border remittances through Unified Payments Interface (UPI).

35. Correct Answer: D

The Reserve Bank of India has appointed chief general manager Yogesh Dayal as an additional director on RBL Bank Ltd.'s board.

36. Correct Answer: D

Aanchal Thakur finished third at the FIS Alpine Skiing Competition held in Montenegro.

37. Correct Answer: A

Uttar Pradesh state bags the 11th Junior National Men's Hockey Championship following a 3-1 victory over Chandigarh in the final.

38. Correct Answer: C

Country's top cue player Pankaj Advani defended his national billiards title by defeating Dhruv Sitwala 5-2 to become the champion for the 11th time.

39. Correct Answer: C

National award-winning filmmaker KS Sethumadhavan passed away. He was 90.

40. Correct Answer: C

Former Indian goalkeeper Sanat Seth passed away in December 2021, he was 91 years old and had been ill for a long time.

41. Correct Answer: A

Atul Kumar Goel, who was MD & CEO at UCO Bank has joined Punjab National Bank, the country's second largest public sector bank. He will initially serve as an Officer on Special Duty (OSD) in PNB until end January.

42. Correct Answer: B

Soma Sankara Prasad has assumed the charge of Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer in UCO Bank on 1st January 2022.

43. Correct Answer: A

Kerala has maintained its position as the best-performing large state in terms of overall performance, according to the NITI Aayog Health Index, 2019-2020.

44. Correct Answer: D

Gujarat has topped the composite ranking in the Good Governance Index 2021 covering 10 sectors, followed by Maharashtra and Goa.

45. Correct Answer: A

RBL Bank informed that the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has approved the appointment of Rajeev Ahuja as Interim Managing Director & CEO of the bank.

46. Correct Answer: A

The Indian economy is expected to maintain a real GDP growth of 9.0% each in FY22 and FY23 amid the

uncertainty triggered by the Omicron variant of Covid-19 according to the credit rating agency ICRA Limited.

47. Correct Answer: D

Karnataka government has partnered with the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) & State Bank of India (SBI) to enabling and implementing e-RUPI.

48. Correct Answer: D

The Centre for Economics and Business Research (CEBR) has predicted that India will regain sixth position from France in 2022 and become the third-largest economy in 2031, a year later the previously predicted.

49. Correct Answer: C

Central Bank of India (CBoI) has announced its partnership with the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) to launch 'RuPay Business Platinum Debit Card' for firms/corporates.

50. Correct Answer: D

Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has extended the anchor investors' lock-in period to 90 days for 50% portion.

51. Correct Answer: D

PETA India has named Bollywood star Alia Bhatt its 2021 Person of the Year.

52. Correct Answer: B

Harry Reid, the former Senate majority leader and Nevada's longest-serving member of Congress, has died. He was 82.

53. Correct Answer: B

Mohammed Shami became just the 11th Indian bowler to claim 200 wickets in Test cricket in just 55 test matches.

54. Correct Answer: B

Former England captain Ray Illingworth passed away at the age of 89 following a battle with cancer on Saturday, 25 December.

55. Correct Answer: C

Egypt added as the fourth new member of BRICS New Development Bank.

56. Correct Answer: B

Reserve Bank of India has extended the deadline for periodic KYC (know-your-customer) update in banks by three months till March 31, 2022.

57. Correct Answer: A

Durga Shankar Mishra was appointed the Chief Secretary of Uttar Pradesh government.

58. Correct Answer: B

Radhika Jha has been appointed as the Chief Executive Officer in state-run Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL).

59. Correct Answer: D

Photojournalist Danish Siddiqui, who died during an assignment in Afghanistan, has been posthumously awarded as the 'Journalist of the Year' for 2020 at the Mumbai Press Club's RedInk Awards for Excellence in Journalism.

60. Correct Answer: C

SBI Cards and Payment Services has tied up with Paytm for card tokenisation to protect the data of the cardholders.

61. Correct Answer: A

The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority (IRDAI) stated that Life Insurance Corporation of India, General Insurance Corporation of India and New India Assurance Co Ltd continue to be identified as Domestic Systemically Important Insurers (D-SIIs) for 2021-22.

62. Correct Answer: C

India's largest public sector bank State Bank of India (SBI) has announced the acquisition of 9.95% stake in India International Exchange (IFSC).

63. Correct Answer: D

China announced a five-year roadmap to achieve its goal of becoming a global robotics innovation hub by the year 2025.

64. Correct Answer: B

Pankaj Sharma has been appointed as the next Ambassador of India to Mexico.

65. Correct Answer: D

ITBP Director-General Sanjay Arora will hold the additional charge of another border guarding force Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) as the latter's chief Kumar Rajesh Chandra was retired on December 31.

66. Correct Answer: D

Tech Mahindra has acquired 100% stake in Allyis India and Green Investments LLC.

67. Correct Answer: A

Celebrated every year on January 1, Global Family Day starts the new year with a positive message of unity to the world.

68. Correct Answer: D

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has observed the 64th Foundation Day of its establishment on January 01, 2022. DRDO was established in 1958 to enhance the research work in the Defence sector.

69. Correct Answer: D

Union Government has approved the sale of the 19th tranche of electoral bonds.

70. Correct Answer: A

Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) of India has inaugurated 'Digi Zone' as part of its effort to enhance its digital footprint.

71. Correct Answer: C

The Tamil Nadu government has appointed Sivarajah Ramanathan as Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Tamil Nadu Start-up and Innovation Mission (TANSIM).

72. Correct Answer: D

State Bank of India (SBI) has been authorised to issue and encash Electoral Bonds through its 29 Authorized Branches.

73. Correct Answer: D

Rupa Gurunath has stepped down as the President of Tamil Nadu Cricket Association (TNCA).

74. Correct Answer: C

Chief minister Nitish Kumar appointed 1987-batch IAS officer Amir Sabhani as the chief secretary of Bihar.

75. Correct Answer: D

Namita Gokhale's English novel Things to Leave Behind won her the Sahitya Akademi Award 2021.

76. Correct Answer: B

Jammu & Kashmir will soon become the first Union Territory in the country to have a district-level Good Governance Index.

77. Correct Answer: B

India and Pakistan exchanged a list of their nuclear installations through diplomatic channels simultaneously in New Delhi and Islamabad virtually.

78. Correct Answer: A

State Bank of India (SBI) said that it has increased the IMPS transaction limit to Rs 5 lakh with NIL charges for transactions done through digital channels.

79. Correct Answer: D

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has announced the inclusion of Airtel Payments Bank in the second schedule of the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934.

80. Correct Answer: C

HDFC Bank's integration with Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) ICEGATE platform has gone live, allowing customers to pay for their customs duty directly via the bank.

81. Correct Answer: A

Tata Power said that Sanjeev Churiwala has joined the company as its new chief financial officer (CFO) with effect from January 1, 2022.

82. Correct Answer: D

Kerala-based lender South Indian Bank (SIB) has won the UiPath Automation Excellence Awards 2021 for best automation under crisis for business continuity.

83. Correct Answer: D

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has informed that it has cancelled the Certificate of Authorisation (CoA) of two Payment System Operators (PSOs): Muthoot Vehicle & Asset Finance, and Eko India Financial Services.

84. Correct Answer: B

Union Minister of State for Science and Technology Dr. Jitendra Singh inaugurate India's first open rock museum at Hyderabad (Telangana).

85. Correct Answer: C

The government approved the second phase of the Green Energy Corridor with an outlay of ₹12,000 crore.

86. Correct Answer: D

Justice Ayesha Malik was appointed by Pakistan as their first woman Supreme Court Judge.

87. Correct Answer: D

India's permanent representative to the United Nations, TS Tirumurti assumed the Chair of the Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee for 2022.

88. Correct Answer: A

The Jammu and Kashmir government has signed an MoU with the LuLu Group to set up a food processing and logistics hub in Srinagar.

89. Correct Answer: B

United Nations World Food Programme has partnered with Akshaya Patra Foundation to enhance the effectiveness of the Mid-Day Meal scheme in India.

90. Correct Answer: B

Sea Dragon 22 exercise is a US-led multi-national exercise designed to practice and discuss Anti-submarine warfare tactics.

91. Correct Answer: B

Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) Chairman, Vinai Kumar Saxena has launched the country's first Mobile Honey Processing Van at Village Sirora in Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh.

92. Correct Answer: A

According to the guidelines, acquiring banks will have to implement a maximum limit of five approved cash withdrawal transactions per customer per terminal per day.

93. Correct Answer: A

India Ratings and Research (Ind-Ra) expects India's GDP growth to 9.3% in FY22.

94. Correct Answer: C

The RBI has approved the re-appointment of Anup Bagchi as the Executive Director of ICICI Bank for three years.

95. Correct Answer: B

Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) has appointed Kuwaiti oil executive Haitham Al Ghais as its new secretary-general.

96. Correct Answer: C

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has flagged-in India's first multi-dimensional adventure sports expedition in France.

97. Correct Answer: B

Kochi, Kerala has become India's first city to have a Water Metro Project.

98. Correct Answer: B

Reliance Industries has acquired a 73.37 per cent stake in the Mandarin Oriental Hotel.

99. Correct Answer: A

Central government observed the first-ever 'Startup India Innovation Week' from January 10, 2022 to January 16, 2022.

100. Correct Answer: C

Former RBI Governor Urjit Patel has been appointed as a Vice President of Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB).

101. Correct Answer: C

Sri Lanka's opening batter, Danushka Gunathilaka, has decided to retire from Test cricket at the age of 30.

102. Correct Answer: C

The Power of the Dog has won the Golden Globe Awards 2022 under the Best Motion Picture (Drama) category.

103. Correct Answer: D

Noted Kannada writer and poet, Professor Chandrashekar Patil (83), passed away following age-related health issues in Bengaluru.

104. Correct Answer: A

The Assam government and National Dairy Development Board has signed an agreement to create a Rs 2,000-crore joint venture for holistic development of the sector in the state.

105. Correct Answer: A

The Union government is set to own 35.8 per cent in Vodafone Idea (Vi).

106. Correct Answer: B

Economist Pierre-Olivier Gourinchas has been named as the next chief economist of the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

107. Correct Answer: A

Alikhan Smailov was nominated as the new prime minister of Kazakhstan by the country's president following the 2022 Kazakh protests.

108. Correct Answer: C

The Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL) Forensic Service, Delhi, has won the SKOCH Award 2021(Silver) in the Governance category for its work towards combating Crime and Violence against Children.

109. Correct Answer: B

India INX has entered into a partnership with Sova Capital through its wholly owned subsidiary India INX Global Access IFSC to provide Indian investors direct access to the Russian securities market, India INX said in a press statement.

110. Correct Answer: D

Edelweiss Housing Finance Ltd (EHFL) and ECL Finance Ltd (ECLF) have entered into co-lending partnership with Indian Bank for lending to priority sector areas.

111. Correct Answer: D

State-owned UCO Bank, in association with the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), has launched a RuPay Select contactless debit card for its premium customer segment with an ATM withdrawal limit of ₹50,000.

112. Correct Answer: A

Axis Bank has tied up with MinkasuPay to offer a smooth net banking payment experience to its customers through biometric authentication solution.

113. Correct Answer: B

India's economy is expected to expand by 8.3% in fiscal year 2021/22 (ending March 2022) according to the world bank.

114. Correct Answer: C

Federal Bank has launched an online lending platform titled federal insta loans to enable MSME borrowers to avail loans in less than 30 minutes digitally.

115. Correct Answer: C

The 2015 film Bajrangi Bhaijaan fame actress, Harshaali Malhotra has been awarded the 12th Bharat Ratna Dr. Ambedkar Award 2022. She received the award from Shri Bhagat Singh Koshyari, Governor of Maharashtra, for her commendable performance in the movie and contribution in the field of Indian Cinema.

116. Correct Answer: B

South Africa all-rounder Chris Morris has announced his retirement from all forms of cricket.

117. Correct Answer: B

The President of the European Parliament David Sassoli has passed away in January 2022. He was born on May 30, 1956, in Florence, Italy

118. Correct Answer: C

The Railway Protection Force (RPF) of the Western Railways zone of Indian Railways has launched a new initiative called "Mission Amanat" to make it easier for railway passengers to get back their lost luggage.

119. Correct Answer: C

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has inaugurated the MSME Technology Centre and an auditorium with an open-air theatre Perunthalaivar Kamarajar Manimandapam in Puducherry.

120. Correct Answer: A

The Supreme Court has appointed a five-member committee to probe the alleged breach in the security of Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his visit to Punjab. It said Justice Indu Malhotra will head the committee which will investigate the alleged lapses in PM Modi's security.

121. Correct Answer: C

New Zealand spinner Ajaz Patel has won the ICC Player of the Month award for December 2021.

122. Correct Answer: B

HDFC Bank was named as the 'Best Private Bank' in India at the 'Global Private Banking Awards 2021' which was organised by Professional Wealth Management (PWM) in a virtual ceremony.

123. Correct Answer: D

Trinidad and Tobago Olympian Deon Lendore has died aged 29 in a car accident in Texas, USA.

124. Correct Answer: D

Army Day is celebrated on 15 January every year in India.

125. Correct Answer: B

The 18th edition of the two days long Kachai Lemon Festival began in Manipur at the Local Ground of Kachai Village in Ukhrul district.

126. Correct Answer: D

The Reserve Bank of India has authorised South Indian Bank to collect direct and indirect taxes on behalf of the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) and the Central Board of Indirect Taxes & Customs (CBIC).

127. Correct Answer: C

Small businesses-focused online lending platform Indifi Technologies has collaborated with Google Pay to provide instant digital loans to medium, small and micro enterprises (MSMEs).

128. Correct Answer: C

Power Grid Corporation of India Ltd has signed a joint development agreement with Africa50, a pan-African infrastructure investment platform to continue to develop the Kenya Transmission Project on a public-private partnership basis.

129. Correct Answer: C

The former Prime Minister of Japan, Toshiki Kaifu has passed away at the age of 91 years in Japan.

130. Correct Answer: A

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has announced that the country will celebrate January 16 as National Startup Day from year 2022.

131. Correct Answer: D

Clive Lloyd, the former Captain of the West Indies Cricket team, has been given the honour of knighthood for his services to the game of cricket.

132. Correct Answer: B

The Board of Directors of Adani Power Limited (APL), a subsidiary of Adani Group, approved the appointment of Shersingh B. Khyalia as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Adani Powers with effect from 11th January 2022.

133. Correct Answer: D

India's Satwiksairaj Reddy and Chirag Shetty defeated three-time World Champions Hendra Setiawan and Mohammad Ahsan 21-16, 26-24 in the final to win the men's doubles title at the Yonex-Sunrise India Open 2022.

134. Correct Answer: C

Lakshya Sen defeated World Champion Loh Kean Yew of Singapore 24-22, 21-17 to secure his maiden Super 500 title in the final of the men's singles final at the Yonex-Sunrise India Open.

135. Correct Answer: A

16-year-old Tasnim Mir from Gujarat state became the first Indian to clinch the number one spot in U-19 girls' singles badminton.

136. Correct Answer: B

As Mrs. World 2022 pageant recently took place in Las Vegas, Nevada, Mrs. America Shaylyn Ford was crowned as the winner.

137. Correct Answer: A

Axis Bank & CRMNEXT Solution won the IBS Intelligence (IBSi) Global FinTech Innovation Awards 2021 for the "Best CRM (Customer Relationship Management) System Implementation".

138. Correct Answer: B

Lavni artist from Maharashtra, Sumit Bhale has won a gold medal at the International Folk Art Festival in Dubai.

139. Correct Answer: A

Savita Punia has been named as the captain of Indian women hockey team for Asia Cup in Muscat

140. Correct Answer: B

Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard has launched a solid-fuel satellite carrier rocket into space.

141. Correct Answer: C

Noted environmentalist Prof M K Prasad, a prominent figure in the historic grassroot level movement to save the evergreen tropical rain forests in Kerala's Silent Valley from destruction has passed away. He was 89. He breathed his last at a private hospital while undergoing treatment for Covid related complications.

142. Correct Answer: C

The Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) has announced the "Open Data Week". The Open Data Week was conducted during the third week of January from 17th January 2022 to 21st January 2022.

143. Correct Answer: C

Poet and activist Maya Angelou, who died in 2014, has become the first Black woman to be featured on a United States quarter coin.

144. Correct Answer: D

Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) has said that it has sanctioned financial assistance of ₹650 crore to AU Small Finance Bank and Jana Small Finance Bank to aid small non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) and microfinance institutions (MFIs).

145. Correct Answer: B

Market regulator Sebi has cut the timeline for filing settlement applications to just 60 days from the current 180 days in its effort to make the system more efficient.

146. Correct Answer: A

Fintech company Lendingkart announced that it has entered into a co-lending partnership with Canara Bank to provide low-cost business loans of up to ₹10 lakh to micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) across the country.

147. Correct Answer: C

Worldline has appointed Ramesh Narasimhan as the chief executive officer (CEO) for India.

148. Correct Answer: B

Federal Bank and Equirus Wealth have together launched a 'US dollar offshore fund' for their customers.

149. Correct Answer: B

Thomas Tuchel from Chelsea, Germany has won the Best FIFA Men's Coach 2021 at the Best FIFA Football Awards 2021.

150. Correct Answer: D

Christiane Endler from Chile has won the Best FIFA Men's Goalkeeper 2021 award at the Best FIFA Football Awards 2021.

SECTION 3

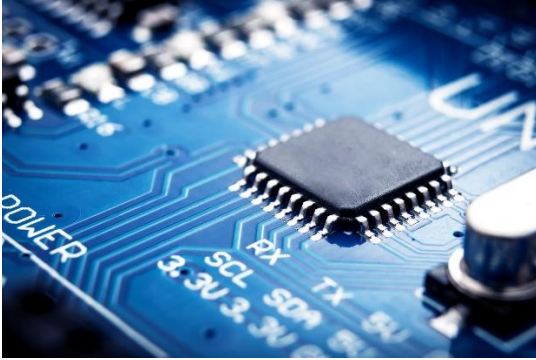


Detailed Analysis of Important Events



Economics

Global shortage of Semiconductor Chips



Worldwide carmakers have slashed production due to an abrupt and cascading shortage of semiconductors.

Semiconductor Chips

- Semiconductors, also known as integrated circuits (ICs) or microchips, are often constructed of silicon, germanium, or a gallium arsenide compound.
- It's the feature that allows electrical devices to be smarter and faster.
- The chip is made of a material that "semi-conducts" electricity and performs a variety of functions.
- Memory chips are simple data storage devices that are traded like commodities.
- Logic chips, which run programmes and serve as a device's brain, are more complicated and expensive.

Reasons for shortages

- Stay-at-home shift: As a result, chip demand surpassed expectations set before the outbreak. Sales of smartphones, computers, and other

electronic devices increased to their highest level in a decade as a result of the lockdowns.

- Forecasts that change frequently: Early in the pandemic, automakers who severely reduced production underestimated how quickly sales would revive.
- Stockpiling: The Chinese smartphone sector, which dominates the global market for 5G networking hardware, began stockpiling inventories to ensure that it would be able to withstand US sanctions.

How is the chip crisis playing out in geopolitics?

- The worldwide chip problem, as well as geopolitical concerns with China, have brought semiconductors back into the spotlight.
- The United States, which was once the world leader in chip manufacture, seeks to reclaim its position.
- The protectionist US wants to bring production back to the US and lessen its reliance on a small number of chipmakers based in Taiwan and South Korea.
- The chip dilemma is also being considered as a factor in China's increasing aggressiveness towards Taiwan.

Impact of semiconductor shortages

- Chip shortages are estimated to cost carmakers \$210 billion in sales this year, resulting in the loss of 7.7 million automobiles.
- When acquiring internet routers, broadband providers faced delays of more than a year.

Why is it so hard to compete?

- Advanced logic chip manufacturing necessitates extreme precision as well as large long-term bets in a rapidly changing area.
- Plants cost billions of dollars to construct and equip, and they must operate continuously to recoup their costs.
- A factory also uses a lot of water and power, and it is subject to even minor interruptions, such as dust particles or distant earthquakes.

- Until the account amount is replenished, there is a limit of \$200 per transaction and a total maximum of \$2,000 until the account balance is replenished.

Conditions applied

- Only after the customer's explicit authorization will payment instruments be activated for offline transactions.
- Apart from that, these card transactions would be permitted without the need to activate the contactless transaction channel.
- Customers may file complaints with the Reserve Bank's Integrated Ombudsman Scheme, if applicable.
- The RBI reserves the right to halt or change the operations of any payment system that allows small-value digital payments to be made offline.

RBI approves Offline E-Payments



The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has come out with the framework for facilitating small-value digital payments in offline mode, a move that would promote digital payments in semi-urban and rural areas.

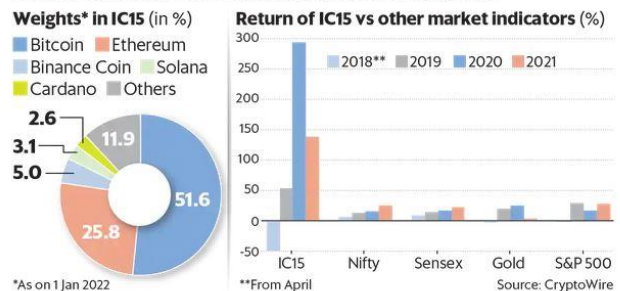
Offline E-payments

- Internet or telecommunications access are not required for offline digital payment.
- Face-to-face (proximity mode) payments can be made with any channel or instrument, including cards, wallets, and mobile devices.
- An Additional Factor of Authentication would not be required for such transactions.
- Because the transactions are offline, the consumer will receive alerts (through SMS and/or e-mail) after a period of time.

Understanding IC15, India's first Crypto Index

Lucrative returns

Data shows that IC15 has been beating other asset classes handsomely since 2019, but correction can be equally volatile as seen during 2018.



Superapp CryptoWire recently launched India's first cryptocurrency index, IC15, which will measure the performance of the 15 most widely traded cryptocurrencies listed on leading crypto exchanges by market capitalization.

What is IC15?

- CryptoWire constituted an Index Committee of domain experts, industry practitioners, and academicians that will select cryptocurrencies from the top 400 coins in terms of market capitalization.
- The eligible cryptocurrency should have traded on at least 90% of the days during the review period and be among the 100 most liquid cryptocurrencies in terms of trading value.
- Also, the cryptocurrency should be in the top 50 in terms of the circulating market capitalization.
- The committee will then select the top 15 cryptocurrencies. The index will be reviewed quarterly.

What is its significance?

- IC15 can be replicated for creating index-linked products such as index funds or exchange-traded funds (ETFs).
- Usually, the performance of a mutual fund scheme is assessed with reference to a benchmark, which could be a total return index of the Nifty or the Sensex.
- IC15 is the first index in India that can act as a benchmark of the underlying cryptocurrency market and the performance benchmark for fund managers.
- Moreover, robo-advisors, which provide financial advice with moderate to minimal human intervention, can use this index to create investment products at lower costs.

How does IC15 correlate with other market indicators?

- IC15's base value as on 1 April 2018 was 10,000.

- It would mean that the index has gained 615% in absolute terms to 71,475.48 till 31 December 2021.

Can index-based crypto investment reduce risks?

- Index investing can be an effective way to diversify against risks as a fund invests in a basket of assets against a few limited coins.
- However, index-based investing may not fully remove risks associated with investing in crypto assets.
- Case in point: IC15 saw a 50% plunge in 2018, whereas other asset classes have seen a maximum drop in the range of 3-4%.
- Further, bitcoin and ethereum have a combined weightage of 77% in the index, making it highly vulnerable to any volatility in these two coins.

Can crypto funds be launched in India?

- SEBI has recently asked mutual fund houses not to launch crypto-based funds until the Centre comes out with clear regulations.
- This means asset management companies for now won't be able to launch crypto funds based on IC15.
- However, in the absence of any regulations, crypto platforms can offer products based on the index.
- Global crypto investment platform Mudrex last year launched Coin Sets—crypto funds based on themes such as decentralized finance or market cap.

What is Antrix- Devas Multimedia Deal?

THE ANTRIX-DEVAS STORY

The ruling relates to a January 2005 agreement between Devas and Antrix, under which Devas was to lease as much as 70MHz of S-band spectrum from two satellites that were to be launched by Isro. A look at the developments so far.

December 2004

Devas Multimedia Pvt. Ltd is founded

January 2005

Antrix and Devas sign agreement providing for Isro to lease as much as 70MHz of S-band spectrum from two satellites to Devas. Devas is to pay Antrix around \$300 million, for 12 years, extendable by an additional 12 years.

December 2005

Cabinet clears Isro satellites GSAT 6 and GSAT 6A.

2006-2007

Devas raises \$15 million each from Columbia Capital and Telcom Ventures.

2008

Devas completes 3rd round of funding of \$100 million from Deutsche Telekom

May 2008

Department of telecommunications allots Internet Service Provider licence to Devas.

2005-2009

Devas and Isro work together to design, review and test the former's systems and technology, including field trials.

2010

Devas says it is ready with its technology and is waiting for Isro to launch GSAT 6 and GSAT 6A on which it is to get the promised 70MHz of S-band spectrum.

November 2010

Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) submits report to Parliament on so-called 2G scam.

2010-2011

As focus shifts to other spectrum deals, complaints about the Antrix-Devas deal surface.

February 2011

Antrix annuls the controversial deal.

June 2011

Devas takes Antrix to international arbitration court.

May 2012

CAG submits report to Parliament suggesting many instances of conflicts of interest amongst senior Isro and Antrix officials, resulting in undue benefits to Devas.

2013

Supreme Court lifts stay on arbitration proceedings.

April 2014

CBI files preliminary enquiry in case and starts investigation

December 2014

Arbitration hearing concludes in London

March 2015

CBI registers case against senior officials of Devas and Antrix for causing a loss of ₹578 crore to the exchequer

September 2015

International court rules in favour of Devas, asks Antrix to pay \$672 million

Source: Mint research

arbitrations. India was defeated in all three cases.

India's non-compliance

- Because AAI and Air India are Indian public sector businesses with international holdings that act as a proxy for the Indian government, they are being targeted.
- The idea of restricted immunity allows the Canadian court to do so.
- Meanwhile, the National Company Law Tribunal (India) ordered Devas Multimedia's liquidation on the grounds that the company's activities were being conducted fraudulently.

Why did India cancel the deal?

- The controversy first surfaced in 2011, when it was revealed that there were several inconsistencies in Antrix and Devas' agreement.
- They presented the findings of a draught audit report, highlighting irregularities such as financial mismanagement, conflicts of interest, rule violations, and favouritism.
- This news followed the 2G spectrum scandal, which was widely panned due to its high level of corruption.

How can a Canadian court order the attachment of Indian assets?

- State immunity, a well-established principle of international law, protects a state and its assets from legal action in other countries' courts.
- This applies to both jurisdiction and execution immunity.
- However, no international legal instrument dealing with state immunity in municipal legal systems of different countries is now in place, leaving an international void.

A Canadian court has ordered the seizure of more than \$30 million worth of Airport Authority of India's assets.

Background

- Devas Multimedia and Antrix, a commercial branch of the IISRO, signed an agreement in 2005 to provide multimedia services to mobile consumers utilising Antrix's leased S-band satellite spectrum.
- The UPA-2 administration cancelled the arrangement in 2011, claiming that the S-band satellite spectrum was needed for national security and for societal reasons.
- Antrix and Devas went to the International Chambers of Commerce (ICC) for arbitration, as well as two bilateral investment treaty (BIT)

- As a result, countries have filled the hole in state immunity through national legislation and domestic court processes.
- Restrictive immunity (a foreign State is immune solely for sovereign tasks) rather than total immunity is the norm in major jurisdictions such as Canada.

How can assets of AAI be seized when the claim is against India?

- Assets of an entity can be confiscated in execution procedures if that entity is an alter ego of the State that fails to comply with the arbitral ruling.
- In other words, if the foreign sovereign has such substantial influence over the entity, the presumption that it is an independent legal entity is thrown out.
- As a result, the Canadian court must have come to the conclusion that the Indian government has substantial control over AAI.

What options does India have?

- The first alternative is to comply with the two BIT awards that are unfavourable. India, on the other hand, is exceedingly unlikely to do so.
- The second alternative is to appeal the verdict to a Canadian appellate court, where India might try to show that the 'extensive control criterion' is not met in the case of AAI, as per Canadian law.
- State immunity from execution, on the other hand, is just a procedural impediment to the BIT award's enforcement.
- It is impossible to defend India's continuous inability to comply with arbitral rulings and its infringement of international law responsibilities established in the two BITs

ANTRIX

- Bengaluru-based Antrix Corporation Limited (ACL) is a wholly-owned government of India company that reports to the Department of Space.
- It serves as ISRO's marketing arm, promoting and commercialising space products, providing technical consulting services, and transferring ISRO-developed technology.
- Antrix is a company that specialises in offering space products and services to multinational consumers all over the world.

What are Scheduled Banks?



The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has informed that Airtel Payments Bank Ltd. has been categorized as a Scheduled Bank.

Why such a move?

- The bank can now compete for government-issued Requests for Proposals (RFP) and primary auctions with this information.
- It can work for both the federal and state governments, and it can participate in government-run social programmes.

What are Scheduled Banks?

- Banks that are included under the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934's Second Schedule are referred to as Scheduled Banks.

- In turn, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) includes only those banks in this Schedule that meet the conditions set forth in section 42(6)(a) of the Act.
- Every Scheduled bank benefits from two main features: it becomes eligible for debts/loans from the RBI at the bank rate, and it instantly becomes a member of the clearing house.
- Non-Scheduled Banks are those that are not covered by this Schedule.

Types of Scheduled Banks

There are two main categories of commercial banks in India namely:

1. Scheduled Commercial banks
2. Scheduled Co-operative banks

Scheduled commercial Banks are further divided into 5 types as below:

1. Nationalised Banks
2. Development Banks
3. Regional Rural Banks
4. Foreign Banks
5. Private sector Banks

Payment bank (currently four banks Airtel Payments Bank, Fino Payments Bank, India Post Payments Bank, Paytm Payments Bank have been granted Scheduled bank status).

Scheduled Co-operative banks are further divided into 2 types namely:

1. Scheduled State Co-operative banks
2. Scheduled Urban Co-operative banks

What are the First Advance Estimates of GDP?



The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) has released the First Advance Estimates (FAE) for the current financial year (2021-22 or FY22).

What is GDP?

- GDP is the monetary value of all products and services produced inside a country's domestic limits over a period of time (generally, a year).
- It differs slightly from the GNP, which is another widely used indicator of national wealth.
- The Gross National Product (GNP) is a metric that represents the monetary value of all goods and services produced by a country's people and businesses, regardless of where that value originated.

GDP estimates for FY22

- According to MoSPI, India's GDP will grow by 9.2 per cent in 2020-21.
- Last financial year, FY21, the GDP had contracted by 7.3%.

What are the First Advance Estimates of GDP?

- The FAE, which were first introduced in 2016-17, are usually released in the last week of January.
- They are the "initial" official estimates of GDP growth for the current fiscal year.

- However, they are referred to as "advance" estimates because they are released well before the fiscal year (April to March) ends.
- It's worth noting that, despite being released shortly after the end of the third quarter (October, November, and December), the FAE do not include the official Q3 GDP figures.
- Data for Q3 is released as part of the Second Advance Estimates at the end of February (SAE).

Significance of FAE

- Budgetary calculations: Since the SAE will be released next month, the FAE's principal significance is that they are the GDP estimates that the Union Finance Ministry uses to determine the budget allocations for the following fiscal year.
- Nominal GDP based on: It is vital to notice what has occurred to nominal GDP — both its absolute level and its growth rate — from the perspective of budgeting. Because nominal GDP is the actual observable variable, this is the case.

Note: Real GDP, which is the GDP after taking away the effect of inflation, is a derived metric. All Budget calculations start with the nominal GDP.

$\text{Real GDP} = \text{Nominal GDP} - \text{Inflation Rate}$

The difference between the real and nominal GDP shows the levels of inflation in the year.

How are the FAE arrived at before the end of the concerned financial year?

Ans. Benchmark-Indicator method

- Extrapolating (using ratio and proportion) the available data yields the FAE.
- The methodology used to compile the Advance Estimates is the Benchmark-Indicator method.

- This is done by extrapolating projections from the prior year (in this case, 2020-21) using key metrics that reflect sector performance."

What are the main takeaways?**#1 GDP Growth**

- At 9.2%, the real GDP growth rate for FY22 is slightly lower than most expectations, including RBI's, which pegged it at 9.5%.
- These estimates are based on data before the rise of the Omicron variant.

#2 Role of high inflation

- For FY22, while real GDP (with 2011-12 base prices) will grow by 9.2%, nominal GDP (calculated using current market prices) will grow by a whopping 17.6%.
- The difference between the two growth rates — about 8.5 percentage points — is essentially a marker of inflation (or the rate at which average prices have increased in this financial year).

#3 Private consumption continues to struggle

- The FAE analyses the three main contributors to GDP — private consumption demand, investments in the economy, and government expenditures.
- It shows that while the latter two are expected to claw back to the pre-Covid level, the first engine will continue to stay in a slump.

#4 Average Indian is much worse off

- For the bulk of the Indian population, thus, aggregate data recovering to pre-Covid levels are largely academic.
- An average Indian has lost almost 2 years in terms of income levels and 3 years in terms of spending levels.

What is Samba Cultivation?



Around four lakh more acres have been brought under the Crop Insurance Scheme for the Samba Cultivation season of 2021-22 in Tamil Nadu.

What is Samba Cultivation?

- It is a Tamil name for paddy cultivation season.
- Other paddy seasons in Tamil Nadu include:
 1. **Kuruvai:** June-July
 2. **Samba:** August
 3. **Late Samba / Thaladi:** September- October
 4. **Navarai:** December- January

Major crop seasons

(1) Kharif Crop

- During the monsoon season, Kharif crops, also known as monsoon crops or autumn crops, are grown and harvested.
- Farmers start sowing seeds at the start of the monsoon season and harvest them at the conclusion. Between September and October, to be precise.
- Kharif crops require a lot of water and warm weather to thrive.

- Rice, maize, millet, soybean, arhar, cotton, and other crops are examples.

(2) Rabi Crop

- Rabi is the Arabic word for spring. Rabi crops are those that are planted in the winter (October to December) and harvested in the spring (April to May).
- These plants require a warm climate for seed germination and maturity, as well as a cold climate for growth.
- The Rabi crop is harmed by winter rain, whereas the Kharif crop benefits.
- Wheat, gramme, barley, peas, oats, chickpeas, linseed, mustard, and other grains are examples.

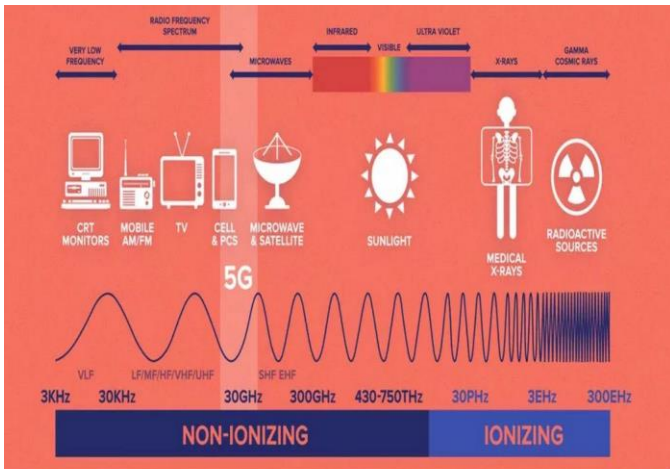
(3) Zaid Crop

- Zaid crops are grown between the months of March to June, between the Kharif and Rabi seasons.
- Warm, dry weather is essential for growth, and extended day length is required for flowering.
- Farmers value the Zaid crop because it provides quick revenue and serves as a gap-filler between the two main harvests, Kharif and Rabi.
- Cucumber, Pumpkin, Bitter Gourd, Watermelon, Muskmelon, Sugarcane, Groundnut, Pulses, and other fruits and vegetables are examples.

Millimeter Wave band in 5G auctions

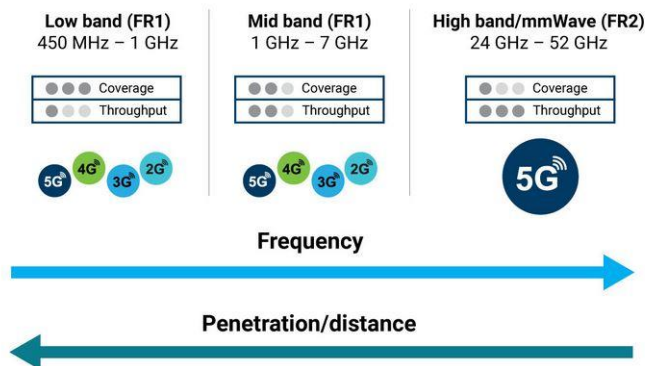
The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has asked for views on band plan, block size, and conditions for auction of spectrum in 5G bands, which includes Millimetre (mm) Wave band of 24.25-28.5 GHz.

What is 5G technology?



- The fifth generation (or 5G) of long-term evolution (LTE) mobile broadband networks is the most recent upgrade.
- It's a unified platform with far more capacity, lower latency, faster data delivery rates, and better spectrum utilisation than earlier mobile services.

5G spectrum



5G mainly works in 3 bands, namely low, mid and high-frequency spectrum — all of which have their own uses as well as limitations.

(1) Low band spectrum

- It has a lot of potential in terms of coverage and internet and data transfer speed, however the

maximum speed is just 100 Mbps (Megabits per second).

- The low band spectrum may not be ideal for specialised needs of the industry, thus Telcos can use and deploy it for commercial cell phone users who may not have specific need for very high speed internet.

(2) Mid-band spectrum

- It has faster speeds than the low band, however it has restrictions in terms of coverage area and signal penetration.
- This band could be utilised by industries and specialised production units to create captive networks that can be tailored to their specific demands.

(3) High-band spectrum

- It has the fastest speed of the three bands, but its coverage and signal penetration intensity are severely limited.
- Internet speeds in the 5G high-band spectrum have been tested to reach 20 Gbps (gigabits per second), although the greatest internet data speed in 4G has been reported at 1 Gbps in most circumstances.

What is Millimetre (mm) Wave Band?

- The millimetre wave band, or mmWave, is a portion of the radio frequency spectrum that spans 24 to 100 GHz.
- As the name implies, this spectrum has a short wavelength and is more likely to give higher speeds and shorter latencies.
- As a result, data transfer becomes more efficient and seamless, as current networks are optimised for lower frequency bandwidths.

Significance of this mm band

- Lower frequency bands can be used to deploy 5G services.
- They can cover longer distances and have been demonstrated to perform well even in congested urban areas.
- However, when it comes to data rates, these bands fall short of the maximum capacity required for a real 5G experience.
- For mobile service providers, mmWave is the missing piece in the 5G jigsaw puzzle.

Concerns with inclusion of mm-band

- According to a decision made by the International Telecommunication Union, the mm bands will be protected for satellite-based broadband services (ITU).
- Excess spectrum could result in the bands going unsold or, worse, underutilised by terrestrial players at the disadvantage of satellite-based service providers if it is provided.
- Due to the extra spectrum offered, Indian citizens will be denied access to high-demand, modern satellite broadband services.
- Furthermore, it will cause a major loss of up to \$184.6 billion to the Indian economy by 2030, as well as a loss of foreign direct investment (FDI) and job creation benefits.

How could this disrupt the satellite communication industry?

- Users have primarily accessed the Internet via fiber-optic-based broadband connectivity or a mobile network.
- Another type of Internet seller has recently emerged. These are companies that provide satellite-based communication services.
- Some of the participants in this sector include SpaceX's Starlink and Bharti Airtel's OneWeb.

- This segment provides broadband to both urban and rural consumers via Low-Earth Orbit (LEO) satellites. Their service might potentially be used to forecast the weather.
- Out-of-band emissions into the passive satellite frequency used for weather satellites at 23.6-24 GHz had caused concern in the mm band.

HeaWay ahead

- The mmWave spectrum allotment is crucial for the satellite communication business, which requires more regulatory backing to ensure that 5G activities do not conflict with current operations.
- The industry group cited Europe's "5G Roadmap," which is based on the ITU's decision to keep these bands open for satellite-based broadband.

Why 5G roll-outs are disrupting flights to the US?



Air India said Boeing had cleared its B777 aircraft for flights to the US following concerns that the 5G roll-out there could interfere with critical aircraft functions.

What is 5G Technology?

- The fifth generation (or 5G) of long-term evolution (LTE) mobile broadband networks is the most recent upgrade.
- It's a unified platform with far more capacity, lower latency, faster data delivery rates, and better spectrum usage than earlier mobile services.

How can 5G affect flight safety?

- Airlines employ auto-pilot systems to take off and land, which use data from radar altimeters to estimate the aircraft's altitude.
- Altimeters generate radio waves at a frequency of 4.2-4.3 gigahertz (GHz), which could interfere with the C-Band, a 5G band that operates between 3.7 and 4.4 GHz.
- The data may be messed up as a result of the interference. That is the issue of safety. At airports and other low-altitude places, radio altimeters are employed.
- For high altitude areas, a specialised type of altimeter called a pressure altimeter is employed.
- If airlines do not use auto-pilot, they will consume more fuel and incur more expenditures.

What happens to Air India's operations?

- While scheduled international flights to and from India have been halted as a result of the pandemic, Air India continues to fly flights to the United States under an air bubble agreement.
- The airline's wide-body fleet of Boeing 777 and Boeing 787 planes fly these routes.
- The introduction of 5G is likely to have the greatest impact on Boeing 777 and 747 operations.

Can this impact India's 5G roll-out?

- The C-Band may not be active in the near future, as India's 5G auctions are scheduled to contain spectrum bands ranging from 3.3GHz to 3.6GHz.
- Furthermore, aviation equipment is produced globally to a set of standards.
- The FAA tests are anticipated to result in altimeter standards that will be used globally.
- Altimeters are essential equipment for aeroplane manufacturers. However, instead of being designed in-house, they are purchased off-the-shelf.
- Once a standard is established, it can be applied to all aircraft.

What are Non-Fungible Tokens (NFTs)?



A French luxury fashion brand is suing American digital artist who created a series of NFTs (Non-Fungible Tokens), a rapidly growing part of the cryptoworld.

Non-Fungible Tokens

- NFTs are one-of-a-kind, irreplaceable tokens that may be used to verify ownership of digital goods like music, artwork, and even tweets and memes.
- In contrast to fungible currency such as money, the word 'non-fungible' merely indicates that each token is unique (a ten-rupee note can be exchanged for another and so on).

- Bitcoin and Ethereum, for example, are fungible, which implies that one Bitcoin may be swapped for another.
- However, because the two are different and thus unique, an NFT cannot be traded for another NFT.
- Depending on which asset it represents, each token has a different value.

How does NFT transaction take place?

- NFT transactions are recorded on blockchains, which are digital public ledgers, with the Ethereum blockchain hosting the majority of NFTs.
- Artists began to see NFTs as a handy way to sell their work in 2021, and they became popular.

Why are they in high demand?

- Another advantage is that NFTs are part of a new type of financial system known as decentralised finance (DeFi), which eliminates the need for institutions like banks.
- As a result, decentralised finance is regarded as a more democratic financial system because it facilitates laypeople's access to capital by virtually eliminating the function of banks and other related institutions.
- Despite this, because NFTs are a decentralised system, anyone can sell a digital asset as one.
- This can occasionally cause issues. For example, if you sell someone else's artwork as an NFT, you might be infringing on their copyright.

Enviro & Diversity

Western Disturbances to bring rain in New Delhi



Under the influence of two consecutive western disturbances, New Delhi is in for a wet spell.

Western Disturbances

- A western disturbance is an extratropical cyclone that originates in the Mediterranean region and sends heavy winter rain to the Indian subcontinent's northwestern regions.

- The westerlies drive a non-monsoonal precipitation pattern.
- The Mediterranean Sea, the Caspian Sea, and the Black Sea are the most common sources of moisture for these storms.
- Extratropical storms are worldwide phenomena that carry moisture in the upper atmosphere, as opposed to tropical storms that carry moisture in the lower atmosphere.
- When a storm system hits the Himalayas, moisture is sometimes released as rain on the Indian subcontinent.
- In the winter, western disturbances are more common and powerful.

Impact: Winter Rainfall and Extreme Cold

- Western disturbances, particularly those that occur in the winter, bring moderate to heavy rain

to low-lying areas and significant snow to the Indian Subcontinent's hilly highlands.

- They are responsible for the majority of rainfall in northwest India during the winter and pre-monsoon seasons.
- During the winter, an average of four to five western disturbances form.

Its significance

- In agriculture, precipitation throughout the winter season is critical, especially for rabi crops.
- Wheat is one of the most significant crops that contributes to India's food security.

India's first open Rock Museum in Hyderabad



The Ministry of Science & Technology has inaugurated India's first open rock museum displaying different types of rocks gathered from different States of ages ranging from 3.3 billion years to around 55 million years.

Rock System in India

Based on this complex and varied geological history, the Geological Survey of India has classified rock systems of the country into 4 major divisions:

1. Archaean Rock System
2. Dravidian Rock System

3. Purana Rock System
4. Aryan Rock System

[I] Archaean Rock System:

The Archaean group of rocks consists of two systems-(a) Achaean granites and gneisses, and (b) Dharwarian sedimentary:

Archaean Gneisses and Schists (pre-2500 million years)

- The Archean System contains the earth's first produced rocks.
- There are no fossils in the rocks, which are mostly gneisses and granites.
- They frequently lie beneath later-formed strata, and the system is known as the basement complex or foundational gneisses.
- Two-thirds of peninsular India is covered with Archaean rocks. They're also found in the roots of mountain summits all over the Greater Himalayas, as well as the trans-Himalayan Zaskar, Ladakh, and Karakoram ranges.

Dharwar System (2500-1800 million years ago)

- The weathering of Archaean rocks produced the first sediments and the Dharwar system, the oldest sedimentary strata.
- These can be found now in metamorphic forms with no remains.
- These rocks can be found in scattered areas throughout Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, the central and eastern portions of the Chotanagpur plateau, the Meghalaya plateau, the Aravalis, and the Himalayan region, among other places.

Mineral contents:

- They contain gneisses (which range from granite to gabbro) and schists (crystalline rocks such as mica, talc etc.).

- These rocks have metallic and non-metallic minerals like copper, tin, graphite, lead, zinc, etc.

[II] Dravidian Rock System:

- This is a carboniferous rock system that originated during the Paleozoic era, some 600-300 million years ago.
- In India, they are in short supply.
- They have a lot of fossils, and the start of coal formation may be detected during this time. Carboniferous coal is of excellent quality.
- They can be found in the Himalayan extra-peninsular regions and the Gangetic plains.

Mineral content

- Limestones, shale, and quartzite make up this type of rock system, and upper Carboniferous limestones make up Mount Everest.
- The majority of the coal is not from India's Carboniferous age.
- In geology, the term Carboniferous means coal-bearing.

[III] Purana Rock System:

The Purana rock system has two divisions: Cuddapah system and Vindhyan system. The word 'Purana' was used in place of a Proterozoic era in India.

Cuddapah Rock system:

- They've been spotted in Andhra Pradesh's Cuddapah district.
- Synclinal basins are depressions between two-fold mountains where non-fossiliferous clay, slates, sandstones, and limestones deposited.
- They also have a substantial stockpile of cement-grade limestones and quartzites for construction.

- Iron, cobalt, nickel, manganese, and other ores can be found in this type of rock.

Vindhya Rock System:

- This is an ancient or old sedimentary rock system that is superimposed on the Archaean rock basis and gets its name from the Vindhya mountains.
- Only evidence of a few animal and plant life have been discovered, making identification of remains difficult.
- Golconda and Panna diamonds were mined from this geological system's diamond-bearing locations.

[IV] Aryan Rock System

The Aryan rock system in India has the following four subsystems:

1. Gondwana rock system
2. Jurassic Rock System
3. Cretaceous system/ Deccan Trap
4. Tertiary rock system

(1) Gondwana Rock System:

- These are mostly found in Jharkhand's Raniganj and Jharia regions, as well as in Chhattisgarh's Damodar Valley and Madhya Pradesh's Pench Valley.
- They get their name from the Gondwana tribe (indigenous people especially residing in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh region).
- Other than coal, metallic minerals such as iron, manganese, and uranium were identified in this type of rock formation.
- Because they are much younger than Carboniferous coal, they have a low carbon concentration. Nearly 98 percent of India's coal reserves are found in these rocks.

(2) Jurassic Rock System

- When the water level rises faster than the land, the shoreline pushes closer to the ground or the land, resulting in a flood. Marine transgression is the geological term for this phenomena.
- A thick succession of shallow-water deposits forms in Rajasthan and Kutch as a result of this. Another transgression in the east coast of Peninsula, this time between Guntur and Rajamundry.
- Coral limestone, shales, and conglomerates are found in Kuchchh.

(3) Deccan traps

- These are generated by magma flowing in layers over a hardened rock structure.
- Volcanic outbursts over a large area of Peninsular India from the end of the Cretaceous to the beginning of the Eocene cause the Deccan trap to rise.
- In Swedish, trap means "stair" or "step," and it was named after the deposition of a volcanic outburst with a flat top and steep sides.
- It is primarily found in Kuchchh, Saurashtra, Maharashtra, the Malwa plateau, and Northern Karnataka, and covers over 5 lakh square kilometres.
- Regur, or black soil, is developed after these rocks have been weathered for a long time.

(4) Tertiary rock system

- This sort of rock system was formed between 60 and 7 million years ago.
- It is the most significant period in India's geological history because it is during this time that the Himalayas were formed.

National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS)

Delhi and most of the other non-attainment cities under the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) have shown only a marginal improvement, said a new analysis released.

About NCAP

- The NCAP was launched in India in 2019 with the goal of reducing particulate matter levels in 132 cities by 20-30% by 2024.
- If a city repeatedly fails to fulfil the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) during a five-year period, it is considered non-attainment.

What are NAAQ standards?

- The Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act gives the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) the authority to establish standards for air quality.
- As a result, the CPCB announced the current National Ambient Air Quality Standards in November 2009.
- Prior to this, in 1994, India established Air Quality Standards, which were later amended in 1998.

- The 2009 guidelines decreased the maximum allowed limits for pollutants even further and made them uniform across the country.
- Previously, industrial zones were subjected to less strict regulations than residential neighbourhoods.

Pollutants covered:

- Sulphur Dioxide (SO₂)
- Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂),
- Particulate Matter (size less than 10 µm) or PM₁₀
- Particulate Matter (size less than 2.5 µm) or PM_{2.5}
- Ozone (O₃)
- Carbon Monoxide (CO)
- Ammonia (NH₃)

(Air Pollutants that most of us NEVER heard of:)

- Lead
- Benzene (C₆H₆)
- Benzo(a)Pyrene (BaP)
- Arsenic(As)
- Nickel (Ni)

Asiatic Lions in Kuno National Park

Experts have argued that the introduction of African cheetahs to Kuno National Park could endanger the Asiatic lion which has also been identified for re-introduction.

Do you know?

Cheetahs had a more extensive distribution than lions — there are no records of lions occurring south of the Narmada River, but Asiatic cheetahs roamed most of India until they were hunted to extinction by 1947.

About Asiatic Cheetah

- In 1952, the world's fastest land animal, the cheetah, was proclaimed extinct in India.
- The IUCN Red List lists the Asiatic cheetah as a "critically endangered" species that is thought to only exist in Iran.
- After the Supreme Court relaxed restrictions on its reintroduction, it was expected to be reintroduced into the country.
- Because of poaching, hunting of their principal prey (gazelles), and habitat encroachment, their numbers have decreased from 400 in the 1990s to 50-70 now.

Why reintroduce Cheetahs?

- Large carnivore reintroductions are becoming more widely recognised as a technique for conserving threatened species and restoring ecological services.
- The cheetah is the only great animal that has gone extinct, owing to previous overhunting in India.
- India now has the financial means to contemplate recovering its lost natural heritage, both ethically and environmentally.

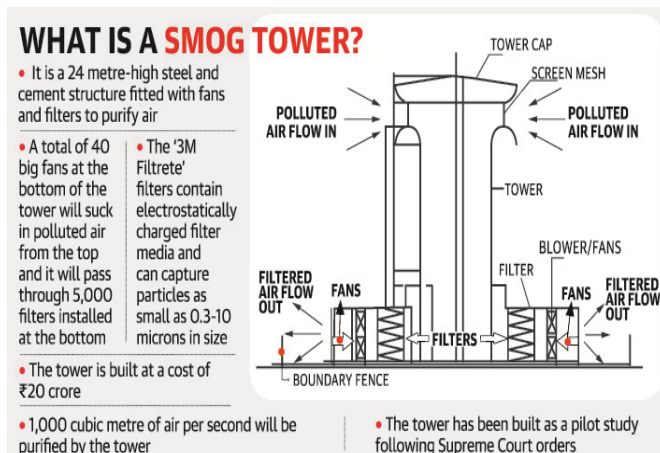
Why was the project halted?

- The court was concerned that the African cheetahs would find the sanctuary to be a favourable climate in terms of prey abundance.
- Those who opposed the initiative claimed that cheetah habitat was insufficient to support a genetically healthy population.

Issues with cheetah re-introduction

- Hundreds of lions have died from diseases such as canine distemper since 2018, raising the terrifying prospect of extinction when confined to a single site.
- The establishment of an extra free-ranging wild lion population in Kuno is critical, and any impediments must be handled openly.
- Clearly, the introduction of African cheetahs cannot take precedence over the 2013 Supreme Court ruling to relocate Asiatic lions from Gujarat to Kuno National Park.
- However, reintroduction of these two wild cats at the same time may result in a prey conflict.

What are Smog Towers?

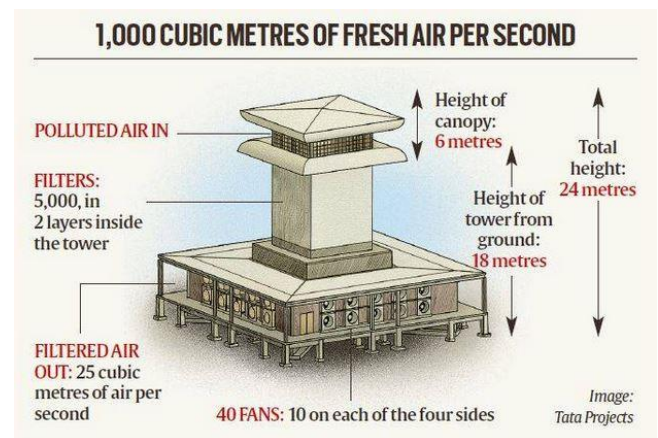


Some researchers in New Delhi have observed paradoxical phenomena near the smog towers. The air closest to the tower should be cleanest, but the device recorded the opposite in several instances.

What are Smog Towers?

- Smog towers are enormous buildings that purify the air at a massive scale. They have many layers of air filters as well as blowers at the bottom to suction the air.
- After entering the smog tower, the contaminated air is cleansed through many stages before being recirculated back into the environment.

Structure of the Delhi smog tower



- The structure is 24 metres tall, equivalent to an eight-story skyscraper — an 18-meter concrete tower with a 6-meter-high canopy. There are 40 fans at its base, 10 on each side.
- Each fan can push out 25 cubic metres of air per second, totaling 1,000 cubic metres per second for the entire tower. 5,000 filters are stacked in two tiers inside the tower.
- Filters and fans were brought in from the United States.

How does it work?

- The University of Minnesota designed a 'downdraft air cleaning system' for the tower.

- At a height of 24 metres, polluted air is sucked in, and purified air is released at the bottom of the tower, about 10 metres above the ground.
- The negative pressure formed by the fans at the bottom of the tower draws in air from the top.
- The filter's 'macro' layer catches particles larger than 10 microns, while the 'micro' layer filters particles smaller than 0.3 microns.
- The downdraft method is distinct from the 'updraft' approach used in China, in which air is pulled in from near the ground and propelled upwards by heating and convection.
- At the top of the tower, filtered air is released.

Likely impact

- According to computational fluid dynamics modelling, the tower could have an impact on air quality up to 1 kilometre away.
- The actual impact will also influence how the tower performs in various weather conditions and how PM2.5 levels vary with air movement.

Issues with smog towers

- Smog towers, according to many experts, are not a practical technique of cleaning the city's air.
- The government had reported an 80% reduction in pollution at the tower's inlet and exit, but had never mentioned the effect of distance from the tower.
- Instead of investing 40 crore on two towers, the government might have used the money to replace small, polluting industrial boilers or chimneys, among other things.



The population of the vulnerable eastern swamp deer, extinct elsewhere in South Asia, has dipped (from 907 in 2018 to 868 in 2020) in the Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve.

Swamp Deer

- The swamp deer, commonly known as the barasingha, is a deer species that can be found throughout the Indian subcontinent.
- Northern and central India have dispersed populations, and southwestern Nepal has two isolated populations.
- In Pakistan and Bangladesh, it is locally extinct, while its occurrence in Bhutan is unknown.
- Barasingha is known as dolhorina in Assamese, with dol meaning marsh.

Note: Swamp deers do occur in the Kanha National Park of Madhya Pradesh, in two localities in Assam, and in only 6 localities in Uttar Pradesh.

Conservation status

- **IUCN Red List:** Endangered
- **CITES:** Appendix I
- **Wildlife Protection Act of 1972:** Schedule I

Species in news: Swamp Deer**Nusantara City: New Capital of Indonesia**



Indonesia passed a bill replacing its capital Jakarta with East Kalimantan, situated to the east of Borneo island. The new capital city of the country will be called Nusantara.

About Nusantara

- The New State Capital Law Bill, produced by a special committee established by Widodo's government, designates Nusantara, also known as IKN, as the Republic of Indonesia's capital.
- In the "first semester" of 2024, Jakarta would relinquish its designation as Indonesia's capital to Nusantara, which has set aside 256,142 hectares of land for the project.
- According to the bill, East Kalimantan, where the new capital would be located, has a world-city concept.
- It will be planned and managed with the goal of becoming a world-class sustainable metropolis.

Why is Indonesia changing its capital city?



- The new location is ideal: it's in the heart of Indonesia, close to major cities.
- Jakarta's load as the centre of governance, business, finance, trade, and services is currently too great.
- Jakarta is also known for becoming the first capital city in the world to sink owing to rising sea levels.
- The city's pollution levels are so terrible that it has consistently ranked as one of the world's most polluted cities for years.
- Another key cause for relocating the capital from Java to Borneo has been the rise in financial and other inequalities.

Where is East Kalimantan?

- East Kalimantan is located 2,300 kilometres east of Jakarta on Borneo Island, which is shared by Indonesia, Malaysia, and Brunei.
- North Penajam Paser and Kutai Kartanegara will be the next capital's locations.
- East Kalimantan is a region with abundant water and livable landscape.
- East Kalimantan has a diverse range of vegetation and wildlife.

Why Nusantara?

- The phrase Nusantara refers to an archipelago in Javanese.
- The name Nusantara has historical, sociological, and philosophical connotations.
- The name would be representative of Indonesia as a whole and would demonstrate the country's potential.

What are the other countries that have changed capitals?

- Indonesia isn't the first country to relocate its capital.
- There has been a long list of countries that have switched capitals for a variety of reasons. In 1960, Brazil's capital city was relocated from Rio de Janeiro to Brasilia, a more centrally placed metropolis.
- Nigeria moved the country's capital from Lagos to Abuja in 1991.
- In 1997, Kazakhstan's capital was transferred from Almaty to Nur-Sultan, which is still the country's commercial centre.
- In 2005, Myanmar's capital was relocated from Rangoon to Naypyidaw.

- To this goal, the signatories pledged \$19 billion in private and public contributions.

Why did India abstain from joining?

- India objected to the declaration's inclusion of a link between deforestation, infrastructural development, and commerce.
- According to India, any commitment to the environment and climate change should not include any mention of trade.
- Analysts in India have linked the decision to a proposed change to the Forest Conservation Act 1980, which would make it easier to acquire forest land for new infrastructure projects by reducing the number of clearances currently necessary.

Declaration on Forests and Land Use



At COP-26 in Glasgow, countries got together to sign the Declaration on Forests and Land Use (or the Deforestation Declaration). However, India was among the few countries that did not sign the declaration.

What is this Deforestation Declaration?

- It was signed by 142 countries, representing more than 90% of the world's forests.
- By 2030, the declaration pledges to stop and reverse forest loss and land degradation while achieving sustainable development and supporting an inclusive rural transformation.

India abstained from many things

- A look at India's positions on several other recent major climate change pledges and decisions finds a clear trend of objections or non-compliance.
- India was absent from the CoP26 conversation on Forests, Agriculture, and Commodity Trade (FACT).
- FACT, which has the support of 28 countries, aims to promote "sustainable agricultural commodity development and trade while safeguarding and maintaining forests and other vital ecosystems."
- India also voted against a recent draught resolution that would have allowed the UN Security Council to examine climate change and its implications on international peace and security.

Why should India join this declaration?

- In general, India's objections to multilateral fora are focused on procedural grounds.

- These concerns appear to be ignorant to the various ways in which climate change is tied to global trade, deforestation, agriculture, and international peace, among other issues, despite being justified on paper.
- Consider the palm oil trade in India as an example. India is the world's top importer of crude palm oil.
- Palm oil cultivation has been the leading cause of deforestation in Indonesia and Malaysia, encompassing around 16 million acres of land.

Kerala gets its first-ever Scientific Bird Atlas



The Kerala Bird Atlas (KBA), the first-of-its-kind State-level bird atlas in India, has created solid baseline data about the distribution and abundance of bird species across all major habitats, giving an impetus to futuristic studies.

Kerala Bird Atlas (KBA)

- Between 2015 and 2020, systematic surveys were conducted twice a year over 60 days during the rainy (July to September) and dry (January to March) seasons.
- It was organised as a citizen science project, with over 1,000 volunteers from the birding community taking part.
- Nearly three lakh records of 361 species are found in the KBA, including 94 very rare species,

103 rare species, 110 common species, 44 very common species, and ten most numerous species.

- The dry season had a greater species count than the wet season, and species richness and evenness were higher in the northern and central districts than in the southern districts.

Significance of KBA

- Through random sampling from the geographical terrain divide, the KBA provides authentic, consistent, and comparable data.
- In terms of geographical scope, sampling effort, and species coverage, it is arguably Asia's largest bird atlas, based on the compilation of 25,000 checklists.
- The KBA is regarded as a useful tool for assessing various ecological hypotheses and recommending science-based conservation solutions.

What is Pollution-Under-Control (PUC) Certificate?



Delhi govt will soon make PUC certificate mandatory for fuel at filling stations.

What is PUC Certificate?

- The PUC certificate is a document that any driver of a motor vehicle can be asked to provide by a state-authorized police officer in uniform.

- If a vehicle is deemed to meet the required emission standards, these organisations provide certificates.
- The PUC certificate has been required since the Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Act of 2019 went into effect.
- The vehicle's licence plate number, the PUC test reading, the date the PUC test was completed, and the expiration date are all included on a PUC certificate.

How is a pollution control check carried out?

- The Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers developed the computerised model for pollution control.
- A gas analyzer is connected to a computer, which also has a camera and printer.

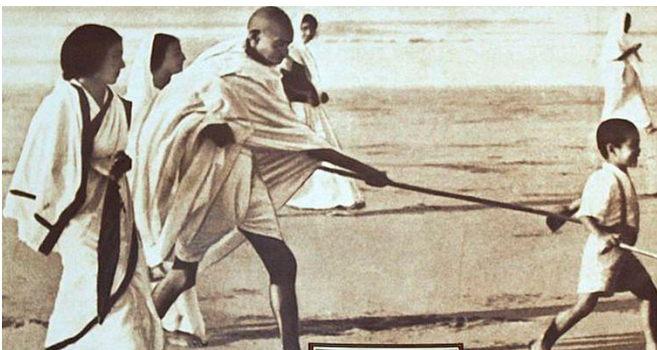
- The gas analyzer records the emission value and sends it immediately to the computer, while the camera records the vehicle's licence plate.
- If the emission values are within the limitations, a certificate may be granted.

Fines for non-compliance

- The cost of the exam varies between Rs 60 and Rs 100.
- The test is valid for one year for BS IV cars and three months for all other vehicles.
- Before the modifications, the penalties for violating the PUC was Rs 1,000 for the first offence and Rs 2,000 for subsequent infractions.

Governance

What is Nai Talim?



The Vice President of India has said that the New Education Policy follows the 'Nai Talim' of Mahatma Gandhi by giving importance to the mother tongue as the medium of instruction at the school level.

What is Nai Talim?

- The term Nai Talim is made up of two words: Nai, which means 'new,' and Talim, which means 'education' in Urdu.
- Gandhiji brought the concept of Nai Talim to India in 1937. Its goal was to make Gram Swaraj a reality (liberation of villages).
- In summary, Gandhiji aspired to make all communities self-sufficient and autonomous.
- It is a four-principle approach to overall personality development (body, mind, and spirit) that was founded on the following four principles:
 1. Education or learning in mother tongue along with handicraft work,
 2. Work should be linked with most useful vocational needs of the locality,

3. Learning should be linked with vocational work, and
4. Work should be socially useful and productive needed for living.

Gandhiji and Education

- Gandhi's earliest educational attempts took place in South Africa at the Tolstoy Farm ashram.
- Gandhi authored his famous paper on education in Harijan years later, while staying at Sevagram (Wardha) and in the midst of the Independence struggle.
- He set out the fundamentals of pedagogy (or teaching) in it, with a focus on:
 1. Lifelong character of education,
 2. Social character and
 3. A holistic process
- Thus, for Gandhi, education is 'the moral development of the person', a process that is by definition 'lifelong'.
- He believed the importance of role of teacher in the learning process.

BARC ratings for news channels to resume soon



Ratings by Broadcast Audience Research Council (BARC) for the news channels will resume, after the organisation revised its procedures and protocols.

The ratings were suspended after the Mumbai police busted a racket involving a private channel's efforts to tamper the TRPs.

What is TRP?

- Anyone who watches television for more than a minute is referred to be a viewer.
- The TRP, or Target Rating Point, is a measure that marketing and advertising organisations use to assess viewership.
- The Broadcast Audience Research Council (BARC) in India uses Bar-O-Meters implanted in televisions in chosen households to measure TRP.
- The BARC has put these metres in 44,000 homes across the country as of now. Prior to broadcast, audio watermarks are encoded in video material.
- These watermarks aren't audible to the human ear, but they're easy to spot and decode with the right apparatus and software.
- The watermarks are captured by the Bar-O-Meters in the same way that viewing details are.

What is BARC?

- The Indian Society of Advertisers, the Indian Broadcasting Foundation, and the Advertising Agencies Association of India represent the industry group, which is equally owned by advertisers, ad agencies, and broadcasting businesses.
- Despite the fact that it was founded in 2010, the I&B Ministry issued Policy Guidelines for Television Rating Agencies in India on January 10, 2014, and BARC was registered under these guidelines in July 2015 to conduct television ratings in India.

How are the households selected?

- A two-stage method is used to choose which families will have Bar-O-Meters installed.
- The Establishment Survey, a large-scale face-to-face survey of around 3 lakh families from the target demographic, is the first step. This is done once a year.
- The houses that will get Bar-O-Meters, or what the BARC refers to as the Recruitment Sample, are chosen at random from this group. BARC does not conduct fieldwork to recruit households directly.
- According to the BARC's website, the viewing habits of panel houses are reported to BARC India on a daily basis. Coincidental checks are carried out on a regular basis, either physically or over the phone.

Vigilance activities by BARC

- BARC India checks worrisome outliers on a case-by-case basis.
- BARC India also employs a special vigilance agency to investigate outliers it regards to be very suspicious.
- These homes rotate every year, according to Ministry of Information and Broadcasting standards.
- The panel is rotated in such a way that older panel homes are removed first while retaining the panel's representativeness.
- The Ministry's instructions further provide that the panel homes' secret and privacy must be preserved, and the BARC must adhere to a voluntary code of conduct.

What are the loopholes in the process?

- On numerous instances, questions concerning the TRP's operation have been raised.

- According to numerous statistics, advertising accounts for over 70% of television channel revenue, while subscriptions account for only 30%.
- Households are said to have been paid to alter the TRP.

How Republic Day tableaux are designed and selected



Recently, West Bengal's tableau for the Republic Day parade was rejected without assigning any reasons or justifications.

Who manages the R-Day Parade?

- The Republic Day parade and events are under the control of the Defence Ministry.
- It encourages all states, UTs, federal departments, and a few constitutional authorities to participate in the march through tableaux in September.

Managing Tableaux

- The Defence Ministry has shared the basic criteria for what should or can be included in all tableaux.
- The tableaux of two separate states/UTs cannot be too similar because the tableaux as a whole should represent the country's variety.

- Except for the name of the state/UT/department, which shall be inscribed in Hindi on the front, English on the back, and a regional language on the sides, the tableaux cannot feature any text or logos.
- The Ministry also requests that participants utilize environmentally friendly materials for the tableaux and refrain from using plastic or plastic-based items.

How are the tableaux selected?

- The selection process is elaborate and time-consuming.
- The Defence Ministry constitutes an expert committee of distinguished persons from fields like art, culture, painting, sculpture, music, architecture, choreography, etc.

Process of selection**(1) Submission of sketches**

- First, the submitted proposals' sketches or designs are scrutinized by this committee, which might give suggestions for any changes to the sketch or design.
- The sketch should be simple, colorful, and easy to understand, with superfluous detail avoided.
- It should be self-explanatory and require no more explanation in writing.

(2) Music and Visuals

- If there is a traditional dance involved with the tableau, it should be a folk dance, and the costumes and musical instruments should be traditional and authentic.
- The proposal should include a video clipping of the dance.

(3) 3D Models

- After the plans have been approved, the participants must create three-dimensional models of their proposals.
- The expert committee looks at these again before making a final decision based on a number of criteria.
- The committee considers a number of aspects before reaching its final decision, including visual appeal, public appeal, tableaux idea/theme, and level of detail involved.

Do they have to be of a particular size?

The Defence Ministry provides each participant with one tractor and one trailer, and the tableau should fit on that.

- The ministry forbids the use of any additional tractor or trailer, as well as any other vehicle.
- However, the participant may substitute other vehicles for the ministry-provided tractor or trailer, but the total number of vehicles should not exceed two.
- The tractor must be camouflaged to match the theme of the tableau, and the ministry requires a turning and manoeuvring gap of roughly six feet between the tractor and the trailer.
- The tableau will be placed on a trailer that is 24 feet 8 inches long, eight feet wide, and four feet two inches high, with a load-bearing capability of ten tonnes.
- The tableaux should not exceed 45 feet in length, 14 feet in width, and 16 feet in height from the ground.

History

Who was Rani Velu Nachiyar?



The Prime Minister has paid tributes to Rani Velu Nachiyar on her birth anniversary.

Velu Nachiyar (1730-1796)

- Rani Velu Nachiyar was a queen of Sivaganga estate from c. 1780–1790.
- She was the first Indian queen to wage war with the East India Company in India.
- She is widely known as Veeramangai (“brave woman”).

Her legend

[A] Early life

- Velu Nachiyar was the sole child of King Chellamuthu Vijayaragunatha Sethupathy and Queen Sakandhimuthathal of the Ramnad kingdom, and the princess of Ramanathapuram.
- Nachiyar was trained in a variety of fighting techniques, including the use of war match weapons, martial arts such as Valari and Silambam, horseback riding, and archery.

- She was a multilingual scholar with fluency in French, English, and Urdu, among other languages.

[B] Battles fought

- She built an army during this time and sought an alliance with Hyder Ali in order to begin a campaign against the East India Company in 1780.
- She became involved in the fight after her husband, Muthu Vaduganatha Periyavudaya Thevar, was murdered in a combat with EIC soldiers.
- Velu Nachiyar discovered where the EIC kept part of their ammunition and planned a suicide strike on the spot, blowing it up.

Significance of Delhi government's recognition to fifth Sikh Takht



The Delhi Assembly has passed an amendment Bill to the Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Act, 1971, recognizing Takht Damdama Sahib as the fifth Takht of Sikhs.

What is a Sikh Takht?

- A Takht, which means a throne, is a seat of temporal authority for Sikhs.
- There are five Sikh Takhts, three in Punjab and one each in Maharashtra and Bihar.

(1) Akal Takht

- It is the oldest of the Takhts, and the most powerful of the five. It is located in Amritsar.
- It was founded in 1606 by Guru Hargobind, whose ascension as the sixth Guru after his father, Guru Arjan Dev, was a watershed moment in Sikh history.
- He created the Akal Takht, a raised platform in front of the causeway leading to the Harmandir Sahib's sanctum sanctorum (Golden Temple).
- It represented the coming together of the Sikh community's worldly authority and political sovereignty (miri) with the spiritual power (piri).
- It is considered the first manifestation of Sikh nationalism.

The other four Takhts are linked to Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Sikh Guru.

(2) Takht Keshgarh Sahib

- Located in Anandpur Sahib in Punjab. It was here that Guru Gobind Singh raised Khalsa, the initiated Sikh warriors, in 1699.

(3) Takht Patna Sahib

- Guru Gobind Singh was born here in 1666.

(4) Takht Hazur Sahib

- In Nanded, where Guru Gobind Singh spent time and where he was cremated in 1708.

(5) Takht Damdama Sahib

- In Talwandi Sabo of Bathinda. Guru Gobind Singh spent several months here.

What does the amendment to the Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Act mean?

- Simply put, it adds one more ex officio member in the Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee (DSGMC) house.
- Earlier, there were four ex officio members in the house — the chiefs (jathedars) of the other four Sikh Takhts.

Is it the first time it has been recognised as the fifth Takht?

- The Union Home Ministry officially recognised Takht Damdama Sahib as the fifth Sikh Takht in 1999.
- With a notification dated April 23, 1999, it was included as such under the Sikh Gurdwaras Act, 1925 (Punjab Act VIII of 1925).
- Prior to that, in November 1966, an SGPC sub-committee declared it the fifth Takht of Sikhs, following the creation of Punjab as a separate state by the Punjab Reorganisation Act, 1966.

How politically significant is the move?

- It comes ahead of the Punjab Assembly elections, where the Delhi's ruling party, has high stakes.

What is the role of the Sikh Takhts?

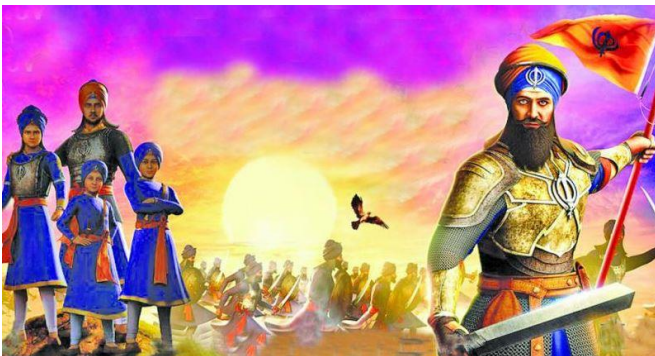
- The Takhts are known to issue hukumnamas (morality orders) on matters that affect the Sikh community from time to time.
- According to Sikh academics, Akal Takht is the most important of them all because it is the oldest and was built by a Sikh Guru himself.
- Only Akal Takht can make any edict or order that affects the entire community.

- Sikhs who are found to be breaking the Sikh theology and code of conduct are punished religiously at Akal Takht (declared tankhaiya).

Who appoints the jathedars of the Takhts?

- The SGPC, which appoints the jathedars, has direct jurisdiction over the three Takhts in Punjab.
- SAD members make up the majority of the SGPC.
- SAD is commonly assumed to be the last arbiter in the nomination of these three jathedars.
- Outside of Punjab, the two Takhts have their own trusts and boards.

Veer Baal Diwas to be observed on December 26



Prime Minister has declared that December 26 shall henceforth be marked as Veer Baal Diwas to pay homage to the courage of the Sahibzades, four sons of Guru Gobind Singh, the last Sikh guru.

What is the legend of Sahibzades?

- In Punjabi, the word "Sahibzada" means "son," and it is a term that is widely used to refer to Guru Gobind Singh's four sons.
- The Sacrificial Week is observed from December 21 to December 27 in honour of the four

Sahibzadas who made sacrifices for the protection of Sikhism and Hinduism.

- Sahibzada Ajit Singh, Jujhar Singh, Zorawar Singh, and Fateh Singh were martyred in the fight to protect their religious beliefs against forced conversion.

Their martyrdom: A backgrounder story

- On the 20th and 21st of December 1704, Guru Gobind Singh and his family left the fort of Sri Anandpur Sahib with their families to resist the Aurangzeb invasion.
- The eldest sons, Ajit Singh and Jujhar Singh, stayed with Guru ji, while Zorawar Singh and Fateh Singh stayed with Mata Gujri ji.
- Subedar Wazir Khan of Sirhind afterwards apprehended the two Sahibzades and enticed them to convert to Islam.
- Finally, it was revealed that they would be elected in the living walls.
- The remaining two sahibzades were killed in the battle of Chamkaur (1705).

Implications of their martyrdom

- When Guruji learned of this, he wrote Aurangzeb a zafarnama (victory letter) in which he warned him that the Khalsa Panth was preparing to overthrow his empire.
- Baba Banda Singh Bahadur exacted vengeance for Guruji's Sahibzadas' martyrdom.
- Wazir Khan was punished for his actions in Sirhind, and he imposed Sikh dominion over the entire region.
- As a result of this sacrifice, Maharaja Ranjit Singh established a massive Sikh dominion.

A historic event in Indian History

- This is a significant event in Indian history, and the anniversary of their martyrdom is recalled and commemorated with both enthusiasm and sadness.
- Sahibzades' names are solemnly kept and remembered every time an Ardas (supplication prayer) is recited in a congregation or individually by an individual.

Ancient Tamil Civilization

A reconnaissance survey in the sea off the coast of Korkai in Thoothukudi district where Tamiraparani River joins the sea, which finds mention in Sangam literature, will be undertaken by the Tamil Nadu Archaeology Department.

About Tamiraparani River



- The Tamirabarani, Tamraparni, or Porunai is a perennial river that flows from the Western Ghats' Agastarkoodam peak in the Pothigai highlands.
- It runs into the Gulf of Mannar through the districts of Tirunelveli and Thoothukudi in the Tamil Nadu state of southern India.
- In the pre-classical time, it was known as the Tamraparni River, and it was named after the island of Sri Lanka.
- Porunai is the historical Tamil name for the river.

Its history

- Tamraparani, Tamirabarni, and Tamiravaruni are only a few of Tan Porunai's various names.
- Tan Porunai nathi is mentioned in ancient Sangam Tamil literature Purananuru by traditional Tamil poets.
- The river was famous in the Early Pandyan Kingdom for its pearl and conch fisheries and trade and was described as a holy river in Sanskrit literature such as the Puranas, Mahabharata, and Ramayana.
- The passage of people from Tamraparni river to northern Sri Lanka, including the devout, trade merchants, and toddy tapers, resulted in the region's name being shared.
- The treatise Tamraparni Mahatmyam is an important historical text on the river.
- Along its banks, there are numerous old temples. On the northern bank of the river, there is a hamlet known as Appankoil

Key findings in excavations

- Brick buildings, terracotta ring wells, shattered bits of copper artefacts, iron implements,

terracotta chess pieces, ear ornaments, spindle whorls, and figurines were among the items discovered.

- There were also glass, terracotta, and semi-precious stone beads, as well as black and redware, rouletted pottery, and a few pieces of Arretine ware.

International Relations

India, Pakistan exchange list of nuclear installations, prisoners

India and Pakistan has exchanged a list of their nuclear installations that cannot be attacked in case of an escalation in hostilities, as part of an annual ritual that has been in practice between the two neighbours for more than three decades.

Non-Nuclear Aggression Agreement



- The Non-nuclear Aggression Deal is a bilateral nuclear weapons control treaty between India and Pakistan that focuses on nuclear arms reduction (or limitation).
- Both promised not to attack each other's nuclear sites and facilities, or to aid foreign forces in doing so.

- The treaty was drafted in 1988 and signed on December 21, 1988, by Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and his counterpart Benazir Bhutto; it went into effect in January 1991.
- The pact prohibited signatories from launching surprise attacks on one other's nuclear installations and facilities (or assisting a foreign power in such an attack).
- India and Pakistan have been exchanging lists of their respective military and civilian nuclear-related facilities every year since January 1992.

Need for the treaty

- In 1986-87, the massive exercise, 'Brasstacks' was carried out by the Indian Army, raising the fears of an Indian attack on Pakistan's nuclear facilities.
- Since then, the Foreign ministries of both countries had been negotiating to reach an understanding towards the control of nuclear weapons.

Significance of the agreement

- The treaty barred its signatories to carry out a surprise attack (or to assist foreign power to attack) on each other's nuclear installations and facilities.
- The treaty provides a confidence-building security measure environment.

Other: Sharing of Prisoners information

- Both countries share a list of convicts held in their respective prisons at the same time.
- The rules of the Agreement on Consular Access, agreed in May 2008, allow for the sharing of these lists.
- Every year on January 1 and July 1, the two countries should exchange detailed lists under this agreement (i.e. twice a year).

Polity

English is the language of Court: Gujarat HC

A Division Bench of the Gujarat High Court has asked a convict to speak only in English as that was the language in the higher judiciary referring to Article 348 of the Constitution which mandates that the language of the High Court would be English.

What is Article 348?

- It specifies the languages to be used in the Supreme Court and the High Courts, as well as for Acts, Bills, and other legal documents.

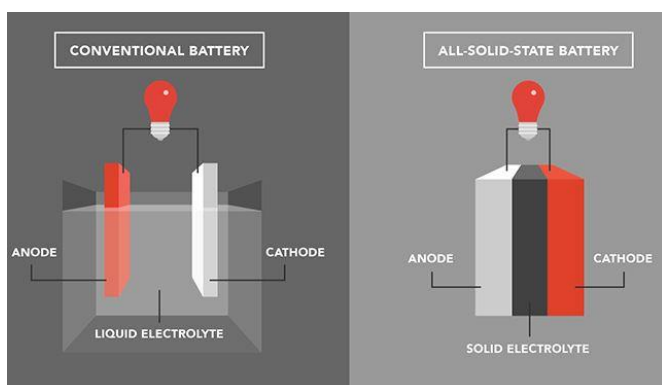
- Article 348 (1) states that unless Parliament passes a law to the contrary, all hearings in the Supreme Court and the High Courts must be conducted in English.
- The Governor of the State, with the prior agreement of the President, may permit the use of the Hindi language or any other language for any official purpose of the State under Article 348 (2).
- It says that decrees, judgements, or orders issued by the High Court with its major seat in that State must be written in English.

When is use of other languages permitted?

- The use of Hindi or another official language of a state in addition to English is permitted under Section 7 of the Official Languages Act of 1963.
- This must be done with the President of India's permission and with the assent of the Governor of the State for the purposes of enforcing judgements and other orders issued by the High Court for that State.

Science Tech Art & Culture

What are Solid-State Batteries?



After Twitter CEO Parag Agrawal, now another Indian origin is in the headline is Jagdeep Singh, CEO and founder of a US battery startup. The reason for his recent buzz for his breakthrough battery technology.

About QuantumScape

- QuantumScape Corp is a battery startup backed by Volkswagen AG.
- Its solid-state battery — lithium metal with a solid electrolyte separating the two electrodes — is seen as an exceptionally bright prospect in E-Vehicle industry.

What are Solid-state batteries?

- Solid-state batteries use solid electrodes and a solid electrolyte rather than the liquid or polymer gel electrolytes seen in lithium-ion and lithium polymer batteries.
- Many issues with liquid Li-ion batteries, such as flammability, limited voltage, unstable solid-electrolyte interphase development, poor cycling performance, and strength, can be addressed with such batteries.

What are Li-ion Batteries?

- Lithium-ion batteries employ aqueous electrolyte solutions to trigger the recharge and discharge of electrons between the anode (negative electrode commonly composed of

graphite) and cathode (positive electrode made of lithium).

- Lithium-ion cells, which are utilised in today's mobile phones and electric vehicles, have a nearly four-fold higher energy density than older-generation nickel-cadmium batteries.

Its limitations

- Low energy density: Despite technological advancements over the last decade, problems like long charging periods and low energy density still exist.
- Small appliances: While lithium-ion batteries are considered to be enough for phones and laptops, they lack the range that would make electric vehicles a viable alternative.
- Extreme reactivity: Lithium metal is exceedingly reactive, which is a serious issue.
- Dendrites (branched lithium structures) that develop out of the electrode and might potentially pierce the separator, short-circuiting the cell, are the most common form of lithium corrosion.
- Dendrite production in modern lithium-ion batteries, where the electrolyte is a flammable liquid, can cause a fire.

What is the breakthrough?

- QuantumScape claims to prevent the formation of dendrites.
- It employs solid-state separator technology, which removes the side reaction between the liquid electrolyte and the carbon/graphite in the anode of traditional lithium-ion batteries.
- Because the separator has been replaced, a lithium-metal anode can now be used instead of the standard anode.

- According to the business, the lithium metal anode is more energy dense than conventional anodes, allowing the battery to store more energy in the same volume.

Key advantages of QuantumScape Battery

- The benefits of solid-state battery technology include increased cell energy density (because to the absence of a carbon anode) and faster charging (by eliminating the need to have lithium diffuse into the carbon particles in conventional lithium-ion cells).
- It can handle more charging cycles, resulting in a longer battery life and greater safety.
- Lower costs could be a game-changer, given that battery costs account for 30% of overall vehicle expenditures.

India's battery push

- The centre is developing a plan for a grid-scale battery storage system with a capacity of roughly 4,000 MWh at the country's regional load dispatch centres, which operate the country's electricity grid, mostly to balance the vagaries of renewable energy.
- State-owned NTPC Ltd has floated a global tender for a grid-scale battery storage project, while Reliance Industries Ltd has announced plans to build an Energy Storage Giga factory.
- The Ministry of Heavy Industries has published a request for proposal for the establishment of Advanced Chemistry Cell (ACC) battery storage manufacturing plants in India.

What is INSACOG?



- INSACOG is an Indian partnership of ten labs and 18 satellite labs tasked with scanning COVID samples from patients and identifying the mutations that have resulted in an increase in transmission.
- The Department of Biotechnology, Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, Indian Council of Medical Research, and the Health Ministry are among the institutions collaborating.
- It started in January 2020 by sequencing all samples having a history of travel from the United Kingdom, as well as a percentage of positive samples in the population.

Tasks of INSACOG

- The NCDC is in charge of coordinating state-by-state sample collecting and connecting disease with specific mutations.
- It is primarily responsible for genomic sequencing, which is accomplished by isolating the genetic material from coronavirus samples.
- It's also in charge of tracking particular mutation combinations that are becoming more common in India.

What has it found so far?

- As of early December 2021, when this data was last made public, the INSACOG has sequenced around 1,00,000 samples.

- The majority of its efforts have gone into identifying international 'variants of concern' (VoC) that the WHO has identified as highly infectious or harmful.
- International travellers who test positive when they arrive in India have their samples sent to INSACOG to determine the genetic variation.

Why is genome sequencing useful?

- Understanding mutations: The goal of genome sequencing is to figure out how certain mutations affect the virus's ability to infect.
- Immune response: Immune escape, or the virus's capacity to elude antibodies, has been linked to several mutations, which has implications for vaccines.
- Vaccine efficacy: Scientists from all around the world, including those in India, have been testing whether the vaccinations developed so far are effective against mutant strains of the virus.
- Virus evolution: Studies like this have revealed that the Omicron version, for example, has evolved to evade antibodies far better than the Alpha or Delta form. Booster doses were pushed as a result of this.

How is it done?

- The genetic material (RNA) of coronavirus samples is isolated and used for genomic sequencing.
- RNA is made up of millions of nucleotide bases, and genomic sequencing is the process of identifying and comparing a sample's sequence to that of a reference sample.
- Alterations in the sequence are signs of mutations, indicating that the virus has experienced significant changes in certain areas.

- Genome sequencing can be done in a variety of ways, including whole genome sequencing and next-generation sequencing, each with its own set of benefits.
- It has now progressed to the point where huge sequencers can handle hundreds of samples at once.

Various challenges that INSACOG faces

- Regional variations: Because COVID-19 is spreading, evolving, and showing geographical variances, the group's original goal was to sequence at least 5% of COVID-19 samples.
- Lack of finances: However, only 1% has been achieved thus far, owing to a lack of funds, as well as a lack of reagents and tools needed to rapidly scale up.
- Despite the fact that it is staffed by experts, the INSACOG is ultimately part of the Central government's communication system.
- Infrastructure flaws: Because not all INSACOG labs have the same level of equipment and staff, a surge or spike in some cities can cause processing issues.

Gaganyaan and other new Missions in 2022



After a rather muted 2021 in terms of satellite launches, Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) is gearing up

for a number of missions in 2022 including the launch of the first unmanned mission of Gaganyaan.

Gaganyaan Mission

- Gaganyaan is a crewed orbital spacecraft that will serve as the foundation for India's human spaceflight programme (IHSP).
- ISRO launched the IHSP in 2007 with the goal of developing the technology needed to launch crewed orbital spacecraft into low Earth orbit.
- Gaganyaan 1, the first uncrewed mission, is set to launch on a GSLV Mark III rocket no sooner than June 2022.
- ISRO had been testing related technologies for the project, including a Crew Module Atmospheric Re-entry Experiment and a Pad Abort Test.
- After Russia, the United States, and China, India will become the fourth nation to conduct independent human spaceflight if the project is completed in the meantime.

Details of the project

- The spaceship will be able to carry three people, and an updated version will be able to rendezvous and dock with other spacecraft.
- This capsule will circle the Earth at 400 km altitude for up to seven days in its first crewed mission, with a two or three-person crew on board.
- In 2014, this crew module built by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) had its first unmanned testing flight.
- Critical human-centric systems and technology including as space-grade food, crew healthcare, radiation measurement and protection, parachutes for the safe recovery of the crew

module, and a fire suppression system will be supported by DRDO.

Other missions this year

- Earth Observation Satellites: EOS-4 and EOS-6
- Flights for Crew Escape System of Gaganyaan
- Chandrayaan-03
- Aditya L1
- XpoSat

New projects

- Venus mission
- DISHA –a twin aeronomy satellite mission
- TRISHNA, an ISRO-CNES [Centre national d'études spatiales] mission

Traditional vaccines just as effective, say US Scientists



Vaccines like Biological E's Corbevax and Bharat Biotech's Covaxin that are made by traditional methods are "just as effective" as the latest mRNA technology-based vaccines a/c to US scientists.

What are Vaccines?

- A vaccination is a biological substance that gives active acquired immunity against a specific infectious disease.
- It usually contains an agent that looks like a disease-causing germ and is made up of weakened or destroyed microbes, their toxins, or one of their surface proteins.

Types of Vaccines

There are several types of vaccines, including:

- Inactivated vaccines
- Live-attenuated vaccines
- Messenger RNA (mRNA) vaccines
- Subunit, recombinant, polysaccharide, and conjugate vaccines
- Viral vector vaccines

[1] Inactivated vaccines

- Inactivated vaccinations use a dead version of the disease-causing bacterium.
- Inactivated vaccines rarely produce the same level of immunity (protection) as live immunizations.
- As a result, you may require several doses over time (booster injections) to maintain disease immunity.
- Hepatitis A, Flu (shot only), Polio (shot only), Rabies, and other diseases are all protected by inactivated vaccinations.

[2] Live-attenuated vaccines

- Live vaccinations employ a weakened (or attenuated) version of the disease-causing bacterium.

- These vaccines elicit a powerful and long-lasting immune response because they are so identical to the natural infection they help prevent.
- Most live vaccinations can provide lifetime protection against a germ and the disease it causes with just one or two doses.
- They must be kept cool in a refrigerated environment.
- Measles, mumps, rubella (MMR), Rotavirus, Smallpox, Chickenpox, and Yellow fever are all protected by live vaccinations.

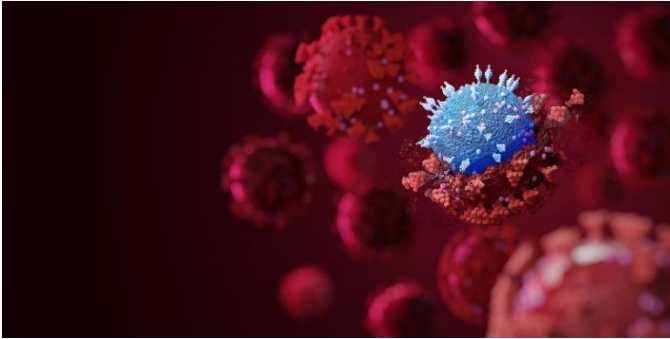
[3] Messenger RNA vaccines

- Researchers have been investigating and experimenting with mRNA vaccines for decades, and several of the COVID-19 vaccines were developed using this technology.
- mRNA vaccines produce proteins to elicit an immunological response.
- mRNA vaccines provide various advantages over other forms of vaccinations, including shorter manufacturing periods and no danger of disease in the person receiving the vaccine because they do not contain a live virus.

How does mRNA vaccine work?

- mRNA vaccines work in a different way than conventional vaccines.
- By injecting antigens into a patient, traditional vaccinations trigger an antibody response.
- mRNA vaccines deliver a piece of a virus's RNA sequence straight into cells, triggering an adaptive immune response. A virus's mRNA fragment is a specialised component of the virus that contains instructions for making the virus's antigen.
- RNA vaccines have the advantage of stimulating cellular immunity.

Omisure: India's first RT-PCR kit to identify Omicron strain



Omisure — India's first home-grown testing kit has recently received approval from the Drugs Controller General of India.

About Omisure

- Omisure is an omicron-detecting RT-PCR kit developed in collaboration with the Indian Council of Medical Research by Mumbai-based Tata Medical and Diagnostics Ltd (TATA MD) (ICMR).
- In less than four hours, it can distinguish the novel coronavirus's omicron strain from the delta, alpha, and other forms.
- This variation can be diagnosed in a single step.

How does it work?

- By focusing on two areas of the S or spike genes, this new tool can detect the Omicron variation.
- This gene produces the spike protein, which aids in the entry and infection of human cells by the new coronavirus.
- Traditional RT-PCR tests target the S, Enveloped (E), and Nucleocapsid (N) genes, among others.
- A patient sample is labelled positive when these genes are detected. Because omicron has a lot of mutations in the S gene, RT-PCR can miss it.

- The absence of the S gene implies the presence of omicron.
- This is known as S gene dropout or S gene target failure, and it is one of Omisure's targets.

How does Omisure compare with gene sequencing?

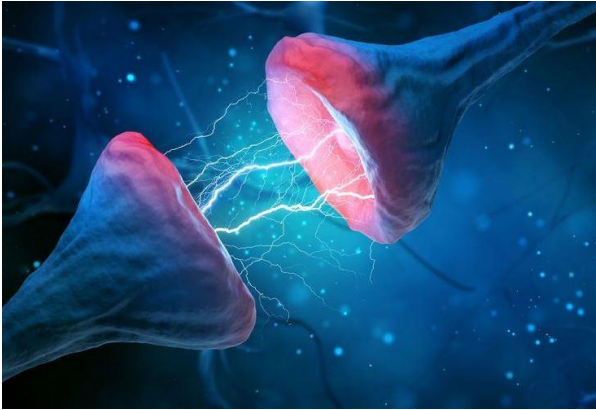
- The order of nucleotides, which are the building components of deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) and ribonucleic acid (RNA), is read by gene sequencing (RNA).
- Despite its status as the gold standard, sequencing has some drawbacks.
- It's time-consuming, costly, and difficult. It's a step-by-step procedure.
- It starts with obtaining virus RNA from patient samples, turning it to DNA, amplifying or multiplying it with RT-PCR, and lastly sending it to be sequenced.
- The complete procedure could take up to three days.

Zebrafish study reveals how the brain makes its connections



Recent work by researchers at the National Centre of Biological Sciences, Bengaluru, has thrown light on what stimulates the synapses (connection of nerve cells) to form.

What are Synapses?



- Neurons, or nerve cells, in the brain connect by means of junctions known as synapses through which they transmit signals.
- There are two types of synapses – chemical and electrical:

(1) Chemical Synapse

- There is around a 20-nanometer gap between two neurons in this, and they interact by one neuron converting electrical signals into chemical signals.
- This substance is released into the synaptic region, where it is converted back into an electrical signal by the receiving neuron.

(2) Electrical synapse

- The two neurons have a physical connection in these synapses, thus no electrical to chemical conversion is required, and they can communicate directly.
- Electrical synapses function similarly to physical wires; communication is faster, but there are fewer of them.

Observing these synapses

- Zebrafish has been chosen as a model organism to explore this mechanism by researchers from TIFR-National Centre of Biological Sciences in Bengaluru.

- Because zebrafish are transparent, neuron growth in larval zebrafish can be tracked day to day by injecting a dye or genetically modifying the fish to express fluorescent proteins.
- Electrical synapses are generated before chemical synapses, and they function as a template for how neurons make a handshake. Chemical synapses are formed as a result of this.
- Chemical synapses do not form when electrical synapses are removed in species like leeches, according to research.
- The process by which it occurs in higher organisms such as vertebrates, however, was unknown.

What induces these synapses?

- The researchers discovered that knocking out a protein called gap junction delta 2b (gjd2b) in the cerebellum of zebrafish impacted the enzyme CaMKII levels.
- CaMKII levels were shown to rise in the Purkinje neurons of the cerebellum.
- These neurons, as well as the cerebellum itself, manage the organism's coordination of movements.

Why study this?

- Excessive alcohol misuse in humans, for example, damages these cells, resulting in a lack of coordination in movement.
- The Purkinje neurons, like the cerebellum, show evolutionary continuity in all vertebrates.
- The cerebellum has remained evolutionary conserved even though fish and humans diverged 500 million years ago from a common ancestor.
- Humans contain hundreds of Purkinje neurons compared to 300-400 in zebrafish.

Carbon Footprints of Cryptocurrencies



Bitcoin prices are rising these days and so will be its mining. As cryptocurrency will become mainstream, its carbon footprint cannot be ignored.

What are Cryptocurrencies?

Global crypto market

- The global cryptocurrency market was worth \$793 million in 2019.
- According to a report by market research firm Facts and Factors, it is now predicted to reach approximately \$5.2 billion by 2026.
- The global use of bitcoin increased by more than 880 percent in just one year, from July 2020 to June 2021.

Carbon footprints of Bitcoins

- The rising popularity of Bitcoin has environmentalists concerned, as digital "mining" leaves a significant carbon footprint due to the enormous amount of energy required.
- According to the Bitcoin Energy Consumption Index, Bitcoin has the same carbon footprint as New Zealand.
- Each year, they release roughly 37 megatons of carbon dioxide into the environment.

What is Mining?

- Mining is the process of solving computer challenges in order to verify user transactions, which are then recorded in the blockchain.
- The works are created, or "minted," using a procedure known as proof-of-work (PoW), which establishes their unique identity.

How do cryptocurrencies create such a footprint?

- Bitcoin, unlike traditional currencies, is a virtual currency that is not formed of paper, plastic, or even metal.
- Bitcoin is a virtual currency that consumes a lot of electricity because it is created by high-powered computers all around the world.
- When high-powered computers compete against each other to solve complicated mathematical challenges, Bitcoin is born.
- This is a high-energy process that frequently uses fossil fuels, mainly coal, which is the dirtiest of all.

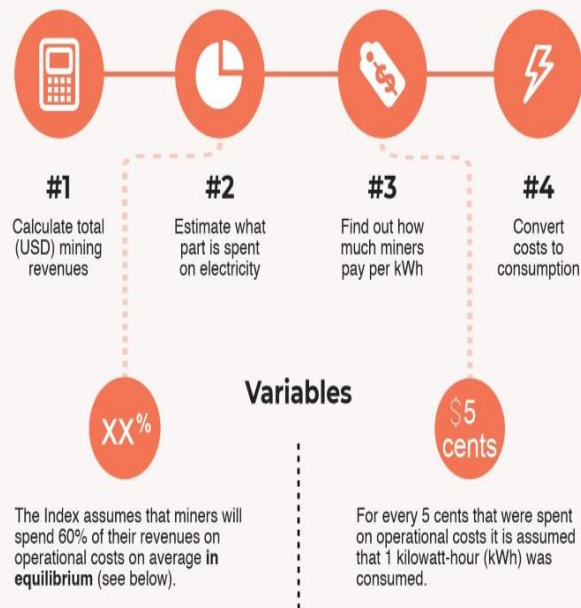
Conclusion

- This means that, unlike traditional currencies like gold, Bitcoin is more than just a settlement layer, a store of value, and a medium of trade.
- Given its diverse potential applications, Bitcoin's relative energy use is productive in compared to other industries.
- The prospect of such an endeavour raises hopes for a more long-term bitcoin future.
- It remains to be seen if this will make much of a difference in the climate catastrophe, given government and industrial inertia.

How does it work?

Bitcoin Energy Consumption Index

Steps to determine Bitcoin's energy consumption



Production takes time

Price movements can be small or large, but new energy-hungry machines won't all appear overnight. Realistic behaviour is introduced by linking price dynamics to the expected time required for producers to fully respond to a changing situation.

The index is built on the premise that new machines will continue to be produced for as long as it's profitable to do so, until the market reaches an equilibrium where making a profit is no longer possible.

Web 3.0: A vision for the future



The concept of Web3, also called Web 3.0, used to describe a potential next phase of the internet, created quite a buzz in 2021.

What is Web3?

- The model, which would be a decentralised internet based on blockchain technology, would be distinct from the current Web 1.0 and Web 2.0 versions.
- Unlike now, when tech companies control platforms, users will have ownership shares in web3 platforms and applications.

Previous versions of Web

To understand web3, we should start with Web 1.0 and Web 2.0.

[1] Web 1

- Web 1.0 refers to the first version of the internet, which was launched in 1989. It gained popularity in 1993.
- The internet in the early days of Web 1.0 was primarily static web pages, with people visiting a website and then reading and interacting with static material.
- Even if there were e-commerce websites in the beginning, it was still a closed environment, with consumers unable to generate content or leave reviews on the internet.
- Web 1.0 was the first version of the internet, and it lasted until 1999.

[2] Web 2

- Web 2.0 first appeared in some form in the late 1990s, but it wasn't until 2004 that the majority of its features were completely functional. We are still in the Web 2.0 era.

- When compared to Web 1.0, Web 2.0 distinguishes itself by allowing people to produce content.
- They can participate and contribute by leaving comments, registering likes, sharing and uploading photographs and videos, and other similar activities.
- The distinguishing feature of Web 2.0 is, first and foremost, a social media type of engagement.

What are some of the concerns?

- In Web 2.0, a small number of giant firms, such as Google, possess or handle the majority of online data and traffic.
- This has resulted in difficulties with data privacy, data security, and data abuse.
- There's a sense of regret that the internet's basic purpose has been twisted.
- The hype about Web3 is particularly noticeable in this context.

Dawn of Web3

- Web3 was coined by Gavin Wood, the founder of Ethereum, a block chain technology startup, in 2014, and many others have since added to the concept.
- Because of the prominence of cryptocurrency in 2021, there were more conversations on Web3.

How will Web3 address the problems of data monopoly?

Web3 will deliver decentralized and fair internet where users control their own data.

- Currently, in order for a seller to do business with a customer, both the buyer and the seller must be registered on a "shop" or "platform" such as Amazon, Ebay, or another e-commerce gateway.

- This "platform" currently verifies that the buyer and seller are legitimate participants in the transaction.
- The role of the "platform" would be eliminated in Web3.
- The normal proofs, enhanced by block chain technology, will be utilised to authenticate the purchase. The vendor is in the same boat.

How is blockchain technology used here?

- The time and location of the transaction are permanently recorded by block chain.
- Web3 eliminates the need for an intermediary, allowing peer-to-peer (seller-to-buyer) transactions. This notion can also be applied to other types of transactions.
- Consider using a social media programme to share photos with your followers.
- It could be a blockchain-assisted broadcast from you, and you wouldn't need social media accounts for all of the participants to do so.

Another key feature: Decentralized Autonomous Organization

- Peer-to-peer transactions and block chains are the two most important elements in Web3 so far.
- Decentralized Autonomous Organization is the spirit of Web3 (DAO).
- The business rules that govern any transaction are publicly available for anybody to view, and software will be created in accordance with these standards.
- The DAO philosophy is followed by technologies like as cryptocurrency and block chain.
- There is no need for a central authority to validate or authenticate with DAO.

Will it take off?

- We don't know if Web3 will become the primary way of internet access, but the issues it raises are important.
- Web3 is still in its early stages, and no one knows if it will take off as Web 1.0 or Web 2.0 did.
- Top tech minds in the industry and academia are sceptical of Web3, claiming that it does not answer the challenges it claims to tackle.

Art-form in news: Kathak

Kathak legend Pandit Birju Maharaj has recently passed away.

About Kathak

- Kathak is one of India's eight primary classical dance styles.
- Kathak is said to have originated with the roaming bards known as Kathakars or storytellers in ancient northern India.
- Kathak is derived from the Vedic Sanskrit words Katha, which means "storey," and Kathakar, which means "one who recounts a storey," or "one who is interested in stories."
- Through dance, singing, and music, wandering Kathakars relayed stories from the great epics and ancient mythology.

Its origin

- Kathak dancers use their hand movements and intricate footwork, as well as their body movements and flexibility, but most significantly, their facial expressions, to tell a variety of stories.
- It developed independently at the courts of north Indian kingdoms and during the Bhakti movement, particularly by including the Hindu god Krishna's childhood and legends.
- Kathak is unique in that it includes both Hindu and Muslim gharanas, as well as cultural influences from both.
- Urdu Ghazals and regularly used instruments from the Mughal period are featured in Kathak performances.

Major gharanas

- Kathak is divided into three types, or "gharanas," which are named after the places where the Kathak dance tradition originated: Jaipur, Banaras, and Lucknow.
- The Jaipur gharana emphasises foot motions, whereas the Banaras and Lucknow gharanas emphasise beautiful facial expressions and hand movements.

Performance details

- It entails both Nritta (pure dance) and Nritya (combined dance) (expressive dance).
- The Kathak dance form is known for its rhythmic foot motions embellished with little bells (Ghungroo) and movement that is in sync with the music.
- The storey is communicated by gestures of arms and upper body movement, face expressions, neck movements, eyes and eyebrow movement,

stage movements, bends and turns, and a constructed lexicon based on these gestures.

- The eyes and foot motions become the major emphasis of the dance.
- The dancer's eyes serve as a vehicle for communicating the message he or she is trying to tell. The dancer makes a variety of face emotions with her brows.
- Kathak can be performed solo, in a duo, or in a group. The speed and intensity exchanged by the dancers with the audience in a technical performance grows in multiples, i.e. the tempo doubles or quadruples.

AP govt bans Chintamani Padya Natakam: A noted Telugu folk play



The Andhra Pradesh government has brought the curtains down on the popular Telugu play 'Chintamani Padya Natakam', which has enthralled people for almost 100 years.

Chintamani Padya Natakam

- It is a theatre drama written over 100 years ago by social reformer, writer, and poet Kallakuri Narayana Rao.
- The playwright illustrates how people ignore their family by succumbing to various social ills.

- Its purpose was to raise awareness about the Devadasi system and how the flesh trade was destroying many families at the time.
- Some of the characters in the drama are Subbisetty, Chintamani, Bilvamangaludu, Bhavani Shankaram, and Srihari.

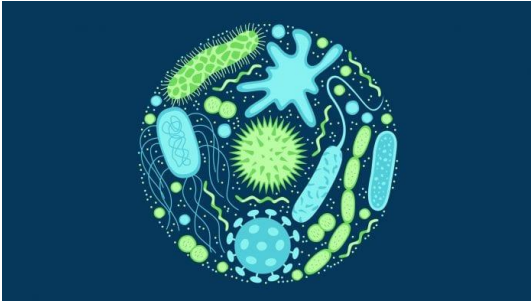
Its performance

- The play is called after Chintamani, the main character, a woman born into a flesh-trading family.
- The drama focuses on her remorse and subsequent salvation.
- Subbi Shetty, a character in the drama, loses his fortune to Chintamani, and his character is used in an engaging way.
- Chintamani is a popular game throughout the state. It has been conducted at tens of thousands of locations around the world.
- Even now, the drama continues to captivate audiences, and it has become a must-see event in communities during Dasara celebrations.

Why it got banned?

- This play, which began as a social sermon, has become progressively profane.
- Subbi Shetty, who looks like a transgender person, is used to portray the social group in a negative light.
- In the sake of originality, obscene dialogue is inserted to the play.

What is Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR)?



The Global Research on Antimicrobial Resistance (GRAM) report published in The Lancet provides the most comprehensive estimate of the global impact of Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) so far.

What is AMR?

- Antimicrobial resistance (AMR or AR) refers to a microbe's ability to withstand the effects of medications that were once effective in treating it.
- Antibiotic resistance develops over time, although human and animal overuse of antibiotics hastens the process.
- As medicines become less efficient, a rising range of infections are becoming more difficult to cure, including pneumonia, TB, gonorrhoea, and salmonellosis.
- Higher medical costs, longer hospital stays, and a higher mortality rate are all consequences.

How does it occur?

- Antibiotics are drugs that are used to prevent and treat infections caused by bacteria.
- Antibiotic resistance develops when bacteria adapt to antibiotic treatment.
- Antibiotic resistance affects bacteria rather than humans or animals.
- These bacteria can infect humans and animals, and the diseases they produce are more difficult

to treat than infections caused by bacteria that are not resistant to antibiotics.

What did the GRAM report find?

- AMR kills more people than HIV/AIDS or malaria combined.
- Bacterial AMR may be responsible for up to 4.95 million deaths this year.
- In 2019, lower respiratory tract infections were the most common infectious condition, accounting for more than 1.5 million deaths linked to resistance.

The six leading pathogens for deaths associated with resistance were:

1. Escherichia coli (E. Coli)
2. Staphylococcus aureus
3. Klebsiella pneumonia
4. Streptococcus pneumonia
5. Acinetobacter baumannii
6. Pseudomonas aeruginosa

What are the implications of this study?

- Hundreds of thousands of people are killed every year by common illnesses such as lower respiratory tract infections, bloodstream infections, and intra-abdominal infections.
- This includes illnesses like pneumonia, hospital-acquired infections, and foodborne illnesses, which were previously curable.

Way forward

- Globally, nationally, and within individual hospitals, doctors urge taking further steps to monitor and control infections.

- Vaccines, safe drinking water, and sanitation should all be made more widely available.
- Antibiotics used for purposes other than treating human disease, such as in food and animal production, must be "optimised," and being "more mindful" is also advised.

Who was Sri Ramanuja?



Ramanuja or Ramanujacharya (1017–1137 CE) was a philosopher, Hindu theologian, social reformer, and one of the most important exponents of Sri Vaishnavism tradition within Hinduism.

- His philosophical foundations for devotionism were influential to the Bhakti movement.

His works

- Ramanuja's philosophical foundation was qualified monism, which is known in Hindu tradition as Vishishtadvaita.
- In Vedanta, his ideas constitute one of three subschools; the other two being Adi Shankara's Advaita (absolute monism) and Madhvacharya's Dvaita (dualism)
- Among the most important works are:

1. Vedarthasangraha (literally, "Summary of the Vedas meaning"),
 2. Sri Bhashya (a review and commentary on the Brahma Sutras),
 3. Bhagavad Gita Bhashya (a review and commentary on the Bhagavad Gita), and
- The minor works titled Vedantapida, Vedantasara, Gadya Trayam (which is a compilation of three texts called the Saranagati Gadyam, Sriranga Gadyam and the Srivaikunta Gadyam), and Nitya Grantham.

UNESCO tag sought for Living Root Bridges of Meghalaya



The Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) has underlined some green rules for the living root bridges of Meghalaya to get the UNESCO World Heritage Site tag.

Living Root Bridges

- A living root bridge is a sort of basic suspension bridge made from the roots of live plants.
- They are common in the southern section of Meghalaya, a state in northeast India. Jingkieng jri is the native name for such a bridge.
- The Khasi and Jaintia peoples of the steep terrain of the southern section of the Shillong Plateau

make them from the aerial roots of rubber fig trees (*Ficus elastic*).

- The majority of the bridges are found on steep subtropical moist broadleaf forest slopes between 50 and 1150 metres above sea level.

Why is it so unique?

- The roots in the bridge can naturally grow thick and strong as long as the tree from which it is made remains healthy.
- To strengthen the bridge, new roots might sprout during the tree's life and must be clipped or controlled.
- Some bridges, if mature, may carry up to 50 or more people and have a lifespan of up to 150 years.

What is Beating Retreat Ceremony?



There are 26 tunes that will be played at Beating Retreat this year on January 29 skipping the "Abide with Me" tune.

What is the Beating Retreat function?

- 'Beating Retreat' refers to a centuries-old military ritual in which troops stopped combat, sheathed their weapons, and withdrew from the battlefield at sundown when the Retreat signal was sounded.
- The military custom dates back to the 17th century, when King James II ordered his troops

to beat drums, drop flags, and organise a parade to signal the conclusion of a day of war.

- After firing a single round from the evening gun, the event was dubbed "watch setting" and took place at sunset.
- Armed forces from the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, and India, among others, participate in the ceremony.

How did it begin in India?

- When the Colours and Standards are paraded, "Beating the Retreat" has become a national pride event.
- The ritual dates back to the early 1950s, when Major Roberts of the Indian Army established the one-of-a-kind massed band demonstration ceremonial.
- The event is organised by the Ministry of Defence's Section D (Ceremonials).
- The ceremony includes musical performances by the bands, who present Indian and western tunes each year.

Small Satellite Launch Vehicle (SSLV)



The new chairman of the ISRO Dr S Somanath has indicated inauguration of indigenous new launch rockets, called the Small Satellite Launch Vehicle (SSLV).

What is SSLV?

- The SSLV is a small-lift launch vehicle being developed by the ISRO with payload capacity to deliver:
 1. 600 kg to Low Earth Orbit (500 km) or
 2. 300 kg to Sun-synchronous Orbit (500 km)
- It would aid in the launch of tiny satellites and would be capable of numerous orbital drop-offs.
- A specialised launch pad dubbed the Small Satellite Launch Complex (SSLC) will be built at Sriharikota in the future.
- SSLV launches will be handled once a new spaceport near Kulasekharapatnam in Tamil Nadu is completed.
- The vehicle's production and launch operations will be handled by a consortium of Indian companies, including NewSpace India Limited, once it enters the operational phase (NSIL).

Vehicle details

(A) Dimensions

- Height: 34 meters
- Diameter: 2 meters
- Mass: 120 tonnes

(B) Propulsion

- It will be a four stage launching vehicle.
- The first three stages will use Hydroxyl-terminated polybutadiene (HTPB) based solid propellant, with a fourth terminal stage being a Velocity-Trimming Module (VTM).

SSLV vs. PSLV: A comparison

- The SSLV was created with the goal of commercially launching small satellites at a far lower cost and with a much higher launch rate than the Polar SLV (PSLV).
- The expected high launch rate is based on a mostly autonomous launch operation and simplified logistics in general.
- A PSLV launch, for example, involves 600 personnel, but the SSLV launch would be controlled by a small team of roughly six individuals.
- Instead of months, the SSLV's launch readiness is predicted to be less than a week.
- The SSLV can launch satellites weighing up to 500 kilogrammes into low earth orbit, whereas the PSLV can launch spacecraft weighing up to 1000 kg.
- The entire project will be completed in a short amount of time, with a cost of around Rs 30 crore for SSLV.

Significance of SSLV

- SSLV is ideal for simultaneously launching several microsatellites and allowing for multiple orbital drop-offs.
- The SSLV's development and production are expected to foster increased collaboration between the space industry and private Indian enterprises, which is a primary goal of the space ministry.

NeoCov Coronavirus found in Bats



NeoCov coronavirus found in bats may pose threat to humans in the future, scientists caution.

Coronavirus: A quick backgrounder

- Coronaviruses are a big viral family that can infect both animals and humans.
- Alpha, beta, gamma, and delta are the four genera in which they are classified.
- In general, alpha and beta coronaviruses infect mammals such as bats and humans, but Gamma and Delta coronaviruses primarily infect birds.

Infecting humans: Through 'Zoonotic Spillover'

- While mammals, including bats, are generally thought to be coronavirus reservoirs, occasional spillover occurrences may occur.
- Viruses that infect animals have the potential to spread to people, a process known as zoonotic spillover.
- Spillover is assumed to be the cause of several important infectious disorders, including COVID-19.

COVID-19 Pandemic

- SARS-CoV-2, the coronavirus that caused the COVID-19 pandemic, is a member of the beta coronavirus genus.

- It is the seventh type of coronavirus to infect humans and cause serious sickness.

How does it affect humans?

- The receptor-binding domain of a coronavirus determines how the virus latches onto particular receptors on host cells.
- The distinctions in coronavirus receptor-binding domains define the type of host receptor the virus will use, and thus the host that it will be able to infect.
- There are now four well-known coronavirus receptors, including ACE2, which is used by SARS-CoV and SARS-CoV-2, and DPP4, which is used by MERS-CoV.

What is NeoCoV?

- NeoCoV is a bat coronavirus that was discovered for the first time in 2011.
- It was discovered in a bat species called Neoromicia, from whence the name NeoCoV was derived.
- This species, sometimes known as aloe bats, is found in the Afro-Malagasy region.
- NeoCoV has an 85% genome sequence similarity to MERS-CoV, making it the closest known relative of MERS-CoV.

Does NeoCoV infect humans and cause high mortality?

- It is important to note that inherently, NeoCoV cannot interact with human receptors, implying that in its current form the virus cannot infect humans.
- NeoCoV does not infect humans yet and has thus not caused any deaths.

What does the preprint say and why is it important?

- Despite their similarities, MERS-CoV and NeoCoV use different receptors to infect cells, according to the study.
- NeoCoV, a bat coronavirus, was discovered to exploit bat ACE2 receptors to efficiently penetrate cells.
- NeoCoV's interaction with bat ACE2 receptors differs from that of other coronaviruses that engage the receptor.
- Specific modifications in NeoCoV's receptor-binding region, however, can improve the virus's ability to engage with human ACE2 receptors.
- These alterations have yet to be discovered in NeoCoV isolates collected from natural environments.

Conclusion

- SARS-CoV-2 isn't the first coronavirus to infect humans and create large-scale illness epidemics, and it won't be the last.
- Coronaviruses such as NeoCoV or other related viruses could potentially develop the ability to infect people through additional modification, according to the study.

Way forward

- To prevent future outbreaks, it will be critical to keep an eye on this virus family for signs of zoonosis while continuing study into the complicated receptor utilisation of distinct coronaviruses.
- As a result, genomic surveillance of human and animal viruses is critical for understanding the virus spectrum and may provide early warning of potential spillover occurrences.

Security Issues

Multi Agency Centre (MAC): A common counter-terrorism grid



The Union government has asked the States to share more intelligence inputs through the Multi Agency Centre (MAC), a common counter-terrorism grid under the Intelligence Bureau (IB).

Why in news?

- States are frequently hesitant to disclose data on the platform.
- There are significant gaps in the timely exchange of crucial information.
- For more than a decade, there have been plans to connect the system to the district level.

About MAC

- Following the Kargil intrusion and the ensuing revamp of the Indian national security system recommended by the Kargil Review Committee report, the Multi-Agency Centre (MAC) was established in December 2001.
- As a result, the Intelligence Bureau (IB) has been given permission to establish a multi-agency centre (MAC) in New Delhi.

- MAC now works 24 hours a day, seven days a week as a nodal entity for sharing intelligence inputs, coordinating with representatives from a variety of agencies and ministries, both federal and state.
- On the MAC, many security agencies share real-time intelligence information.
- Subsidiary MACs have been established for the state offices (SMACs).
- The platform includes 28 organisations, including the Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW), the armed forces, and state police

- It is a multilateral anti-submarine warfare exercise hosted by the United States in the Pacific Ocean.
- The fleets of India, Australia, Canada, Japan, the United States, and South Korea are participating in the drill.
- India, Japan, Australia, and the United States are all members of the Quad and take part in the Malabar exercise.
- It involves in-flight training, which encompasses everything from detecting simulated targets to tracking a real US Navy submarine.

Significance of the exercise

- Almost all of the participating countries have tense relations with China, thus the exercise is significant.
- China's Look West Policy is allowing it to strengthen its position in the Indo-Pacific.

Exercise Sea Dragon 22

India is among the six Indo-Pacific nations participating in Exercise Sea Dragon 22.

Sea Dragon 22

Trivia

Telangana's Tribal Fair: Sammakka-Sarakka Jatara



Medaram, a tiny village in Telangana's tribal heartland of Mulugu district, is getting ready to host the Sammakka-Sarakka jatara, billed as the country's biggest tribal fair.

Sammakka-Sarakka Jatara

- The four-day jatara in Medaram is set to commence on February 16. It only happens every two years.
- It is possibly the only tribal fair dedicated to honouring tribal warriors who made tremendous sacrifices in defence of aboriginal tribal people's rights.
- It represents the Koya tribal people's customs and heritage.
- During the four-day jatara, the sacred place in Medaram and its surrounding Jampanna vagu, named for tribal martyr Jampanna, son of Sammakka, comes alive with lakhs of believers.

Why do tribals come to Medaram?

- This event commemorates a tribal insurrection organised by Sammakka and Saralamma, a

mother-daughter duet, in the 12th century against the charging of taxes on tribal people by the then Kakatiya rulers during drought conditions.

- During the jatara, tribals (and others) flock to Medaram from all over Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, as well as Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, and Maharashtra.
- Devotees worship Sammakka and Saralamma as tribal deities, and they give offerings to them in exchange for health and wealth.

- All of the rituals at the jatara site are performed in accordance with tribal customs and are overseen by tribal priests.

Features of the celebrations

- The gift of jaggery to the tribal goddess at the altars is one of the most noticeable aspects of the tribal fair (bamboo poles).
- It includes classic tribal fair elements such as devout worshippers entering trances, the sacrifice of fowls and goats, and throbbing rhythmic drum beats accompanying folk melodies.



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